



STAFFING *INSIGHT*

A monthly newsletter from International Staffing University,
a division of Seminars By The Sea
Since 1992

Vol. 6 Issue 1

Feb 2007

Welcome to STAFFING *INSIGHT*!

This newsletter was prepared for staffing professionals. If you no longer wish to receive email from us please reply to this e-mail and use the word "remove" in the subject field. Or call toll free 877-473-6732.

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> [Sept. Training Promotion!](#) <<

IN THIS ISSUE

TAKING STOCK OF STAFFING IN 2007

1. Taking STOCK of Staffing in 2007
2. Quiz: Does Your Staffing Firm Have "SOC" Potential?
3. ISU Happenings
4. Staffing Company Owner's Conference & Retreat / August – 2 Days with Cathy Vee celebrating her 30 years in Staffing!

A belated Happy New Year / '07 Success Greetings to You!

2007 started off bittersweet for me.

The "sweet" news included: my business achieving another profitable year; excitement entering my 31st year involved in the staffing industry; "only" (daughter) thriving at Berkeley; 32 year old niece now in cancer remission; personal relationship in good shape; and both my octogenarian parents still alive and healthy.

On the "less than sweet" side, my 84 year old dad John (Giovanni) started from a family of ten children and is now, sadly, down to *three*: himself, his twin brother and younger sister. He lost three siblings over the last six months – most recently, Uncle Vinny (Vincenzo) who died at the age of 88. And to make a bad week even worse for my father, Jonnie (his bird) died and so did the Kentucky Derby equine hero, Barbaro.

For those of you who are dealing with loss, please allow me to share the beautiful verse from my uncle's Memorial Card:

Miss Me -- But Let Me Go (Unknown Author)

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little--but not too long
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me--but let me go.

For this is a journey that we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick of heart
Go to the friends we know

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And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss Me--But Let me Go!

That verse really touched me and I hope it serves to help/comfort some of you – for now and future.

The death of my uncle and other family members caused me to think of great memories and reflect on how fast time flies.

Weeks ago, it dawned on me: "Wow, I have been passionately involved in the staffing industry for more than three decades now and I have never purchased any staffing *stocks*?"

Now how weird is that??? Since 1992, I have had the (mostly) pleasure of providing consulting and training to over 650 staffing companies. And I am a total believer in this industry and review Annual Reports of publicly held staffing firms on a monthly basis.

Last week, I went on Ameritrade and bought some stock in *two* staffing companies.

Taking the advice of the "madbull", Jim Cramer (Mad Money) ... "Buy Best of Breed" ... I bought stock in staffing firms that I have studied and admire greatly.

Based on that criteria, I could've bought other company stock. In buying the staffing stock that I did, it got me thinking:

"How many of my (publicly and privately held) staffing company clients – and myself, for that matter – try to evaluate their own company as if they were stock analysts making buy – hold – or sell recommendations?"

If we did, would we buy stock in our own company and recommend it to our friends and family? Or would we "be on the fence" or possibly be saying: "Don't even think about buying this stock". As a stock analyst making that call, what would we be evaluating?

I recently read an article in *Investopedia* (www.investopedia.com) on this subject.

"When analyzing companies, investors can easily get caught up in details such as performance figures, stock ratios and valuation tools while forgetting a more basic question: *how does the company actually make money?* To distinguish the great companies from the losers, investors should learn how to describe and evaluate companies' **business models.**"

The article goes on to reference Joan Magretta, former editor of the Harvard Business Review:

"When business models don't work, it's because *they don't make sense* and/or the *numbers just don't add up to profits.*"

That's as straight forward as you can get, right?

As a consultant and a student of staffing industry financials, I have seen many unprofitable staffing operations and plenty of models that don't make sense to me.

The other night, I was watching *Mad Money*.

Jim Cramer talked about the opportunity to make money in the diet/weight loss/fitness sectors. And he highlighted two (2) diet program companies – Weight Watchers (which he loves) and Nutrisystem (which he hates) – and he discussed their business models.

