

Transformation of Human Resources Role

Business Need

The Human Resources department at a national communications company was in the midst of transforming their role within the organization. The leadership team recognized the need for Human Resources professionals to partner with their clients on a more strategic level – moving beyond their customary HR role. They knew that given the opportunity, HR could play an instrumental role in helping their clients meet their business goals. HR professionals needed to understand more about their client's business, directly link the implications to human capital and position themselves to direct and recommend actions that would help drive their client's business.

Goal

Provide the HR professionals with the tools and skills to increase their competence and confidence in working strategically with their clients. Equally important was their need to communicate their expertise to gain influence with their clients. Their ability to position themselves as business partners with their clients was critical to their success.

Solution

Beginning in August 2002, Advance Consulting rolled out a two-part training program for more than 200 participants at four locations. The Consultative Approach two-day workshop was presented followed 2-3 months later by Leveraging The Consultative Approach, an advanced consulting skills workshop. Participants were asked to complete an application project between parts 1 and 2 of the training. This allowed them an opportunity to apply skills to their client situations, report results and receive coaching and feedback. Advance Consulting worked with the client to develop an ongoing reinforcement plan which includes:

- Use of Advance Consulting's online reinforcement tools and activities
- Formation of participant peer teams to provide ongoing support and development
- Ongoing executive sponsorship which includes regular discussions at staff meeting and HR forum events.

Results

Since the training began, the company has seen results in the following areas:

- An increase of between 19% and 49% in participant's overall competencies. Specifically in their ability to present their expertise, question thoroughly and listen, determine a strategy for partnering in conflict, effectively manage client interactions and develop business partner relationships.
- Participant feedback - participants have cited their increased ability to influence their clients, share their expertise and apply a consulting process to sell recommendations and gain agreement.
- Clients have noticed the difference and have acknowledged Human Resources for their contribution to meeting business goals. As one client told their HR business partners: "Our special thanks and congratulations to all of you that worked directly or indirectly to meet this incredible target!! We know that without our CALA expertise, dedication and effort it would not have happened. Congratulations!"

The company continues to apply the skills learned through the Advance Consulting training and for ongoing reinforcement and development.