



# *Sherpa Strength: The Newsletter of Executive Coaching*

April 2010

## Winning with Collaboration

By Bill Smith

2006 Sherpa Coach of the Year

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There's a lot of value in working together. As an independent coach, I look for opportunities to team up with other Sherpas. I can take on larger projects, work a bigger territory and earn business I'd never see otherwise.

I've teamed up with individual Sherpas, and I have partnered with Sherpa headquarters on client engagements. This collaboration has helped me from both a learning and financial standpoint.

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The first time I collaborated with Sherpa headquarters was for a state-wide chain of retirement communities. Sherpa had a long-term relationship with them, and I was just a few minutes away from their headquarters. I coached two of their directors, and was later asked to coach their corporate Chief Information Officer. Then, the CIO asked me to coach one of her direct reports. What a learning experience . . . to coach both the boss and her subordinate. Coming up, we are going to 'team coach' the entire information systems department, twelve in all. Sherpa HQ got me in the door, and I showed them success. Now, I can work inside the organization to round up new projects that benefit everyone.



Another collaboration was with a national service provider for utility companies. In this case, Sherpa HQ assembled a team of CSC's from Philadelphia to Saint Louis to cover a large contract. I coached a regional manager, a supervisor, a safety officer and a supervisor-in-training. All four had an executive contact and went through the twelve week process. It was gratifying to see two of the four promoted, helping the firm live out their succession plan. Great experience for me. I helped my partner cover a contract and keep a big client happy.

Just a few days back, I heard about a potential coaching engagement for a major healthcare system right here in Columbus, Ohio. I got the Request for Proposal on a Saturday, and saw that it had a Monday deadline. I called Sherpa HQ. We decided who would officially offer the bid, and how we'd split the work, including another CSC in the process. Karl Corbett spent most of his Sunday drafting our proposal. We met Sunday evening along I-71 to hand off the paperwork. I got the proposal in, just under the wire. Neither one of us, working separately, met the criteria for service providers. Together, we had it all covered.

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Working with our "Sherpa mother ship" has been very beneficial for me. You can create real synergy, enhance your learning of the Sherpa process, keep a personal connection to Sherpas at headquarters (yes, Brenda and Judy are still my mentors), gain multi-client engagements and even work with fellow Sherpa graduates. Sherpa HQ benefits the same way I do: taking on larger projects and a bigger territory, building capacity and earning business by partnering. It's been win-win-win, all the way.

For your part, you have to stay in touch with the network. When opportunities come up, you have to know about your partners, and they have to know about you. Stay in the game. Be part of the LinkedIn forum. Get to the conference, and call your graduating classmates every once in a while. It's a good feeling, and it will pay off in many ways. It has for me.

Bill Smith is President and founder of Pinnacle Coaching in Columbus, Ohio. He was honored as the first "Sherpa of the Year" in 2006, and continues a close working relationship with the authors and educators at Sherpa Coaching. He can be reached at (614) 246-1568, or at [pinnacle@columbus.rr.com](mailto:pinnacle@columbus.rr.com).