Anybody who has ever been on a diet can relate to why Jim loves Weight Watchers. It is a sound diet plan (easy to follow) with plenty of success stories and repeat customers. The average WW customer stays on the plan for a long time. And the company is well managed and innovative in their programs and marketing strategies.

On the hand, while Nutrisystem does have some effective advertising to bring in new customers, they require the dieter to buy/eat their own packaged foods resulting in the average customer dropping out after ten (10) weeks. And the company has a very low percentage of return customers. Nutrisystem would seem to have a poor business model.

They are not alone in having what could be perceived as a bad business model. The Investopedia article suggests that we look to U.S. automakers – Ford, Chrysler, GM – for big time *failed business models*.

“In 2003, to compete against foreign manufacturers, Ford, Chrysler and General Motors offered customers such deep discounts and interest-free financing that they effectively sold vehicles for less than it cost to make them. That dynamic squeezed all the profits out of Ford's U.S. operations and threatened to do the same for Chrysler and GM. To remain viable, the big automakers had to revamp their business models.”

Wow, just think – what if they had just manufactured great, reliable automobiles to begin with – maybe they would have (a) retained their top standing in the industry (b) not had to offer deep discounts and 0% Financing (c) not deep in the red today? You think? Seems so simple.

I have seen similar activities with some staffing clients, too, who sell their services at rock bottom prices to client companies that I would never have considered taking on ... primarily because they don't have a great, reliable “product”. It seems to me (and always has) that building a good business model is not ‘rocket science’ but about:

- (1) Development of a strong well-thought out, customer centric Business Plan with management having/sharing their big picture/long view vision
- (2) Delivery of exceptional Service and attention to CRM (client/candidate relations management)
- (3) Recruitment and retention of a strong management and associate team
- (4) Finding something to do very, very well for customers (or candidates) that other staffing companies cannot (or do not) do – build an “Economic Moat”
- (5) Strong Brand Development
- (6) Attention to Earnings/Profits
- (7) Careful attention to Details – paying attention to little things - every day
- (8) Avoiding mine-fields – staying out of legal, financial and other trouble

Can you tell I am passionate about this subject? Well, I am.

So much that I am going to be presenting an Audio Web Conference on this subject.

TAKING STOCK OF YOUR STAFFING COMPANY: HOW TO BUILD A GREAT BUSINESS MODEL

I have lots of ideas to share on how you can build a business model that would “wow” Wall Street, the “Mad Bull” and even me. Mark your calendars. You won’t want to miss this conference. For more information, visit: www.istaffingu.com
Let me share with you a few tips to wet your appetite and encourage your attendance.

CATHY VEE’S FIVE (5) TIPS FOR BUILDING A GREAT BUSINESS MODEL:

1. Put your Business Plan to Paper & Run It By A 10-Year Old
2. Build an “Economic Moat”.

Or better known as a strong competitive advantage.

In an article discussing how they evaluate company stocks, Morningstar www.morningstar.com uses “Economic Moat” as a key assessment factor:

“Competition tends to drive down excess profits, but companies can earn excess profits for an extended time by creating a competitive advantage (or economic moat)—and these companies are likely to be superior investments. We’re big fans of companies that are low-cost producers, create high switching costs for their customers, or have strong brands or long-lasting patents, because all of these characteristics allow companies to protect their competitive position. For example, Tiffany is far more profitable than a run-of-the-mill jewelry chain because it has a strong brand that creates a moat around its business, allowing it to charge more than its competitors.”

Know any staffing companies who have built “Economic Moat”? I can think of one off the top and that company has one of the best profit margins in the industry.

We will help inspire you to build that “Economic Moat” in our upcoming web conference.

3. You Don’t Want To Hear This (I Know) But It REALLY IS About Earnings – Past, Present and For Future.

It’s not about Sales Volume or “Hours” or number of branches you have opened in the last year. 12 branch operations – with 9 losing money due to low margin clients, staff turnover and customer

bankruptcies – does not make for a good business model – no matter what your sales or “hours” volume. Like it or not – unless you are a start-up – a strong staffing business model has earnings, growth and strong fundamentals for potential future growth.

