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MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

2005 ALC Annual Conference Dates are Confirmed

The ALC will host its 2005 Annual Conference June 13-18 at The Westin Pasadena in Pasadena, CA (near Los Angeles). The dates encompass several pre-conference workshops. Look for details in the next issue of this newsletter.

ATA Conference Report

Bill Graeper and Lelani Craig

This year for the first time the ALC participated in the American Translators Association Annual Conference, held in October in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. In addition to hosting a booth in the exhibit area, the ALC sponsored the Translation Company Division Dessert Reception held on Wednesday, October 13, 8-10 pm. It was an enjoyable evening attending by the ATA's Translation Company Division (TCD) members.

The ALC representatives attending the conference took turns tending the booth. Over 30 leads were collected and many companies committed to either joining or attending our Los Angeles Conference in June 2005, including two past presidents of ATA. It was a successful first event for the ALC.

In summary, this was an event where the ALC attracted positive attention from company owners, as well as serving as a forum between company owners and interpreter/translator attendees. ALC was able to talk about their goals and objectives and focused on the growth of the industry as a whole. Few people were aware of the strong role that the ALC has had in advocacy, influencing government policies regarding languages. Twenty-six potential new members were discovered, and aggressive follow-up work by the Membership Committee is already underway.

The ALC's board will consider continuing its participation in future ATA events. Their next conference is scheduled for November 9-12, 2005, in Seattle, WA.

Management Intelligence for Hiring

Mark S. Peterson

Have you ever hired someone who performed better on the interview than they did on the job?

Hiring mistakes are often the result of too much reliance on *unreliable* hiring practices. A closer look at some of these practices uncovers inherent weaknesses in most.

The traditional hiring process begins with a review of applications and resumes in an attempt to screen in or out those candidates who appear to be the most or least attractive on paper. It's here where many poor hiring decisions get their start.

Recruiter Robert Half, founder of Robert Half International, the world's largest specialized staffing firm, once quipped that "a resume is a balance sheet without liabilities." Mr. Half was not *wholly* correct. Resumes may not be representative of a candidate's assets either.

A 2002 survey by the Internet company HireRight found that 80% of all resumes are misleading. The review of 200,000 job applicants showed that 20% listed fraudulent degrees; 30% altered employment dates; 40% inflated salaries; 30% had inaccurate job descriptions; 25% said they worked at companies that no longer existed; and 27% gave falsified references.

Another potential concern is that resumes are primarily a review of education and experience. This information may not easily predict on-the-job performance in what might be a new role for the candidate. A former school teacher who becomes a star real-estate agent is more common a story than you might think. Discounting this person's success potential due to lack of relevant work history or education would be a serious and costly error.

The discrepancy between what someone knows and what they do with what they know often comes into play, as well. How many sales jobs need to be held by the person with 20 years of only marginally successful sales experience before somebody figures out they are not cut out for sales? The salesperson may have been through every training program available but simply doesn't have what it takes to handle rejection, deal with confrontation, organize time and activities, or listen to the customer. You get the point.

Unfortunately, the odds of avoiding hiring mistakes that start with heavy reliance on resumes don't easily improve during what is usually the second phase in most hiring

processes: The interview.

The best interviews are usually with candidates who have had the most practice, or coaching, or who have read the best books on the subject. “Knock ‘Em Dead,” Martin John Yate’s *New York Times* best seller series on interview strategies has sold over 3 million copies! By the way, there is also an edition dedicated to writing resumes.

Adding to the perils of weighing too heavily on what you might learn about the applicant during the interview, a recent University of Massachusetts study found that over 50% of “candidates” made less than truthful statements during interviews -- with the most frequent and blatant dishonesty displayed by those seeking what were considered positions of higher responsibility and reward.

More specifically, candidates often tell at least one of three kinds of lies during the average interview.

Behavioral lies seem quite innocent on the surface. For example: Your candidate was on time, wore appropriate attire, was courteous to your receptionist, gave socially or politically correct answers to tough questions, and so on. Unfortunately, it’s difficult to tell if this is the candidate’s usual behavior or if they were taking a “best face forward” approach for the moment.

Subconscious lies are often difficult to disprove through conversation--especially if your candidates have sold themselves on such common assertions as “I’m a real people person”, or “I don’t need a list because I love prospecting”, or the classic and perhaps neurotically-based “I’m a workaholic.” These often serve to *expose* the subconscious liar.

Finally, there are *conscious lies* or blatant dishonesty. Mark Twain once said “a liar has to have a great memory.” If yours does, you may have to wait quite some time for the ugly truth to come out. Incredible claims about income and successes may not be supported by W2s or references--if you can get them.

This brings us to what is usually one of the final steps in most hiring processes: Reference checks.

A cynic once suggested that a bad reference is as hard to find as a good employee. That may be a bit extreme. Yet even with the relaxation of some liability laws regarding the giving of references, many employers are still quite hesitant to disclose much more than dates of employment, regardless of the employees’ status with their organizations. Some disclosures may easily be misinterpreted. Comments such as “you’ll be lucky to get her to work for you” or “he had a major impact on our bottom line” are double-edged.

