



June 2011

Small Business Concerns for 2011

The last week of May I was in Washington DC for the US Chamber's Small Business Summit. Part-Time Pros was one of only 75 small businesses in the US to receive the US Chamber Blue Ribbon Award. I was among some great businesses and honored to be a part of such an energetic group. Small businesses truly are the backbone of this economy; and the free enterprise system will help us get out of the great recession we have lived in since the last quarter of 2008.

While talking to and sharing with other small business owners it was natural that we discuss our thoughts about the economy and what our greatest challenges/concerns were for 2011 and beyond. There was an overwhelming similarity among the concerns felt by businesses that had two employees and sales of three MM and businesses that had 150+ employees and sales exceeding 10 MM. The common concerns were: increasing sales, finding qualified employees, and getting loans to continue to expand services.

I would like to speak on the second concern since it is the nature of our business. Part-Time Pros recently formalized our mission statement: *"to provide the perfect match between client needs, desires and wants with associate's knowledge, skills and abilities."* As a small business owner I know first-hand how painful it is to have to fire an employee, or to lose one with whom you have invested countless hours of training. However, with unemployment hovering at a whopping 9.6%, you might find yourself asking why it is so hard to find the right person for a job. The answer is sobering but simple - quality not quantity.

As Jim Blasingame stated "we may have 17 million people either unemployed or underemployed. Structural unemployment- unqualified for second decade of the 21st century jobs - is our most challenging economic headwind." There is great concern about the applicant pool not producing qualified applicants. So what can we do to change this?

One thing that we have done within Part-Time Pros is to hold applicants accountable. We clearly define our standards and qualifications for becoming an active candidate and if someone does not meet these, they are not processed. It is our philosophy that you have to demand quality and not allow for anything less. We also have a very structured performance-driven culture. We join with each corporate partner to create job descriptions that clearly define expectations and help our clients determine how to best track performance. This allows each client to ascertain when a professional is not meeting expectations and make adjustments to rectify the problem before too much time passes.

For those who have actually hired Part-Time Pros, you also know that I contact each client 30, 60 and 90 days from the start date to check on performance and to ensure that we made a good

match. If there are concerns, they are dealt with directly by me or my recruiters so that each professional can know where he/she stands. If problems are found, the professional has the opportunity to improve or runs the risk of termination. This may sound harsh, but running a small business is very challenging and in order to be successful you have to have a great team moving in the same direction.

As always, I would love to hear from you about your concerns for 2011 as well as ways that you have tried to shift the workforce quality issue.

Have a safe and happy June!

Sincerely,

Carey

"We do more than just fill jobs, we create them"™