4. Know Industry Benchmarks & How Yours Measure Up
5. Study Other Staffing Companies – and Learn
6. Manage well and Stay out of Trouble

How would a stock analyst evaluate your Business Model?

Take our Quiz below and find out.

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Taking Stock of Your Business Model

(A Quiz Worth Taking)

1. Is your company profitable? Are you at least as profitable (prefer better) than your competitors?
2. Are your expenses in line and your debt-ratio low?
3. Is your company growing? Does it offer good growth potential for future?
4. Are you continually seeking new ways to grow your business and brand?
5. Do you avoid selling on “price” and temptation to undercut competition to gain market share?
6. Do you have a strong and attractive BRAND?
7. Would your company be viewed as “Best of Breed” (at least in your marketplace)?
8. Does your staffing company offer compelling value propositions to clients and candidates?
9. Does your staffing company attract and retain strong internal talent (management/staff)?
10. Are you diligent about doing what needs to be done to avoid problems with IRS/tax and other government agency compliance issues, workers compensation and insurance issues, unemployment, fraud, employment

law/labor issues, contract disputes and collections?

Score:

If you answered: "Yes" to all 10 questions – your company would likely be a strong "Buy" recommendation and a fine business model.

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STAFFING *INSIGHT*

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Since 1992

Vol. 6 Issue 2

June 2007

Welcome to STAFFING *INSIGHT*!

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IN THIS ISSUE

FAILURE TO **BACKGROUND SCREEN** CAN THREATEN A STAFFING FIRM'S SURVIVAL

1. Staffing in the News: Two (2) Articles

Failure to Background Screen Can Threaten A Staffing Firm's Survival

YOU probably read the news article last week about the 30-year old woman ("high on crack") who drove her vehicle into a crowd enjoying the Unifest Food and Music Festival in D.C., causing injury to 40 people including 7 kids. The woman had a crack pipe in her hand and her 7- year old child in the passenger seat. Tonya Bell of Oxon Hill, MD was charged with aggravated assault while armed. The woman had felony and misdemeanor arrests dating as far back as 1995 and served prison times for drug charges. The story was well covered in the press but in case you missed the it – here's a link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/03/AR2007060300615.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

At the time of the incident, **Ms. Bell was employed by a DC temporary staffing company on a receptionist assignment** for the office of former mayor and now D.C. council member Marion Berry.

After hearing of the horrific event, Barry's office terminated the woman's assignment.

They also terminated their contract with the staffing company because "they may not have properly investigated her background prior to placing her in office".

2. Audio Training/CD's Who The "DEVIL" Are We Sending On Assignment Now?

"Needless to say we are greatly saddened by the incident not only because of the tremendous pain and suffering of the victims, but also because our office relied on the integrity of your screening procedures in agreeing to the placement," Barry wrote in a letter sent to "the employment agency".

"The behavior of your employee, although outside of work, indicates that you may not have properly investigated her background prior to placing her in our office," the letter reads.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,277779,00.html>

This begs the question to be asked once again: Who the 'DEVIL' are we sending on temporary assignments these days?

Are we doing our "due diligence" (extensive behavioral interviews, thorough background and reference checks) to protect our clients and our company?

Many in the staffing industry have recognized the need to do these things, but others don't take it seriously enough.

If the above-mentioned story doesn't prove that point, here's another one that made headlines recently.

It appears that an Ohio medical staffing company sent Herman Brown, a nurse aide, on an

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The key to increasing the Value of your staffing business is a laser-like focus on PROFIT creation - Gross and Net...and the power to grow Profits is linked to establishing strong Margins.

With solid profits, the value of your staffing business increases; your business can add capital improvements, new technology, attract better clients and candidates - plus hire and retain the best staff!

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assignment to a hospital psychiatric ward. While on assignment, he was charged with (and pleaded not guilty to) “rape, kidnapping, gross sexual imposition and sexual battery”.

Not only was Mr. Brown alleged to not have the credentials to do the job, the hospital officials are convinced that the staffing company did not do the REQUIRED background checks because “if the temp agency had done so, it would have found (prior) charges of theft, forgery, aggravated burglary and drug abuse”.

