

Preston Leadership Drives Growth at Miles Technologies by Developing Leadership Proficiency beyond the C-suite.

Advancements to the selection process yield higher quality candidates to match heavy demand.

Situation Summary

Miles Technologies, a leading provider of technology-based business solutions with an aggressive growth strategy, was challenged by a lack of leadership capability beyond its senior team. They were looking for an improved selection process to reduce costs associated with turnover.

The objective was two-fold: a) quickly build company-specific leadership skills in key managers; and b) develop a productive staffing process that would yield high quality new hires – all without significant disruption to their daily operations.

The Solution: An individualized coaching program was delivered in twelve 1-hour sessions over a six-month time-frame. Targeted pre-screening tests were designed using a post-validation element that produced higher quality candidates.

The Results: 50% of the coaching program participants were promoted to more senior roles within 60 days of the conclusion of the program. Staffing matched demand and turnover during the first 90 days was reduced by an average of 30%.

Customer Profile

Founded in 1997, Miles Technologies provides customized IT hardware and software solutions, media relations, PR services and website design. Its exponential growth has earned it numerous awards and industry recognition in the Mid-Atlantic region. The majority of its employees are software developers, IT professionals, customer support and sales representatives. Its slogan, "You Request. We Respond. It Gets Done!" reflects the company's fast-paced, client-focused culture where resourcefulness, tenacity and exceptional customer service are rewarded.



Customer Profile

Miles Technologies is a provider of advanced business systems integration, computer forensics, information security, media relations and website development. Named to Deloitte's *Fast 50* (4 years) and *South Jersey's Fifty Fastest Growing Companies* list in 2008. 1,800 clients and 115 employees.

Objectives

Expand leadership capability to meet the demands of rapid revenue growth and geographical expansion. Address specific skill gaps in key individuals without significant disruption to daily operations. Improve new hire selection decisions.

Solution

Individual coaching in 1-hr. time slots spread over six months

- Performance Management
- Interviewing and Selection
- Team Building
- Time Management
- 360-Feedback Surveys

Customized pre-hire testing

- Post-validated profiles
- Interview training

Benefits

- Leadership strength
- Lower turnover
- Better hiring decisions

A Detailed View

Context

Founder/CEO Chris Miles and COO John Bialous had promoted software developers, IT professionals and sales leaders to managerial roles but were still forced to manage staff and handle routine employee issues directly. An exceptionally flat organizational structure worked well until the company reached a critical mass of 80 employees, which then stretched the senior executives beyond a sustainable framework for efficiency and productivity.

Recruitment challenges, employee relations issues and competitive pressures highlighted the need for more efficient staffing, leadership scalability and a more reliable talent retention strategy. An unstructured new hire selection process had resulted in an undesirable turnover rate, high costs, personnel shortages and morale issues.

Objectives

Preston Leadership was asked to identify and develop a highly effective second tier of business leadership while laying the groundwork for a future leadership pipeline, create a professional development program that would bolster talent retention, generate a larger and higher quality applicant pool, improve selection decisions, and provide senior-level HR consultation as-needed.

Finding the Right Partner

Preston Leadership's experience in HR was particularly attractive to Miles Technologies. Individual customization and coaching delivered on-site over six months in convenient, 1-hour sessions became a cornerstone of the client's decision to select Preston Leadership. The development of a client-specific success profile for use as a post-validated selection tool, (which they then owned), gave Miles Technologies assurances that they did not receive from competing providers.

Solution

Leadership Development Coaching Process

Senior leaders were interviewed to document each coaching participant's strengths, developmental objectives and corporate goals. A DiSC® leadership behavioral style assessment was then administered. The resulting information was used to create a custom syllabus for each participant, which was then shared with all stakeholders for coordination and buy-in.

One-hour sessions were held at the client's office on a semi-monthly basis over six months, which provided numerous opportunities for relevant discussion, application and practice. Participants were expected to complete outside reading assignments and other preparation totaling not more than 2 additional hours per month. The coaches were accessible to each participant between sessions on an unlimited basis throughout the program. Formal monthly status reports were provided to all stakeholders.

"Working with Preston Leadership has been very instrumental in providing perspective - and learning what it takes to be an effective leader. This experience has truly made me a better leader. The curriculum was clear and concise. My coach's wisdom and his ability to understand my unique situation really helped me to advance my career and my understanding of leadership. I would recommend Preston Leadership to any company looking to develop great leaders."

John Politsky
Director, IT Client Services

Pre-Hire Testing Based on a Company-Specific Success Profile

Preston Leadership selected Brainbench™ to supply pre-hire tests designed to identify success in a variety of specific job titles at Miles Technologies. These online tests were also administered to current employees having at least 1 year of tenure and deemed to be exemplary performers by management. From this data, a success profile was built and used as a validation tool from which to compare all future applicants' results.

The company's internal recruiter was trained to administer the tests and analyze the results against the success profile. Hiring managers were also trained on targeted selection interviewing techniques, provided with a list of interview questions, and taught how to best evaluate Brainbench™ test results.

A positive correlation between high scores on the Brainbench™ tests and success in the first six months on the job was uncovered quickly. By continually adding test scores from successful new hires to the success profile, the profile itself continues to get more "intelligent". Turnover (all reasons) decreased by 30% in the first nine months of the program.

Evaluation

Results and Benefits

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Leadership Development Coaching program, two 360-degree surveys were administered, one at the onset and the second 6 months later. On the second survey, respondents reported higher satisfaction with their managers, stronger communication skills and general enthusiasm for the positive changes in behavior and style that they experienced. The senior leadership team relayed similarly positive feedback as well, and as a result promoted several participants to positions of higher responsibility within months of the conclusion of the first phase of the program.

Pre-hire evaluative testing also produced positive results. Turnover (all reasons) has decreased by 30% since the beginning of the program. Average time to hire has also been reduced - from 30 to 20 days (a 33% improvement).

Customer Quote

"Wow. Preston Leadership has done a very good job. We do believe strongly in developing the future leadership of the company and we are excited to see this progress."

Chris Miles, Founder and CEO
Miles Technologies

For More Information

For more information about Miles Technologies' products and services, call Chris Miles at (800) 496-8001 or visit <http://www.milestechnologies.com>

For more information, call Alan Preston at (877) 326-7770 or email us at info@prestonleadership.com

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