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American Staffing Association



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Motivate Your Sales Force



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president and COO
Elwood Staffing
Services Inc.

A motivated, effective sales force is key to finding potential markets and clients for ASA board member John Elwood. And in difficult times, everyone who works for the company is part of the sales force. “We have a mentality that everyone has some role in selling because selling is the lifeblood,” says Elwood.

Right now the company, which was named to the Inc. 5,000 in 2008, is focused on diversifying its business into new markets. Daily sales calls with the entire sales team “keep it top of mind that we are a selling organization,” says Elwood. Each employee talks about what they’re doing and who they’re meeting with. It provides an accountability, but it also creates good news.

“We want people who have success stories to be motivators,” he says. “They learn from each other and that triggers a momentum.”

The good news from each meeting is then compiled for a daily e-mail blast. Big successes aren’t always easy to come by, so creating shorter, incremental goals helps to keep the sales staff focused and challenged, says Elwood.

To keep in touch with clients’ needs, the company created Operation Bear Hug. The purpose is “to wrap our arms around customers and say what do you like about us, what do you hate about us. It’s just staying close to the client,” says Elwood. The idea is not to make assumptions about the relationship. “It teaches us something that we all ought to know.”

In addition, Elwood says that employees with ASA certification have an advantage in an increasingly crowded field. “My personal belief is that certification does help you to have some ability to stand out. It gives clients confidence that the staffing industry is a professional group of people.”

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