

SAA

SHARON ARMSTRONG
AND ASSOCIATES

HR Consulting and Referral Network

LISTEN. CLARIFY. REFER.

SAA Network Consultant of the Month



Dear Colleague,

When I was a kid, I didn't show much imagination when it came to Halloween costumes. I'd simply put on a black skirt, a black leotard, a black sweater, and a black beret ... then I'd tell people I was a beatnik. (This was long before we learned that orange was the new black.)

I was less interested in the costumes, in other words, than I was in the treats. The kids in our neighborhood nowadays, on the other hand, are quite clever when it comes to Halloween costumes. A few years ago, a 12-year-old kid came to our porch dressed in a business suit, carrying a briefcase, and wearing a Richard Nixon mask.

"I am not a crook," he said. "Now give me some candy."

My favorite costume in recent years, however, consisted of two kids in business suits carrying a large, cardboard bank check made out to "Lucky Sweepstakes Winner." It was the Publisher's Clearinghouse Prize Patrol!

I don't like candy as much I used to, so nowadays there are only two kinds of treats that really make me happy.

The first treat is when we're able to please one of our clients by finding exactly the right trainer, consultant, or speaker for their project. That happened several times last month, including some of these "sweet" placements:

- We helped one client find a trainer to give a session on "Executive Presence" at a staff retreat in Chicago
- We found a speaker who addressed a group in the DC government on the topic of "Elevating Your Interpersonal Communication Skills"
- One of our consultants helped a client present a webinar on "Best Practices that Support Compliance through Training" broadcast to a national audience
- Another one of our speakers presented a session on "Positive Psychology" to a group of senior HR leaders in Virginia
- And one of our folks even did a webinar on the topic of networking in Lithuania!

The other big treat for me nowadays is when clients email us to tell how satisfied they

were with the results and how we've made their jobs a little easier. In recent weeks, we've received several gratifying letters like these:

"Sharon, you provide a terrific service and I'm grateful to you. You've just saved me boatloads of time and effort! I can't thank you enough." -- KM

"It's great to be able to find external resources so quickly, just through a few emails." -- KJ

"Thank you for referring one of your network consultants as a speaker for our conference; according to the feedback, she did a fantastic job." -- CF

"I must say I am impressed with your work. If you don't mind me saying so, you are akin to the HR Fairy Godmother." -- JS

Do I mind being called the "HR Fairy Godmother?" Heck, no! In fact, I think I just got a great idea for this year's Halloween costume! (After all, the beatnik outfit is getting a little threadbare, and it's getting harder to fit into clothing I wore when I was 12.)

Meanwhile, here's a Halloween treat for you:

All of our referrals to consultants, trainers, and speakers are absolutely free. If you have an assignment in mind -- but you don't have time to chase down the right person -- please give me a call at 202-333-0644 or email me at Sharon@SharonArmstrongandAssociates.com.

I'll give you the names of three highly-qualified trainers, consultants or speakers who can do the job for you and do it right.

Speaking of highly-qualified consultants, take a moment to check out our consultant-of-the-month, **ILONA BIRENBAUM**.

Sincerely,

Sharon Armstrong

P.S. Since the beginning of the year, we've helped 204 clients find trainers and consultants. Welcome to 51 new subscribers.

ILONA BIRENBAUM, M.A., PCC, is a leadership and organizational consultant/leadership coach with over 20 years of experience and a diverse organizational development background. She is an adjunct professor and coach with American University's School of Public Affairs, Key Executive Leadership Program. Her specialties include leadership coaching, facilitation, change management, leadership assessment and development, action learning, performance management, training, strategic planning, and conflict resolution.

Ilona has significant international and multicultural experience through the work that she has done in Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, and Bolivia. She has worked in many different industries that include petrochemical, technology, consulting, and non-profit. Examples of Ilona's clients include, America Online, Capital One, Towers Watson, Discovery Communications, Rapiscan Systems, Ironshore, Janelia Farm Research Center of the Howard



Hughes Medical Institute, Internal Revenue Service, Securities and Exchange Commission, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, AMTRAK, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Small Business Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of the Navy, Federal Housing Finance Agency, American Institutes for Research, and many others.

As a leadership coach, Ilona offers her clients a practical approach to solving such issues as communication, delegation, teamwork, conflict management, and strategic thinking. Through insightful questions, she helps her clients increase their self-awareness and enhance skills in managing themselves and others. Known for easily building rapport with senior leaders, Ilona combines her psychology, organizational development background, and business experience in working with senior leaders. As an organizational development consultant, Ilona is known for partnering with her clients to solve complex human capital challenges and to develop solutions that will work in the particular client environment.

Ilona has held leadership roles for American Management Systems (AMS) and Watson Wyatt Worldwide. As a Principal with AMS and a Senior Consultant with Towers Watson she led multiple change initiatives which included the design and implementation of performance management systems, introduction of career development frameworks, developing and leading train-the-trainer efforts for major change initiatives, developing and managing leadership development programs within a corporate university, designing and implementing multiple employee surveys, and facilitating hundreds of workshops, training sessions, and meetings.

Ilona has been published by the Washington Business Journal, Association of Training and Development and Washington CEO Magazine. She is a certified facilitator of the Drexler Sibbett Team Performance Model, MBTI, DISC, Lominger's Voices, CCL's 360 Assessments, Hay Group's Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), and is an Action Learning Coach. Ilona obtained her leadership coaching certificate through Georgetown University and holds a Professional Certified Coach Certificate through ICF. Ilona earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Masters of Labor and Industrial Relations from Michigan State University. She is fluent in Russian and enjoys yoga, travel, reading, and spending time with her family.

Call us to learn more about Ilona or the other HR Consultants, OD Specialists, Trainers, Coaches and Keynoters.

If you believe any information in this newsletter will benefit a colleague, please feel free to share it.

See you next month!

Sharon Armstrong

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