One solution to this dilemma is the *reference check disclaimer form*. If you do not currently have one, you may wish to consider developing and implementing use of this simple document. The disclaimer is read, signed and dated by the applicant, then sent to

their references, granting them permission to speak freely about the applicant's employment with their firm. (This article's author will provide a sample of this form upon request.)

The reality is that getting at competence--or true job suitability--can be difficult using the procedures we've reviewed so far. That's simply because most traditional hiring practices and the conclusions drawn from the candidates' education, experience, interviews, and reference or background checks tend to be highly subjective in nature. If you're human, you're naturally subjective--seeing things based on who you are, your own experiences, and your perceptions of others.

Adding objective information to the information mix and resulting conclusions. That's why many organizations have enlisted the help of *ability composite testing*. Instruments or test batteries designed to measure a variety of mental aptitudes and personality dimensions as they relate to job performance have been utilized by savvy business people for decades. These instruments are produced by dozens of different companies, many with their own specialties and normative databases or success benchmarks.

Dr. Laurence Peter, author of the Peter Principle states that “. . . testing should not be used as a substitute for judgment, but it can provide a measure of objectivity.” And, it is objectivity that is often the missing component of an ineffective hiring process.

A Michigan firm, HR Strategies, found that employers who incorporated testing instruments into their candidate information mix were satisfied with their professional and managerial selection results 62.9% of the time. That compared to a mere 37.1% satisfaction rate for those who did not use formalized procedures including testing instruments.

Other studies have found corroborating results, including one conducted by Dr. John Hunter of MSU. Hunter's work concluded that ability composite testing added a 28% improvement over pure luck in his study efforts to predict behavior. By comparison, references, when obtained, added a 7% improvement, and interviews, perhaps somewhat surprisingly to many, only 2%.

When used properly as a one more tool in your information mix, testing instruments can provide management with in-depth knowledge of a candidate's strengths and weaknesses not easily discernable through interviews, reference checks, education, or experience. And while they won't tell you if an accountant can balance the books, they will tell you whether they can sit still, concentrating long enough to make the effort.

The result using of using testing instruments is *higher level management intelligence*, affording you the opportunity to not only predict employee performance but to enhance it by using these same analyses to guide the training, coaching, and proper management of your employees.

Mark Peterson is the founder of Mark Peterson and Associates LLC, a Verona, WI, firm providing its clients with testing instruments and related consulting. For additional information phone 608-575-2470 or email mark@petersonandassociates.com

***"It is easier to go down a hill than up,
but the view is from the top."***

You Gotta Have Heart in Sales

Jacqui Sakowski

It has long been my view that it doesn't matter how good your sales skills and sales processes are if you're not party to the negotiations. In my recently published book, *The HEART of Selling*, I share my insights into how to become a sales professional with whom others wish to do business by displaying honor, enthusiasm, accountability, resolve and trust.

When you become a sales professional with whom others wish to do business, doors open to you more easily, more often and more profitably. Here are some tips on improving your professionalism.

Extract from Honor -- Know Your Clients

In every meeting and conversation, make every effort to learn more from your client than simply about the area of their life or business that specifically affects you. You need more than an order from your interactions. You need to build a long-term relationship which provides regular benefits to all the parties involved. Think bigger than today's order: think bigger than this week's, this month's or even this year's sales goal. Think about building a relationship that will bring benefit to your client and you over a lifetime.

Extract from Trust -- Say What You Do and Do What You Say

One of the most powerful ways we gain and retain the trust of our clients is by keeping our word. Say what you will do and do it. Say when you will do it and do it at that time. I know that's just every day common sense, so I pose this question: If it's common sense, why do so many sales professionals not do it? Often, it's because they so want to meet the needs of their clients that they agree to everything that is asked of them without first checking to make sure it's actually doable. That is not smart. It is one certain way to screw up a sales relationship. If you overpromise and underdeliver, your clients will not care that you tried--they will care that you failed.

Jacqui Sakowski was a featured speaker at the ALC's 2004 Annual Conference. She has

worked in sales for more than two decades across four continents. She is a guest instructor with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Business. Her new book, The HEART of Selling, may be ordered online at www.theheartofselling.com or by calling toll free 888-670-2665. To ask Jacqui a question she may answer in a future article, email her at Jacqui@sakowskiconsulting.com.

***"Only those who risk going too far will ever know
how far they can go."***

ED Report

Bob McLean, CAE

Your new Board of Directors and committee chairs have been hard at work since the annual conference in June. The conference was a seminal moment for the ALC. With the total number of members doubling since January of this year, we had were enough interested, capable individuals interested in leading the group that board members didn't have to wear two or three hats--as board members, committee chairs and committee members.

During a series of teleconferences the board has continued to review a strategic plan first developed in January. The committee chairs has also submitted their goals and objectives for the coming year--ensuring that they are working and in a focused direction for the benefit of the entire association. This new e-newsletter is but one small example of the resulting activities.

