

# Better Business Bytes

Experts answering questions to help grow your business.



**It's *who* you know that matters, especially when it comes to consultants**

By Judy Zimmer, SALO LLC

## **Q. Consultants seem like a natural fit for large companies. How can a small company justify the cost?**

More and more small companies are utilizing the services of consultants because they are able to bring in a consultant for a short term project. Most consultants bring a broad range of experience that is a tremendous advantage to a small company who could not afford to add staff with the credentials and background that a consultant may have. Smaller firms can also cut costs by requesting a consultant who can work on a part time basis.

## **Q. What is the best way to maximize a contractor when they come on board for a project?**

Employers today are under the gun to meet tight deadlines and stay within budget. The best consultants in the market are up for the challenge. Be clear with expectations and set up a preferred system for updates. Make sure your consultant has multiple projects to work on and the resources to get at the information they need. Consultants add value by consolidating processes, maximizing systems and reducing redundancy.

## **Q. It seems that the shortage of finance and accounting professionals isn't going away anytime soon.**

In SALO's most recent survey of finance staffing issues in the Twin Cities, the SALO Forecast paints a startling picture of what recruiters and hiring managers will face in finding, attracting, recruiting and retaining qualified finance professionals:

- Nearly 40% of participants say a shortage is imminent this year, with mid-level professionals predicted to be in shortest supply
- Business growth and a short supply of qualified talent contribute to the overall shortage, which is expected to continue through 2014.
- The talent shortage is creating drain and burn-out of existing staff—a situation that can only lead to reduced ability to meet aggressive business goals.

Using contract help as part of a company's business strategy makes sense in the short and long term.



The MRCC B2B group provides information in a different area of expertise each issue of the Business Briefing. Judy Zimmer is a consultant advocate with SALO, a local firm specializing in accounting and finance professionals for interim projects and direct hire positions. **For more information about hiring a consultant,** contact Judy at [judyzimmer@saloproject.com](mailto:judyzimmer@saloproject.com). All published articles in this column will be archived on the B2B page of the MRCC website.

**If you have a question for the B2B group, please email it to [b2b@minneapolischamber.org](mailto:b2b@minneapolischamber.org).** You will receive an email reply by the appropriate expert within 5 business days. Selected questions may appear in future issues of the "Business Briefing" magazine.