MARKET-BASED SHIFT: MULTIPLE ASSESSMENTS PAY DIVIDENDS FOR SELF-STORAGE COMPANY

The SITUATION:

Many small-business owners aspire to grow their businesses, particularly as their product catalogues expand and the market demands new solutions.

However daunting these aspirations may seem, Value Added Associate Stacey Harris has understood the importance of offering new solutions in the arenas of selection and employee development, while also expanding her client base.

But because the use of DISC was so predominant amongst her major clients over the years, Harris said the gradual introduction of other science-based assessments, including motivators and emotional intelligence (EQ), always led to an impasse.

Harris, president of Austin, Texas-based Leadership Resources & Consulting, bought her company five years ago from business partner Ken Bratz and said it was her goal to better integrate motivators into the business.

She knew it would be her ability to open doors at multi-national corporations through the use of multiple assessments that would pay the biggest dividends.

"It's hard to convince a major client to change when something is already working so well," she said of the insistence by clients to solely use DISC. "It's almost like trying to fix something that isn't broken."

With larger clients, the results don't suddenly happen overnight. Harris said these clients tend to be reactive — not proactive — in how they adopt and conduct new corporate strategies.

Typically, their major concerns in choosing to not purchase an assessment, let alone multiple assessments, include:

- Continuous budget constraints
- Unbending executive mindsets
- Only making decisions based on need

The SOLUTION:

But when a new client in the self-storage business came along last year, Harris said an opportunity presented itself to showcase the value of multiple sciences to better understand how an incoming vice president would relate to her team.

"We always position ourselves as authorities in DISC, motivators and EQ," Harris said. "The fact that this company was interested in discovering more about their employees opened up new doors for us."

STACEY HARRIS
Value Added Associate
President, Leadership Resources & Consulting

The RESULTS:

Harris said the self-storage company was won over by the assessments. Employees said they enjoyed how learning more about self and others would translate to greater team productivity and performance.

"It's been really well received," Harris said. "They love DISC and focus a lot on the 'how' piece because that's so practical and useful in the realm of communication. But they really enjoy motivators, or the 'why,' as well. They definitely see the value."

In particular, Harris said the company's senior vice president of human resources, a driven and results-oriented individual, remarked during a group debrief session how her communication style may have been a burden to her team's performance.

"The immediate feedback I received from her team was that, 'You saved us. I don't know if I would've stuck around [without this training],'" Harris said. "She has made some dramatic changes to her leadership style."

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What's NEXT?

Today, the company's general managers have been trained on how to debrief the reports and are rolling out the assessments amongst their teams. The company plans to use assessments as part of future selection and job benchmarking efforts.

Harris said team building and communication have improved greatly at the self-storage company from when she began her turnaround efforts.

"When I walked in the door, I saw a lack of connection amongst the employees," she said. "But now everyone is on the same page, and it's snowballing. They now have a common language in DISC and motivators that everyone can understand."

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