

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Insights on the Current Economy
- High Value Talent

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## Understanding & Dealing With the Current Economy

Despite the gloom and doom we witness daily in the Wall Street Journal or hear on the major business news channels, there are sectors of the economy that will weather the economic storm better than others. These are probably (in no particular order) Healthcare and Life Sciences, Academia and Higher Education, Energy & Utilities, CPG firms particularly those offering necessity products and food, Grocer/ Supermarket & Pharmacy chains; Government, particularly the federal government, Technology, particularly that which supports and maintains existing systems, Professional Services such as Accounting and Consulting and Engineering and Construction, especially if the new administration supports the infrastructure projects as promised.

As we have surveyed clients over the past several weeks, most of them are exercising caution going into 2009,

but many anticipate some needs later in the first quarter of 2009 and moving into the second quarter of 2009. Privately-held businesses seem to be weathering the economic downturn a bit better than others, as they are not directly affected by the rise and fall of the stock markets. Additionally, firms with overseas trade or international operations may see an upturn sooner, due to growth corridors in emerging markets.

Organizations always look at these periods as times to re-evaluate talent and look to upgrade their staffs if possible. Consider the fact that despite losses in 401k plans and other retirement accounts, the workforce in the U.S. is aging and many sectors have large segments where succession planning must be considered. So if you are a job seeker, there is no better time to review your resume or CV and update it. Candidates should not shy away from the market

assuming "last in, first out". There is no such thing as "job security" as markets today are too dynamic for any organization to guarantee anything, incumbent or not.

Downsizing and right-sizing are the natural, and sometimes unfortunate occurrences of our industrialized and global economy, but done correctly, should serve to make those organizations better and more profitable in the long-term. Our organization stands prepared to assist those firms attempting to upgrade and reassess their talent pools, as well as assist in directing those impacted by downsizing, to areas where they might be able to refocus their career efforts.

For additional information contact Larry Imely at [limely@paul-lawrence.com](mailto:limely@paul-lawrence.com) or Paul Stefunek at [pstefunek@paul-lawrence.com](mailto:pstefunek@paul-lawrence.com).

## Practice Leader Insights: A Perspective on International Search

Andrew Rafey is a Vice President and Managing Director in the Baltimore/Washington office of **paul-lawrence associates**.

Andy has successfully completed executive searches across a broad functional spectrum which includes, but is not limited to the "C" suite. Industries served include: Information Technology, Security, Professional Services, Government and Defense, Retail, Semiconductors, Financial Services,

Consumer Products, Software and Telecommunications.

Prior to joining **paul-lawrence**, Andy was a member of the Global Technology & Defense Practice of Korn/Ferry International, where his work cut across many industries and functional disciplines. Andy also founded his own retained search firm focused on start-up technology companies, and previously was a Vice President at Gustin Partners, Ltd., a global boutique retained executive search firm, where, for seven years, he brought his wealth of experience

in senior level executive search, management assessment and employee relations. Andy merged his first consulting practice with Gustin Partners in 1995. Prior to Gustin, he was Vice President and Managing Director of the Bartholdi Partners, an international search firm focusing on emerging technology clients.

**paul-lawrence associates** and **highbridge associates** are pleased that Andy is a part of our growing network of consultants both domestically and internationally.



Andrew Rafey

# Spotlight Company: U.S. Steel

While safety remains the top priority at U.S. Steel, the company has been making a greater commitment to another of its core values -- diversity and inclusion. In 2007, the company initiated a training program among its nonunion and new employees.

"It's opening people's minds to things around this topic," said F. David Coleman, general manager of Corporate Diversity and Inclusion for U.S. Steel. Arlene Roane, who leads the Diversity & Inclusion practice for **highbridge associates**, has facilitated classes for over 600 employees at U.S. Steel, including managers and supervisors.

The emphasis on diversity and inclusion is important to the company's quest for talent; according

to Coleman, as much as half of U.S. Steel's work force will be eligible to retire within the next two to four years. The company wants the best new and experienced employees to fill those spots, and realizes the pool of talented individuals is becoming increasingly diverse. Diversity and Inclusion training is seen as an important aspect of the professional development of these future leaders as well.

"Diversity is defined as differences and similarities among individuals and inclusion is putting that understanding to work for the success of the organization," Coleman said. The differences addressed by U. S. Steel include race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, generations/age, length of

service and disabilities. Coleman appreciates the criticality of including and sharing the perceptions of all employees.

To learn more about our diversity and Inclusion efforts with U.S. Steel and others please contact Arlene Roane at [aroane@highbridgeassociates.com](mailto:aroane@highbridgeassociates.com)



**David Coleman**  
General Manager -  
Corporate Diversity

## Recession Proof Your Job in a Slower Economy

*Excerpts from an interview with Frank Skedel and Mark Little—The Plain Dealer, Cleveland Ohio*



**Mark E. Little**

In this slowing economy, no one is immune from layoffs, shutdowns and downsizings. The job market is tight, especially in the housing, real estate or finance fields. There is obviously no sure way to guarantee or "recession proof" your job, but there are some strategies to consider in difficult times like these that can help in your job search, career change or current employment situation.

During a recession, are there some professions that are less vulnerable to job loss? Some industries do remain strong in a weakening economy, according to a report released earlier this year by outplacement specialists Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Among the areas less prone to economic downturns are education, energy, health care and security, the Challenger report said. When attempting a career change during economic downturns, focus on transferring

your current job skills to the more resilient industries.

