

Start-up company smooths communication differences

Starting a company in a difficult economy requires strong, focused leadership. The six founders of Pixio Corporation have what it takes.

The Pixio founders learned how to put their strengths to work through their association with HR Northwest, a consulting firm recognized for providing outsourced solutions to human resource issues for growing companies.

Pixio's business uses unique ways to drive product sales. It makes electronic displays of product information for store shelves, which helps consumers at the point of purchase. "Fundamentally, we want to build a company that we ourselves would want to work for," says Kelly Rupp, Pixio co-founder. "This dream came one step closer when we won first place in a business plan contest sponsored by the *Portland Business Journal*."

Pixio Corporation's prize in that contest was a full year of consulting and training services from HR Northwest. According to Rupp, "Our early meetings with Judy Clark, the president of HR Northwest, centered on a frank discussion of who we were and where we wanted to go as a company. We had a unique opportunity to work with HR Northwest to create a company with a vibrant culture as our guiding principle."

Business Challenges

- Communicating effectively when a team doesn't really know each other

Company Profile

Pixio Corporation supplies retail chains and outlets with merchandising software for consumers. It produces on-the-shelf, wireless-networked display devices which show product information. The company is based in Oregon.

Pixio Corporation

Solution

Clark recommended that Pixio's leadership team participate in HR Northwest's organizational executive development process. The customized program helps companies learn how to build teams, manage employees, and be exemplary employers.

At the heart of HR Northwest's process is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) tool, a self-assessment that identifies an individual's personality type and offers insight into that person's preferred communication styles.

According to Clark, "The MBTI assessment provides an exceptional springboard for conversations about different styles. Appreciation of a variety of styles is an essential part of effective communication."

Pixio's founders discovered they had some very different preferences for communication, especially during meetings.

"Often start-ups struggle with not knowing how to disagree," Clark explained. "They've come together over a great idea and too often part painfully after discovering what they don't agree on. Dealing with change, and adding employees, customers, or additional investors, has an influence on the initial relationships."

For Pixio, the MBTI instrument's results facilitated conversations about how the individual founders' personality types influenced their communication. Through their discussions, they were able to identify ways to make meetings more productive and improve their decision-making process.

Results

Pixio's founders were so impressed with the results of their training from HR Northwest that they extended the use of the MBTI tool from their executive group to their investors and recent additions to their executive team.

Solution

- Use MBTI instrument to improve communication

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Judy Clark,
President, HR Northwest

Pixio Corporation

“We’ve found the MBTI instrument easy to administer, easy to score, and easy to understand. It’s a very workable tool through which to have a dialogue about how to approach different problems, identify biases, and establish achievable team expectations,” said Rupp.

Adds Clark, “Pixio has been able to lay the foundation for a healthy company culture and group dynamic utilizing the MBTI assessment. They’ve now got the right stuff.”

What’s the message from Pixio’s experience? Consultants, trainers, and human resources professionals can make today’s challenging business environment more manageable for both new and established companies. Personality tools, including the MBTI assessment, can be an important part of the processes that help individuals and organizations make the most of scarce resources.

Results

- Improved communications and teamwork
- Widespread roll-out of MBTI training



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