“The hospital has wisely instituted a requirement that temp agencies show proof of background checks for their referrals.”

<http://www.cleveland.com/politics/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/opinion/118087384797070.xml&coll=2>

“The Ohio Hospital Association has severed ties with the agency that hired the worker.”

http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2007/05/police_investigate_fifth_sex_a.html

“The hospital has dismissed the other 15 temporary staff from their duties and severed its relationship with the temp agency.”

http://www.wkyc.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=68746&provider=gnews

In my opinion – comprehensive behavioral interviews, reference checks and background screens are no longer an option today – they are an absolute necessity to provide protection for your clients, your company and to assure your very survival!

Do not take risks with send-outs. The price is too high today.

‘Nuff said?

Need some inspiration for improvement in the areas on making sound hiring decisions?

Here’s a Program that should be in every staffing company’s training library:

ISU STORE

Who The Devil Are We Sending On Assignment NOW?

Produced by International Staffing University

Trainer: Jonathan Paul

\$198.00

Topics covered:

- > The High Cost of Hiring and/or Sending Out Bad Hires
- > The Big Picture - Selecting Candidates for What?
- > Recruiting and Pre-Screening Techniques to WOWO
- > Ten (10) "Red Pitchfork" signs to look for on Applications
- > Ten (10) "Red Pitchfork" signs to look for on Resumes
- > Interrogation vs. Interviewing; detecting Deception
- > Behavioral Interviewing
- > The Basics of WOWO Interviewing and Selection
- > Unacceptable Questions for Interviews and Employment Applications
- > Ten (10) Key WOWO Interviewing Questions to ask New Applicants
- > How to Read an Applicant's Body Language
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To order: <http://www.istaffingu.com/index.php?action=item&id=32&prevaction=category&previd=18&prevstart=10>

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ARE YOU (AND YOUR CLIENTS) AT RISK WITH CANDIDATES HIRED/ASSIGNED? (A Quiz Worth Taking)

1. Do you have strong selection criteria to use in recruiting and hiring temporary associates?
2. Are your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants well trained in behavioral interviewing and candidate skill/success potential assessments?
2. Do your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants know the key "red flags" to look for in interviewing candidates/potential temporary associates?
3. Do your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants know and "live" the three (3) major objectives for conducting the interview?
4. Are your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants well trained in effective employment reference retrieval?
6. Do your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants minimize your risk in avoiding the send-out "iffy" candidates?
5. Are your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants "intuitive" and trained to evaluate body language and behaviors in interviews?
6. Are your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants 'business minded empathetic' – not 'social workers - toward candidates/potential temporary associates?
7. Do your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants have good judgment and make sound hiring and assignment/placement decisions?
8. Have your Recruiters/Staffing Consultants been trained to be good detectives (but not "interrogators") in the interviewing process?

Score:

If you answered: "Yes" to all 10 questions – you are playing it safe for your company & clients – keeping both at LOW RISK!

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WHAT'S NEW AT ISU ... 2007

Lot's going on at International Staffing University - Seminars By The Sea for 2007!

1. WEB-BASED CLASSROOMS (Live Web Conferencing)

We are very excited about our **new Virtual Classroom**.

Staffing professionals participate in **LIVE REAL TIME web classes** from their own office or home. (No need to travel or hotel

it!).

Attendees can see and be seen (optional), listen and engage with our instructor as the class is presented.

Students participate in the classroom assignments, role plays, Q&A; and they interact with the instructor and the other attendees.

Attendees receive: workbook, homework assignments, final exam, Certificate of Completion and Continuing Education Units that can be applied to ASA or other trade association certification programs.

Classes can utilize telephone or VOIP allowing for voice over through the computer.

Our classes – built upon 15 years of training experience and thousands of students - provide the “simply the best” balance of structure and freedom for students to gain a solid understanding plus inspiration to succeed in the staffing industry – without the travel, lost production time, cost of hotels, and all of the other inconveniences of offsite training. For details, click link below.