But remember, hot careers today can become a cold career tomorrow, said Frank Skedel, President of **paul-lawrence associates**, an executive search firm with offices in Hudson.

"If you jump around a significant number of times, that last jump might make you vulnerable. You're going to be the last person in and the first person out in a downturn," he said.

Skedel said his firm advises its clients that the best time to upgrade talent is when others aren't, so the sluggish economy is a good time to search out strong employees who otherwise would be in the greatest demand in normal times.

To protect your job in these challenging economic conditions, it is also a good idea to make yourself as recession-proof as

possible by following a few simple strategies, said Mark Little, Vice President of **paul-lawrence associates**.

Companies, even in a downturn, are always looking for the people who generate revenue, Little said. So if you are a good salesperson, chances are you will always be in demand. Good people can move with different products and services. The same goes for other positions across industry lines.

"Be a contributor, be vocal and make suggestions. Look at cost savings or process improvement. Everyone is challenged to do more with less these days. If you have any great ideas from a business development standpoint or new prospects you can bring in, you become a valuable contributor and companies don't want to lose contributors," he said.

For the article in its entirety please go to [www.paul-lawrence.com/news-articles.shtml](http://www.paul-lawrence.com/news-articles.shtml)



**Frank G. Skedel**

# In a Talent War? Focus on High Value Talent

This year McKinsey released an update of its influential 1997 study on the war for talent. They found that of the over 4500 senior managers and executives surveyed:



- 89% think it is more difficult to attract talented people now than it was three years ago
- 90% think it is now more difficult to retain top talent.

Their update also found that companies doing the best job of managing talent deliver far better results for shareholders. McKinsey reported that finding talent is likely to be the single most important management preoccupation for the balance of the decade and that the global competition for talent may be the single most significant factor affecting their business. In spite of this evidence, an alarming 6 out of 10 respondents indicated that senior managers do not spend enough time

on talent management.

What's high-value talent or HVT? HVT have mastered the critical technical, managerial, and leadership skills that are core requirements and they leverage these skills to successfully navigate challenging situations. HVT perform at or above an expected level of excellence and are already achieving positive returns in productivity, sales, efficiency, or other business metrics. Furthermore, HVT develop those who work for them and expect others to perform at the same high level of achievement.

HVT move quickly into, around and out of organizations, hence it is essential that HVT quickly find their "fit". Their presence and integration into the organization increases its overall skill and performance. Their influence can be especially positive but it is not automatic. HVT have the same multiple effect on organizations when they fail to perform or simply

don't fit. A poorly matched, poorly connected or unhappy HVT can have a disastrous effect on an organization's people and performance.

To learn more about HVT and identification, attraction and retention strategies contact Arlene Roane, SVP Diversity & Inclusion at [aroane@highbridgeassociates.com](mailto:aroane@highbridgeassociates.com) or Frank Skedel, President, at [fskedel@highbridgeassociates.com](mailto:fskedel@highbridgeassociates.com)

Arlene Roane presented this and other concepts at the 2008 Conference Board Diversity Conferences. She will also speak on the topic at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Multicultural Forum on Workplace Diversity being held March 3-4, 2009 at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, MN.

For more information about the conference go to <http://www.stthomas.edu/mcf/>

**“ 89% of senior managers & executives think it is more difficult to attract talented people now than it was three years ago.”**

**- 2008 McKinsey Study**

## Around the Community

**paul~lawrence associates** colleagues are active in their communities by serving on boards and advisory groups. Some of these include:

- Paul Stefunek: Board of Advisors for Jitter Fingers, Responder Technology & QD Technology
- Hank Deaver: Chairman of the North Shore Board of the American Cancer Society and Board Member of the Wilmette Hockey Association
- Mark Little: Membership Committee for Northern Ohio Human Resource Planning Society
- Suzanne Conroy: Member of the HR Advisory Group for the Peer Network at the Pittsburgh Technology Council
- Arlene Roane: Member of the Board at LaRosa's Incorporated and Springer School and Center
- Andy Rafey: Board of Director's of Camp Bauercrest, Inc. and past Board of Advisors and Career Counselor at Middlesex Community College School of Engineering
- Larry Imely: Board Member of the Ohio Board of Myasthenia Gravis Foundation and Advisory Board Member of the Ohio State University Graduate Program for Human Resources and Industrial Relations



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Working in concert, **paul~lawrence associates** and its sister company **highbridge associates** serve as strategic partners with their clients in sourcing, assessing, managing and retaining human capital. The company has built a series of industry-specific practices to support the diverse needs of its clients.

The firm's offices include US locations in **Atlanta, Baltimore-Washington, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, New York, and Sarasota**. International Coverage: **Australia, India and Eastern China**, including **Hong Kong and Shanghai**.

**paul~lawrence associates** and **highbridge associates** work with a select group of partner companies to offer its clients a broader range of services. Our joint venture partners include: **Hunt Partners, Global Lead, and PsyMax Solutions**. We are affiliated with: SHRM, Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP), Pittsburgh Technology Council, University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences, The Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business, Department of Management and Human Resources, BioOhio, and the Northeast Ohio Human Resource Planning Society.



## Welcome To Our Ever Growing List of Clients

