

Fercho Joins SSP

SSP is pleased to announce that Brad Fercho has joined SSP as a Senior Consultant in the St. Louis office. Fercho brings extensive experience in healthcare and entrepreneurial environments. Most recently, he was Executive Vice President with Quick Study Radiology, a technology driven services start-up focused on information management in radiology funded by venture capital firms. Previously, Fercho spent seventeen years with Mallinckrodt, Inc. in sales and management roles culminating in the position of Group President for the company's \$800 million Imaging Division.

"I'm thrilled with the opportunity to be with SSP," says Fercho. "This is an organization of talented and committed people focused on helping organizations meet the complex challenges of managing talent in today's competitive business climate."

Fercho also founded a consulting practice addressing the needs of small companies, including business plan development and providing operational oversight for emerging and existing organizations. His experience in raising capital, financial modeling and developing and implementing small business strategies will benefit both executives in transition and the leadership of emerging companies.

"Brad Fercho is a highly respected, accomplished executive," says Kevin Pallardy, a Partner in SSP. "We are excited to have him on our team."

Coach's Corner: Harriett Sinclair



Harriett, what is your primary role at SSP? I see my role as a coach and trainer who provides tools and techniques for life-long career management to SSP clients.

What is your previous professional experience? I have many years of sales and training experience for multi-national organizations.

What attracted you to SSP? I was attracted to SSP for two main reasons. First, the professional level and friendliness of the staff and secondly, the individualized and customized approach to service delivery.

What is the greatest benefit or value that you provide your clients? The greatest benefit is that I ignite the passion for continuous learning in the area of workplace success and career management for the persons with whom I work.

What do you enjoy most about your role? It is never boring!

What is the most important advice you give your clients? Keep your sense of humor!

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SSP *Creating Shared Success*

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 Partners

Route to:

The Constant "C" of Change

Change is constant. We know that, and it is particularly true in business. The "sea changes" of the past year, however have irreversibly altered the business landscape as we have known it.

Continued economic uncertainty and the corporate upheaval of 2002 have wreaked havoc on American companies. Innocent people were victims of the wake of the Enron and WorldCom scandals, and the fallout continues.

The past year left its scars on St. Louis as well. American Airlines reduced flights and jobs. Firms shed technology jobs and employees as the economy limited corporate investment in new technology platforms and projects.

As many of St. Louis' major corporations have increased their global reach, they also suffer the effects of international influences. Problems at these companies may create a ripple effect throughout their supplier communities as well, affecting many more businesses and their employees.

From our perspective, the fast-paced marketplace and Wall Street's scrutiny of corporate strategies and successes have resulted in a free-market mentality that has transformed the workplace. The relationships between companies, their employees, and their shareholders are radically different than the environment we've previously experienced.



The "new world of work" isn't simply an outgrowth of last year's corporate and economic challenges. But perhaps the past year simply spotlighted more extreme growing pains in the ongoing evolution of the working world.

Professionals today are struggling with the loss of job security and stability brought on by the free-market system. Many professionals entered corporate America believing that they would work for one company throughout their careers, and now their lives are rocked by the loss of both their jobs as well as their identity associated with their companies.

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SSP Opens St. Louis Office

SSP has opened its first office outside of Illinois by creating SSP – St. Louis, LLC. Led by Partner, Kevin Pallardy, the office services many of St. Louis' top corporations with high-quality executive coaching, career management and transition services. "Kevin and SSP-St. Louis share our transition coaching approach, marked by a focus on highly personalized coaching versus a standardized search process," says SSP-Chicago Partner Jay Scherer.

Pallardy embraces the firm's "coaching continuum" philosophy and the Q5 Framework. "Today, many career management firms are program-driven and have reduced client access to quality coaching. SSP knows that most firms have good content, but it is the ongoing accessibility to top-caliber coaching that makes the difference for our clients."

What Pallardy finds most rewarding about his role as coach and career consultant is "seeing the impact on what you do,

not only on a professional's career, but on his or her personal growth and development." He takes a holistic approach to the transition process, recognizing the impact is on both the individuals and also their families. "It's all part of getting the person in transition balanced in all aspects of his or her life."



A St. Louis native, Pallardy brings experience from a human resources and management career with Emerson Electric, General Dynamics, United Technologies and Citicorp. Prior to SSP, Pallardy was Managing Partner with another career management firm in St. Louis.

Pallardy's teammate in the SSP – St. Louis office is Crys Newsom, client services manager, who has more than 20 years experience in management and leadership roles with Mallinckrodt, Inc. One of her key areas of expertise is corporate re-engineering, and like Pallardy, she is enthusiastic about working with the SSP career management processes.

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“People don’t really want to change or know how to make changes to adapt to the new reality of career dynamics,” comments SSP Partner Jay Scherer. “Everyone is over-reacting to what’s happening in the marketplace – except in the way we manage our careers. People are doing the same things and hoping that the pendulum of workplace security will swing back to the old days.”

The reality today is that few people can expect lifetime employment, explains Paul Schneider of SSP. “We need to look back at history and realize that lifetime employment hasn’t been the standard. We’re simply not going to get it anymore.”

“For the foreseeable future, we should be prepared for more free-market impact on our careers,” says Scherer. “Our workplaces are not very stable, so our careers will not be stable.”

The free-market impact on the workplace is evidenced by a variety of factors, including: more alternate work arrangements, such as telecommuting and job-sharing; more pay for performance; more turnover; more career-management tools; and more job-posting systems, both within organizations and on the Internet.

Loyalty and security have been redefined in the employment equation. Most people in the workforce were raised to believe that loyalty to the company is the most valuable quality an employee brings to the workplace.

