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MONEYMAKERS

Five questions with J.P. Magill

Venture aimed at easing human resources chores

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Arch Payne, Bill Bradshaw and J.P. Magill teamed up in 2001 to form Achilles Group, a firm designed to become the human resource department for small and midsize businesses.

Achilles Group lets entrepreneurs focus on running their businesses without having to worry about human resource issues. It's clients include businesses in areas such as engineering, technology, manufacturing, restaurants, hotels, retail, services and construction.

Being entrepreneurs themselves, the three controlling partners believe their experience is a great resource.

Magill talked with Chronicle correspondent Mason Lerner about human resource outsourcing trends.

Q: Why should a small business be interested in what Achilles Group has to offer?

A: What happens is that a small business with 50 to 1000 employees has the same issues as a large company with a large HR department.

They still need the skills that an HR professional can bring to the table. What happens is that unlike a large company, they don't need it all the time. What we're able to do is come and become the HR department on a part-time basis. This way, they get a higher-caliber, more experienced HR professional than they can hire themselves.

Q: What specific services does Achilles Group provide?

A: We do the recruiting. We do the interviewing. We do the hiring. We do the firing. We represent the companies when they are buying employee benefits from their brokers. We build compensation structures and bonus programs. We work with our clients through mergers and acquisitions. We do anything that HR departments do for large companies.

Q: Why is Achilles qualified to do this?

Most of us have been directors or vice presidents for Fortune 500 companies.

A Small company can normally afford somebody who has three to five years of experience. For much less than you pay them, you can get our services. I have 15 years of HR expertise. The last company that I worked for had more than 15,000 employees. We've got a lot more horsepower to draw from than an isolated professional working for a small business.

A: Is the HR outsourcing industry growing?

Actually, yes, it is. What's going to be happening over the next couple years is that the labor market will be tightening up. Getting the right people in HR is going to be more and more difficult. It's going to grow exponentially. Over the last five years it has grown about 200 percent.

Q: Is there anything that separates the Achilles Group from other HR outsourcing services?

A: Normal HR outsourcing deals with administration and paperwork. What makes us different is we focus on the expertise, not just the paper. We also deal with helping the company grow, increasing profit and protecting the company at the same time.



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