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PLOTKIN GROUP CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Founded in 1968, Carlsbad consulting firm pioneered employee screening and assessment

CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA—The Plotkin Group, a leader in employee screening and assessments, is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Founded on March 11, 1968, the firm pioneered the then-fledgling practice of systematic testing for employee hiring, promotion and training.

A former rocket scientist for TRW, company founder Hank Plotkin applied science and technology to a business process that is often emotional and done in a matter of minutes. But “gut instinct” is not the best way to acquire a company’s most valuable assets—its employees. Plotkin became an evangelist for employee aptitude testing, demonstrating that a thoughtful, measured approach to employee hiring pays dividends in the long run.

Now operated by Hank’s son, Jim, The Plotkin Group is recognized throughout the U.S. and Canada as one of the most experienced in the human resources management industry. Along the way, Hank played a key role in taking employee assessments from being regarded with suspicion, having minority bias and even as illegal, to not only become a respected component of employee hiring, but a necessary one.

“Human resource assessment tools are cost effective; used systematically, they not only pay for themselves, they can boost the bottom line,” Jim Plotkin said. “We’ve shown that these tools can reduce the employee turnover rate and increase one’s return on investment through the hiring and retention of higher quality employees.”

Employee turnover costs are roughly 150 percent of an employee’s salary, according to a recent study by Workforce Magazine. By reducing employee turnover, businesses increase their profits.

For example, after implementing the targeted procedures recommended by The Plotkin Group, employee turnover at the Teachers Credit Union in South Bend, Indiana, fell to 18 percent from 45 percent. Similarly, the turnover rate at the Government Employees Credit Union in El Paso, Texas, fell to 12 to 15 percent from the industry norm of roughly 30 percent.

Because of demonstrable results like these, The Plotkin Group became a major player in a number of industries in terms of human resources management as it related to employee hiring, performance management and organizational development. The industries include credit unions, golf clubs, self-storage facilities, movie theaters and cardboard box manufacturers. Companies and industry associations that have relied on its services include Kinkos, Jostens, Stater Brothers, PGA Tour’s Tournament Players Club Network and the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters.

Locally, Club Demonstration Services (a division of Daymon Worldwide), Heritage Golf Group, Iron Mountain and Roel Construction number among the firm's clients.

Under the guidance of Jim Plotkin, a former professional golfer, the company continues to expand, adapting the latest technologies to an age-old process, offering its products through the Internet. This gives clients greater flexibility and control of the testing processes, and it gives them almost instant results. About 95 percent of the firm's products are now offered online.

But it wasn't technology alone that contributed to the firm's success. During his three decades at the helm of the company, Hank wrote more than 400 articles that were published in trade magazines and business newsletters, and he is the author of the book "Building a Winning Team." He also spoke regularly to trade associations and business groups.

"We got most of our new business through referrals, because these tests really worked," Hank Plotkin said. The first time he took one of the tests, which measured intelligence and personality, he was mind boggled. "It nailed me!" he said.

He had a similar experience with several of his friends, who were also business executives. "It was so accurate, it stunned them," he said.

That transformed the focus of his operation from business consulting to employee assessment and training. And in 1991, son Jim left the pro golfing tour to help operate the business, taking over as president in 1995.

Jim brought greater efficiency and automation to the business, increasing its profits, his father said. "Jim's contributions were enormous. "He computerized our office and took us to the Internet. That really gave us a leg up on our competitors."

Nonetheless, Jim Plotkin is not resting on the firm's laurels. He is assembling a larger sales team to take the company to "the next level."

"This is not the easiest sell in the world," he said. "Our industry has grown, but a lot of people still don't get it. It requires a lot of education on the value of employee assessment, and interpreting the results of the tests is not a perfect science.

"But if you see consistent profiles of successful people," he added, "those are the characteristics to look for when hiring and promoting employees, and our products provide that information."

About The Plotkin Group

The Plotkin Group provides human resources consulting services to a broad range of industries, offering employee assessment tools to help employers mitigate labor-related risks. The firm specializes in employee prescreening, performance management and organizational development. Based in Carlsbad, the consulting firm serves a diverse base of clients that range from small start-ups to Fortune 1000 companies in such industries as manufacturing, retail, finance, construction, recreation, transportation, technology and services. For more information, go to www.plotkingroup.com.