



Orion Global Talent

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Igniting Power Program Unleashes Blind and Visually Impaired Recruiting Talent

Orion Global Talent is Vermont based executive search and recruiting firm working with a wide range of clients from large global consulting firms to Vermont based manufacturers and healthcare providers. Orion has experienced steady growth and wanted to expand their recruiting and sourcing capabilities and was inspired by Harvard and MIT's edX on-line training model.

Orion owners, Bob Richardson and Jacqueline "Jax" Willey had an idea. Why not modify an on-line program and involve the blind and visually impaired community? After all, these jobs could be done virtually! They took their idea to Fred Jones who heads the State of Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) and together brainstormed the idea. Their concept was to break down the position into tasks and develop a training program to meet Orion's needs that would train to the strengths of the students.

Orion had a long relationship with The Sourcing Institute and its founder Shally Steckerl, recognized as one of the founders of the global sourcing and recruiting movement, who had developed a comprehensive on-line training program. Shally established The Sourcing Institute (TSI) many years earlier to provide training for individuals wanting to become sourcers and/or recruiters and advanced training to those already in the industry. Their on-line program is self-paced consisting of 33 modules. One of the unique aspects of their program is the platform. It was developed to work in a low Internet bandwidth environment. Some of their first students were military members deployed in remote locations with marginal service. These students were preparing themselves for an occupation when they left the military. Bob witnessed the effect of the program first hand when he referred a returning Vermont veteran to TSI. This veteran was a single mom holding down several jobs and was looking for something with better pay, benefits and career advancement. She completed the program and is now on a successful recruiting career path with a large, global aerospace firm.

TSI had previous experience in the visual impaired community. They worked in collaboration with Subhashish Acharya on a program to train individuals who are blind and visually impaired for job

opportunities as part of his graduate project at Harvard University. Project Starfish was established as a result of his project. Orion, DBVI and TSI conferred with Subhashish to learn more about his program and suggestions in putting their program together.

When Orion started speaking with DBVI about the concept, someone immediately came to DBVI's mind. It was Kate Coburn. Kate became visually impaired as a result of a stroke. Professionally, she developed and conducted training programs to help major hospitals and large medical practices make the transition from written to electronic recordkeeping. A few years ago, she had a stroke which left her visually impaired. Not wanting to sit on the sidelines, she yearned to return to the workforce where she could contribute her professional skills in a new endeavor – enter Orion's program. Kate completed TSI's on-line program and modified it to enhance the learning experience of participants. The original 33 on-line modules were reduced to 27 and organized into 3 module units. This formed the core of Orion's 8 week intense structured program. Students completed one module per week independently and participated in a weekly group webinar with an instruction/facilitator. The webinar included a review of the unit material, role-playing, class problem solving and a question and answer segment. To further enhance their learning experience, the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMC) and their Human Resources Department volunteered to provide an on-the-job training opportunity where the students worked an active engagement project and learned aspects of UVMC's six sigma recruiting program.

Now it was time to start the search process for students. Orion and TSI collaborated to come up with the search criteria to use for in looking for candidates for the program. This information was passed along to DBVI counselors in the field who were able to identify potential participants. They discussed the program with prospects and from that they had the first class.

The visual abilities of the class ranged from modest visual impairment to total blindness. To be able to learn and be in a participatory environment, they needed to make sure everyone was able to be on line and participate simultaneously. This meant reviewing each participant's hardware and software capabilities. Jimmy Allen, DBVI's Assistive Technology Coordinator, traveled to each participant's home to make sure everything was ready to go. Further technology adjustments were made as the program started.

Orion decided to run a preliminary pre-program orientation and enlisted Nasreen Bhuta, a graduate of Project Starfish's program and herself totally blind. Nasreen provided an overview of sourcing and recruiting and her perspective on career opportunities. The program was then launched and successfully completed. Of the small initial class, two graduates were hired by Orion and have quickly become acclimated to recruiting and sourcing.



Photo caption:

Igniting Power Program graduation attendees (left to right): Fred Jones, Director of DBVI; Jimmy Allen, DBVI Assistive Technology Coordinator; Melissa Hoellerich, DBVI Counselor; Anne Branesfield, IPP Graduate; Andrew Kranichfeld, IPP Graduate; Melissa Shaw, IPP Graduate; Kate Coburn, Orion Vice President; Taya Tarr, Associate DBVI Counselor; Sheila Reed.

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