

# “Gaining Understanding and an Appreciation of Others”

## Art Hall, CEO, A&A Contract Services

**A**&A Services is an outsourcing firm that provides contract personnel to the telecommunications industry. The company controls a database of several thousand contract professionals and frequently has as many as 300 people working on projects that last from several weeks to many months. As A&A grew, its owners sought out a consultant who could help leverage individual strengths and further develop team and interpersonal skills.

“We wanted coaching about how to better manage personalities and how we could work together more effectively,” says Art Hall, CEO and co-owner of A&A. “We started working with Turknett Leadership Group and began an executive development process that has proven to be very valuable to both our organization and to our individual managers.”

Under Turknett's lead, A&A's management team addressed issues such as developing better self-understanding, redirecting relationship habits, adopting confidence-building skills, and learning the art of becoming vulnerable. They also learned how to diffuse interpersonal competition and how to recognize individual strengths, weaknesses and personality styles.

“When you have more than one Type A personality who wants to be in charge and have their ideas work, it's important to know how to diffuse competition,” says Art. “Turknett Leadership Group taught us how to ask for ideas instead of just giving our own perspective, how to guide a process instead of forcing it through the organization, and how to compromise instead of everyone wanting things their own way.”

“We learned many lessons,” says Art. “Perhaps, most importantly, we learned to appreciate others and consider their point of view. We learned to step back and take the time to listen to the other person's perspective and place value on it. We became aware that people who are blind sided by their own standpoints, ideas and goals can alienate others without realizing it. Everyone must appreciate the skills and abilities of others. Frequently, there is more than one right answer to a situation, more than one way to do things. We learned that three people can be in a room and all three can be right.”

Several of A&A's key managers participated in Turknett's Executive Development Program, each focusing on different aspects of his or her management style. One A&A manager, for instance, addressed a tendency to micro-manage

issues. By learning to adopt a less controlling, more vulnerable style, this manager began to tap into inner talents that were previously overlooked. And another manager who had very little drive and very little self-confidence learned to acknowledge his talents and strengths and assert his innate leadership ability.

“My coaching sessions were with Bob,” says Art, “and he truly has the ability to get you to say, ‘Hey I do have within me the skills and abilities necessary to accomplish my goals and run a successful business.’ Several of us at A&A are retired corporate employees who are now in second careers in a small business environment. Before, we learned how to implement the *corporate*

cookbook. Now we have to write our own cookbook. You must be able to acknowledge the skills and talents you possess that enable you to get the job done.

For instance, my peers now are former high-level corporate leaders and business owners. I had to learn how to think of myself in this new way in order to communicate effectively with them.

Three years ago, within the corporate structure, I never would have communicated directly with people at this level; in the corporate chain of command, they were several levels higher than I was. Now they are contract employees working for me. Bob taught me how to think of myself not in terms of a corporate ‘pay grade,’ but in terms of the responsibilities I now have and the type of people I now serve. Bob and his team have a tremendous ability to break down barriers that have been created over the years. They know how to open your mind and make you see yourself in new ways.”

In addition to unlocking powerful, new levels of self-discovery for A&A managers, Turknett Leadership Group also inspired a higher level of participation and team work within the A&A organization. “We all agree,” says Art, “that the critical lesson we learned was gaining a greater respect and appreciation for others. This lesson has helped us become more focused on the contributions of others, which has meant all of us achieve more effective results for the organization. Our business is up 81% year over year. There is no doubt

Turknett is playing a major role in the success of our business.”

“The whole Turknett organization is very professional,” adds Art. “They're a wonderful group to work with. And we are all especially appreciative of Bob's commitment and intuitiveness. Just the other day, one of our managers said, ‘The insight Bob has when it comes to understanding people is amazing. He has me pegged to a ‘T.’”

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