Membership growth remains the association's highest priority. To help achieve that goal the Membership Committee has begun contacting key prospects and revising membership recruitment materials. The PR Committee is also supporting this effort, spreading the word about the ALC to the many companies that still do not even know the ALC exists. And the Marketing Committee is working on several projects, in one case partnering with Membership and several board members to host a booth and a reception at the ATA's Annual Conference.

This is just a snapshot of what only a few of the committees are doing to help support the ALC. You'll hear more about committee activities in future issues of the *Link*.

If you'd like to take an active role in the ALC's future there are still plenty of opportunities for participating in any of the committees. Please contact me by email to learn how to get involved (bmclean@alcus.org).

Finally, the ALC has reached tentative agreement with a hotel in Pasadena, CA for the 2005 conference. The event will be held in June. Look for details on the ALC website.

*"There is no such thing in anyone's life
as an unimportant day."*

NVTC Update

Bob McLean, Executive Director

Members who attended the 2004 Annual Conference in June heard about new opportunities for submitting proposals for projects with the federal government. Recently we received updated information on the status of the contracts.

Federal agencies seeking translation and interpretation services obtain help identifying qualified companies through the National Virtual Translation Center. The NVTC was established by an act of Congress in February 2003 to provide timely and accurate translations of foreign intelligence for all elements of the intelligence community.

The NVTC's goal is to augment existing government translation capabilities by doing the following:

- * acting as a clearinghouse for facilitating interagency use of translators;
- * partnering with elements of the U.S. Government, academia, and private industry to identify translator resources and engage their services;
- * building a nationwide team of highly qualified, motivated linguists and translators, connected virtually to our program Office in Washington, D.C.;
- * applying state-of-the-art technology to maximize translator efficiency.

For its customers, which include federal government, military and intelligence agencies, the NVTC is developing a shared database that contains up-to-date information on available certified translators, access to an ever-increasing pool of translation resources and help finding the right translators with the right skills at the right time.

NVTC Executive Director Everette Jordan moderated a panel on government contracting opportunities during the conference. In June he reported that many government agencies have significant backlogs of translation work. Because of limited internal resources, these agencies must seek the help of private sector firms, and have done so through the NVTC.

Companies that want to bid on these federal projects must be listed on the General Services Administration (GSA) schedule of approved vendors. As of October 1 there

were 11 ALC members who had notified headquarters that they were on the GSA schedule. GSA approval is a fairly lengthy process that can take several months and many staff hours to complete. Jordan suggests that firms yet to get on the GSA schedule partner with those that are. (The Members Only website is the perfect place to look for a partner.) In October the ALC sent an updated list of its member companies that are on the GSA schedule to the NVTC.

After several months of working to clarify the projects and the resources need, the NVTC sent an approved statement of work to the GSA, along with all other documentation required to proceed. However, because the federal fiscal year ended at about the same time as GSA received the statement of work, there may be a substantial backlog of contracts now being processed.

The next step will be for GSA to conduct its internal process, after which they will issue information to prospective bidders. It is impossible to accurately predict when that might occur; however, he stressed that the NVTC remains in need of help and said he would push for completion of the contracting process as quickly as possible.

For additional information on federal contracting you can visit the following website:

- * NVTC (www.nvtc.gov), for information on the services it offers federal agencies, branches of the military and those entities in the intelligence field;

- * GSA (www.gsa.org), for information on the federal contracting process and for an application to get on the GSA list of approved vendors;

- * FedBizOpps.gov is the single government point-of-entry (GPE) for Federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps via the Internet. Through one portal, commercial vendors seeking Federal markets for their products and services can search, monitor and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire Federal contracting community.

- * the ALC's Members Only website (www.alcus.org/forum/), to find organizations with which to partner on federal and other projects.

"It's so simple to be wise. Just think of something stupid to say and then don't say it."

Resources for Company Owners

Looking for ideas that will help you run your business more effectively. Check out StartupJournal.com, The Wall Street Journal's free site for entrepreneurs. StartupJournal has articles to help you create a business plan, research potential market opportunities and stay on top of the news and trends that are vital to your business interests. It's the perfect resource for anyone looking to start or buy a business or franchise.

Here are summaries of some recent articles. Follow the links to read the entire article, or visit www.startupjournal.com for many more articles.

Selling a Business: Passing the Torch Requires Preparation

By Tara Siegel Bernard

There are a variety of things startup owners should do to choreograph a smooth exit. Many consultants advise starting the process about five years in advance.

<http://www.startupjournal.com/runbusiness/selling/20040928-bernard.html>

Businesses Must Comply With Overtime-Pay Rules

Act now: The deadline looms for new overtime-wage regulations established by the Department of Labor earlier this year. If you're lagging in compliance efforts, costly lawsuits could await.

<http://www.startupjournal.com/runbusiness/hiring/20040823-whitehouse.html>

Can Testing Employees Boost Your Bottom Line?

Multiple choice: Small-business owners have long used psychological tests to screen potential employees. Here's how to use quizzes to coax more from the workers you already have.

<http://www.startupjournal.com/howto/management/20040720-inc.html>

*"A bank is a place that will lend you money,
if you can prove that you don't need it."*

The ALC Link

November 1, 2004

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