[Virtual Classroom – Live Web Training](#)

2. ISU Classes For 2007

For some staffing professionals, there is nothing like spending a few days in “paradise” at our International Staffing University located in beautiful, seaside Huntington Beach, California. **Educate and Energize** yourself and your team by coming to an ISU class this year.

Featured June Classes: [Staffing Sales 101](#) - [Branch Manager 101](#) - [Direct Hire Professional](#)

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Have a great June! Talk to you soon. – Cathy Vee

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**Thank you for
reading!**

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STAFFING INSIGHT

Valuable Insights into Current Staffing Issues

A monthly newsletter from International Staffing University – Seminars By The Sea

WHAT'S INSIDE December 5, 2007

- Training Magazine Article
- Wise Owl Quiz
- Cathy Vee's Wise Owl Tips
- What's New at ISU
- Develop a World Class Staffing Team 3-Part Jan Web Training

JUST ONE STAFFING COMPANY MADE TRAINING MAGAZINE'S TOP 125 BEST

At a black-tie affair in February of this year, **Training Magazine** announced their **Best in Training List of 125 firms** that excelled at employee training and development for 2006.

For the sake of brevity, let's take a look at the top 25 "best in training" companies.

1. Ritz-Carlton Hotel
2. PricewaterhouseCoopers
3. EMC Corporation
4. Verizon Wireless
5. General Mills, Inc.
6. Ernst & Young
7. KPMG LLP
8. Wyeth Pharmaceuticals
9. Booz Allen Hamilton
10. Export Develop. Canada
11. Lockheed Martin
12. Scotiabank Group
13. Cerner Corporation
14. SCC Soft Computer
15. Satyam Computer Services
16. Miami Children's Hospital
17. U of New Mexico Hospitals
18. 1-800-FLOWERS.COM
19. Microsoft Corporation
20. inVentiv Commercial
21. KLA-Tencor
22. BMO Financial Group
23. Aetna Inc.
24. South African Breweries
25. Deloitte & Touche USA LLP

To see the entire list, go to www.trainingmag.org

As you can see, no staffing company made the top 25. In actual fact, only one staffing company made the list at all. **#83 Cross Country Staffing**

Wow!

Despite the fact that "staffing" has become a very prominent industry, only one brand name staffing company has the level of training to make Training Magazine's list.

To be fair, another staffing organization DID make the equally prestigious **ASTD** (American Society of Training & Development) (39) **Best Awards for Training**. Coming in at **#34** was **Randstad United States**. Kudos to that organization!

As trainers to the staffing industry exclusively, now going into our 16th year, we recognize that the staffing industry has a long way to go to improve employee training and development and achieve a highly professional level.

Because of this, we have compiled a brand new *user friendly* **Train-The-Trainer Toolkit and Guide** (\$395) exclusively designed for staffing executives / owners / and learning managers.

The Toolkit has been developed to be a fully comprehensive "how to" manual on launching and/or /improving training focusing exclusively on the staffing industry and includes blueprints for training managers as well as associates. It will be available for purchase at the end of January and can be pre-ordered at www.istaffingu.com.

Wise Owl Quiz:

How 'Training Benefits SMART' Are You?

1. According to a government study, what % of employees are satisfied with their company's training and development programs?
2. Many companies that made Training Mag./ASTD Best in Training lists also made Fortune's 100 Best Firms to Work For. On average what % less of voluntary employee turnovers occur with firms on the Fortune list versus firms not on the list?
3. According to a study by Louis, Harris & Associates, 41% of employees plan to leave a firm (within a year) when they deem the training to be "poor". What % of employees plan to leave their firm when they deem the training to be "very good" or "excellent"?
4. According to The Loyalty Effect, what % of customer satisfaction is dependent upon employee satisfaction?
5. An ASTD study found that corporations who invest \$680 more in training per employee more than the average company improve their total stockholder return by what % the following year?
6. Training Guru Michael Allen says that if you can only achieve one thing in training your employees it should be to do what?

Find the Answers on Page 2!

