

FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO DO THE RIGHT JOB

By Don Horne

To succeed in business, it's all about the people.

Graham Clark, President of Total Power Ltd., watched his company grow from 10 employees in 2000 to more than 60 workers today. Finding the right people to meet the seemingly insatiable demand for the sales and service of emergency generators was the greatest challenge facing Total Power.

"The biggest limiting factor is people. In the last seven years, we've grown five times, and not having the right people available to serve our customers is an opportunity cost," says Graham.

Operating out of Mississauga for more than 40 years, Graham had become frustrated with the investment in time and money being wasted in searching for and hiring the wrong people.

"That was the challenge. Finding the right candidates for the job, the person to do the right job. The cost can be very high with the wrong people.

"When you look at the cost of hiring, training and having coworkers and management devote their time and energy to helping the wrong people, it can add up to tens of thousands of dollars."

Following the 2003 Ontario blackout, Total Power Ltd. saw business go through the roof.

"The blackout raised everybody's awareness (as to the need for backup generation)," says Graham. "We look at it as an insurance package for business continuity."

To meet this exploding demand, Total Power used the normal avenues to look for new hires.



Graham Clark (right), President of Total Power Ltd., knows all too well the inherent value of the right employee for the job.

"We used the traditional head hunting agencies, but we are not suited for the 'one-size-fits-all' approach. That's when we sought out vpi Inc."

It was vpi Inc., located out of Toronto, who met with Total Power Ltd. to discuss what their hiring needs were.

"They discussed what wrong hiring decisions we had made in the past, and offered options for hiring solutions."

Total Power posted the job, then let vpi Inc. do the prescreening of applicants. Vpi Inc. then recommended a few candidates for Total Power to interview.

"They provided a lot of information to back up their recommendations," says Graham. "We had everything we needed to choose the right person."

Following the hiring of the recommended individuals, vpi Inc. then asked Total Power how the prescreening

process had worked for them and what, if any, tweaking was needed.

"One of the key things we were looking for were people who could work under pressure. If the power goes out with one of our clients, there's going to be a loss. We needed personalities who could work under pressure and think on their feet, being able to multi-task and clearly communicate what was happening."

Avoiding a high employee turnover rate, maintaining a high workforce morale and strong customer service are all ingredients to making Total Power a strong competitor in the marketplace.

"It's the people that make the company successful," stresses Graham. "Making the investment in job satisfaction and job security is huge. If you want to succeed, it's all about the people."