

Outsource back office ops to fuel growth, founder says

Four years ago when SolTerra Founder Dixie Speck needed a part-time office manager, she turned to another woman business owner – Essie Escobedo of Office Angels. Dixie knew that finding an office manager to work two days a week during the peak seasons of spring and fall, and just one day a week during summer and winter would be tough. It wasn't the kind of challenge that a company president wants.

For Dixie, advertising the soon-to-be-open position, sifting through stacks of resumes and spending hours interviewing was not attractive. "I was afraid to go through all that, add in the hours of training I would have to do and face the possibility of the person quitting. Having to go through all that – even once – was too much for me to do," she said. "Now, Office Angels handles all of that. So far, we haven't needed a replacement but if we ever do, it won't be my problem to resolve."

When she started SolTerra, Dixie did everything – as most entrepreneurs do in the beginning. It became obvious that hours spent in the company's back office operations were not a good investment of the founder's time. To keep the company on a growth trajectory, she needed to spend more time on selling and customer service.

"Our arrangement with Office Angels is just perfect for us," Dixie said. "We increase the part-time office manager's role during peak seasons and scale back during the slow times. Thanks to Office Angels, we have the same person year-round, which ensures continuity."

Dixie pointed out that having someone outside the company handle the company's confidential information is a plus in her eyes. "Our Angel is privy to a good deal of information confidential to the company," she said. "Frankly, I'd rather have some outside the company with that information than someone inside. With an outsider, there is a lower chance the information will be shared." Dixie added that throughout the relationship with Office Angels, all of her confidential information has stayed that way.

Last year, when SolTerra's office management needs started to track to a full-time position, Dixie was hesitant to make a switch from her Angel to a new, full-time person. "We didn't want to lose her but we knew she couldn't work full-time," she recalled. "I'm probably the only person in America who was relieved when the economy pulled back. We no longer needed a full-time office manager and our great relationship with Office Angels could just rock along."

Dixie was not the only person who appreciates the flexibility of working with Office Angels. For SolTerra's Angel, having a flexible schedule helps a stay-at-home mother keep her project management skills sharp and generate a second income for her family. The SolTerra assignment spans two days a week for five hours each day. That schedule leaves plenty of time for SolTerra's Office Angel to arrive at the office after dropping off her children at school and ends just before the end of the school day. When the situation requires the Angel to stay at home, such as on school holidays or when the children are sick, the Angel does her SolTerra work at home.

"I would absolutely refer other small business owners to Office Angels," Dixie said. "This kind of arrangement only works with great people and Office Angels has plenty of strong professionals to put to work."

About SolTerra

SolTerra Landscape creates distinctive detail in the design, installation and maintenance of residential landscaping and lawns. Catering to the discriminating homeowner, SolTerra customers want their landscapes to reflect their personality and distinguish their homes as a cut-above other homes in their community.

About Office Angels

Office Angels serves small business owners as the exclusive gateway to the at home workforce, a large community of professionals with experience in every facet of business operations. Business owners work with Office Angels secure experienced professionals who can do what needs to be done in finance, marketing, customer service and sales on an "as needed" basis.