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Cathy Vee's Wise Owl Tips for Training

If you are involved in management or ownership of a staffing organization and have it on your "To Do" List for 2008 to improve your staff training – let me share a few ideas with you.

1. Learn the BENEFITS of Training and the Training-Profits-Company Value Proposition.

It's important to view training as a core investment NOT an expense. To do so, one must understand the value proposition and benefits of training.

In a nutshell, those include: company goals achievement; recruitment magnet; reduced employee turnover; employee satisfaction, confidence, competence and morale; improved productivity and reduced employee errors; customer retention and expansion; increase value of the company and improved profitability. Effective training more than pays for itself!

2. Link TRAINING to your company's goals, objectives and NEEDS.

Before you launch or attempt to improve your training, start with an analysis of your company's goals, objectives and needs. Review your business plan; what you are trying to accomplish; company strengths and weaknesses; comparison of your employees' present competencies vs. desired performance; and a complete needs analysis of what will be required to meet your goals/objectives and train your staff. There are books, classes and consultants that can help you accomplish these important tasks. No sense in developing training programs that do not bridge to your needs!

3. Use a Systematic / Organized and Blended Training Approach

My associate, Jonathan Paul, says: "Training is NOT an event. It is an ongoing process."

That ongoing process needs an organized training system that blends methods of learning, including orientations, on-the-job, peer2peer,

assignments/ tasks / role plays, classroom, written materials, eLearning, videos/audios, outside events and other training methods.

Not all adult trainees learn the same way nor is every training method most effective for training every learning topic or trainee. To develop your training programs, it is best to start with help from a consultant; to organize and administer your training programs effectively, it is best to utilize a learning management system (LMS).

4. Effective Training does NOT need to be Sophisticated nor Expensive.

One of the reasons staffing executives, owners and managers fear embarking on structured training program development is that they fear that the time and expense of authoring and managing training programs is out of reach. The reality is that effective training need not involve expensive LMS (learning management systems) or CMS (course management systems), nor involve very time-consuming course authoring. As a matter of fact, even some staffing companies who have gone to the expense of investing in these products have "tossed them" and gone to **RLS (rapid learning systems)** where you can design course quickly in days, not months. CD-Rom training has come back into favor to develop / deliver training effectively and without extensive course authoring time. Again, here is where a consultant OR good Train-the-Trainer class OR resource can be of help to you.

5. Go to the OUTSIDE for help to DESIGN/DEVELOP Training.

There are many "Train-the-Trainer" consulting firms and resources available to help you in this area.

We at International Staffing University can consult with you in these areas or refer you to other consultant or classes that can get you on your way to developing world class training for your company.

What's New at ISU

- "Develop a World Class Staffing Team for 2008", a three part web training. Jan 9, 16, 23, 2008. 12 Noon PST. CD Set included. **FIRST 25 EARLY BIRD** Paid Registrations before Dec 15, 2007 receive **FREE** \$395.00 Train the Trainer Toolkit and Guide! 3 parts, \$598! Visit <http://www.istaffingu.com/index.php?action=category&id=21> for details!
- We have our **2008 ISU Class & Web Class Catalog & Schedule** now online. Download the PDF catalog at www.istaffingu.com
***20% Early Bird Savings: Register for a 2008 Class in 2007 (before January 1, 2008) and save \$\$\$.
- **2008 Campus Classes** include: Sales 101; Advanced Sales; Staffing Consultant / Placement Specialist (Beginner and Advanced classes); Branch Manager; Industrial Staffing Consultant; Industrial Staffing Sales; Onsite Manager Certificate Class; Medical & Home Care Classes; and more.
- **Web classes** are now LIVE with instructor on camera and students can interact with instructor via web cam, too.
- Our new **2008 Training Product Catalog** available in PDF for download.

||||| Answers to Quiz |||||

1. 28%
2. 50% less turnover
3. 12%
4. 60-80%
5. 6%
6. Improve employee's confidence

**Happy Holidays from Cathy Vee,
Jon Paul, Annette Clancy and ISU staff
to you and yours!**

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