“A valuable employee must produce results for an employer, but must also continue to explore his or her development both inside and outside the company. It is just as important to foster loyalty to one’s career,” says SSP’s Kevin Pallardy.

Commitment is now the key concept. “People have been overly focused on commitment to their companies, and not enough to themselves,” explains Scherer. “Now, loyalty and long-term commitment to one company is not as valued in the marketplace. You should work hard, be valuable to your company, but more importantly, create value for yourself. Keep up with the marketplace, and continue your education. What is rewarded today in the marketplace is diversity of expertise and experience.”

Schneider agrees that commitment is in question, especially among younger workers. They are more willing to commit to three to five years at a company, rather than a lifetime commitment.

For the relationship between employer and employee to be successful, a balance must exist between employer and employee needs. Loyalty to the company and employment security have been important aspects of the employment equation. But if that equation falls out of balance, the relationship won’t survive. “Security comes from the employee’s needs, and the company’s ability to meet those needs,” Scherer explains. “The big change is that now security flows from the employee, not the company.”

SSP’s Q5 Framework helps individual clients assess career realities and ensures that their success is balanced with the success of their organizations.

The new work equation is unfamiliar territory for most people. “It’s like a new frontier – there aren’t any road maps or models for dealing with the new workplace and accelerating uncertainties,” says Scherer. “People are battling their fear of the unknown and risk-taking.” The same is true of business leaders who are trying to manage in new, untested, fast-paced marketplaces.

“Wall Street doesn’t give much time for turnarounds. It wants to see changes and results much faster. The market has changed, but people

have not,” Scherer comments. “Individuals are having much more difficulty making changes in their career strategies. Workers are not yet comfortable with their new role and taking greater responsibility for their workplace success.”

Everyone needs to assess their current work situation and try to understand the realities of their business and their workplace. Assessment and role realignment should be done regularly by individuals as well as companies. “Because there are no models, you will have to make your own map. Look for the gaps between what the organization needs and what you can offer, and develop a plan that focuses on closing the gaps.”

Taking that first step toward taking control of your career and your workplace success isn’t easy, the SSP Partners

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It All Starts With Hiring the Right Person

It all starts with hiring the right person. It is such a simple statement. Some would say it is obvious. But it is one of the most challenging aspects in business. Bad hiring decisions live in every organization and no amount of training or special treatment by management can make up for a bad hire. According to Gerald Graham, Dean of the W. Barton School of Business at Wichita State University, “Employee selection is so crucial that nothing else, not leadership, not team building, not training, not pay incentives, not total quality management can overcome poor hiring decisions.”

The hiring step is critical in building any type of organization. Often, too little time or thought is given to the hiring process. In other organizations, elaborate interview processes are developed to get the right “read” on a candidate. Too often, the organization does a great job in evaluating the technical skills and experience of a candidate but becomes shocked that the individual does not “fit” with the job or the organization. The result is that the company and individual will spend months and maybe even years trying to grind a square peg to fit into a round hole. The employee is miserable, the organization is disappointed and the cost of turnover and retraining is significant.

SSP assists organizations in developing hiring processes and implementing assessment systems that may significantly improve the odds of hiring the right people. We work with a broad range of aptitude, personality, behavior and integrity assessments. Some of the most popular assessments are:

- The *Job Analysis Expert (JAX)* provides an in-depth job analysis highlighting the most important job related behaviors required for successful performance in a position. *JAX* provides a basis for creating a more accurate fit between an employee and his or her job, making each new hire more productive in less time.
- *Proception2*, a behavioral assessment measures key dimensions of an individual’s behavior in a business environment, including primary behaviors,

preferred work environment, strengths related to the work environment, strengths to the team, personal performance motivators and personal growth suggestions. *Proception2* fits nicely with the *Job Analysis Expert* to identify how closely an individual’s natural behaviors in a work environment match the behaviors required for success in a defined position.

- *The Assess System* measures intellectual abilities such as critical thinking, abstract reasoning, verbal comprehension and mathematics, as well as personality characteristics such as thinking, working and relating.

In addition, SSP applies a process, *The Q5 Framework*, that develops the skills of managers in interviewing and evaluating candidates, not only on technical skills and experience, but also to identify the candidate whose personal needs, talents and skills best align with the position and the organization’s needs and offer. Key characteristics of the *Q5 Framework* include:

- Simultaneously helping to recruit (sell) and select people aligned with the requirements of the organization.
- A clear methodology that can be implemented in a manner consistent with the mission/values of an organization.
- Allowing for individual differences in interviewing approaches that can capitalize on the strengths of each interviewer in bringing critical talent into an organization.
- Compliance with legal requirements related to employment interviewing.

It all starts with hiring the right person. For more information on SSP’s assessment and selection services contact Kevin Pallardy at kpallardy@sspcorp.net or call 314-542-2121.

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agree. Yet it doesn’t have to be a monumental or dramatic action. “Take one step, make one behavior change, and see what happens,” says Scherer. “Then build your plan upon your direction and continue to move forward.”

Managing your career necessitates knowing yourself. SSP helps professionals assess and focus on career management through the Me, Inc. assessment. The Me, Inc. tool is a starting point for professionals in transition to recognize career strengths and needs, develop a career plan, and repo-

sition and repackage themselves for successful new roles. “Focus on the ‘Me’ side of the employment equation,” Scherer advises. “Don’t worry about the company side first. You have to identify and meet your needs. Begin setting your plan, and then adjust it based on market reality.”

“Years ago, when the economy was stable, we would have blips in the economy and the job market, but we’d get through,” says Schneider. “Now, in this fast-paced environment, responsibility is on the individual to manage his or her career and success in the company or workplace.”