

The Daily Southerner

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MAKING HEADWAY

Recruiter searching for talent

W. Terry Smith, Editor

If you are a “knowledge worker,” Headway Corporate Resources might want to talk with you.

“We are believers that the future of the United States economy is in the development and opportunity creation of knowledge workers,” Headway Chief Executive Officer and President Jean-Pierre “J. P.” Sakey told guests at an open house cosponsored by Carolina Gateway Partnership Wednesday night at the company’s Tarboro office at 401 St. Andrew St. About 100 people attended, including town and county officials.

“Knowledge workers will be the lynchpin of all future economic growth in the U.S.”

Sakey defines knowledge workers are those with problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, research, writing and communication skills.

Headway recruits talent nationwide for business. It doesn’t look for job applicants (“passive candidates”); it finds people who already have jobs.

“We believe people who aren’t looking are your best sources,” said Suzanne Kinkel, executive vice president

Sakey moved Headway’s headquarters in midtown Manhattan to Raleigh three years ago, just after Sakey, 54, brought the company out of bankruptcy. The Tarboro site is Headway’s National Recruiting Center.

After many rough edges in the Tarboro startup, Headway spent \$250,000 to renovate the old two-story Sprint Building at the corner of St. Andrew and Church streets.

“We average rent payments to a local landlord of about \$100,000 annually,” Sakey said. “In 2006, our startup year, we had a payroll of \$375,000. In 2007, our payroll more than doubled to \$744,000 and in 2008, we have budgeted nearly \$900,000 for payroll,” he said. “We have made a significant commitment to this location and this business prospect.”

Sakey admitted “unacceptable turnover” has been a problem in Tarboro but he seems to be pleased with the 20 enthusiastic employees on board now. He would like to have 100 here, he said. “Frankly,” he said, “it’s hard work,” he said.

Sakey says Headway looks for workers who have commitment, character and passion, both for its work and its clients.

The company is ranked 75th globally in revenue for all staffing companies and over the last four years we placed more than 240,000 individuals with more than 3,000 businesses, either on a temporary or permanent basis, he said.

Sakey himself has been named a Human Resource Outsourcing superstar for two consecutive years.

Job placement ranges from payroll, human resource administration, logistics and management to project recruitment to sourcing, screening and research services.

Sakey noted Headway had sources 3,692 candidates and place 302 with Startek 1; sources 481 candidates and placed 28 with Startek 2; sourced 2,901 candidates and placed 1286 with Jet Blue; placed 80 hires with ADT; 120 in six months with Panasonic; sourced 35,989 and placed 9655 with Hickory Farms; and in three months hired 1,288 for Halloween Express.

There were 30,000 candidates in the HRC system when it started; as of Tuesday, there are more than 600,000 and growing, Sakey said.

Sakey praised Edgecombe Community College for its help in training. One day his dream is to see an associate's degree offered in recruit training.

Guests were treated to a catered spread and wine from On the Square and briefs remarks by David Snyder and a copy of his latest book, "How to Hire a Champion."

Snyder has worked with Sakey as a consultant and some Headway people are included in the book.

Snyder, a Seven Springs native and Harvard graduate, has his own consulting firm in Raleigh.

Prior to acquiring Headway, Sakey ran North America for Monster.com.

Kinkel said Headway had placed 11,092 people all over the country in the last six months.

Paulette Bennett, the director of sourcing and recruiting strategies, was out of town helping a client in Baton Rouge, La.



Headway Chief Executive Officer and President J. P. Sakey, right, welcomes Tarboro Town Manager Sam Noble to an open house Wednesday night at the firm's Tarboro office while Carolinas Gateway Partnership President Frank Harrison and Vice President Oppie Jordan look on. Jordan helped recruit Headway to Tarboro.

W. Terry Smith / Editor



Headway Executive Vice President Suzanne Kinkel said the company searches for people who already have a job.
Staff Photo