



The Laso Corporation
Bringing People Together

Laso eLetter

November 2007: Vol. 7 - Issue 8

Dear Laurie,

What ever happened to the long term employee and the gold watch at retirement? Has technology killed employee and employer loyalty? Is it the global economy that is forcing employees to change companies as often as companies change software?



Call me a born optimist-and everyone who knows me does-but I think that people like to belong to something. I think people enjoy being part of a team that builds something of substance be it a product or a process. The challenge for companies today is in understanding that people have a lot more choices than they used to for their lives. In their work, it might be best for all concerned for the person to move on but often good people leave because they feel more like a number than an important contributor.

In this month's newsletter we look at **Celebrating Employees**. We hope to give ideas about

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How to Throw the Perfect Clambake

Let's party!

As recruiters, we at Laso Corp. speak with people from many different corporate cultures. We get a wide perspective on the various ways you promote loyalty, motivate your team and celebrate your employees.

One time-honored tradition common at nearly every firm is the **Company Party**, typically held during the winter holiday season.

You don't have to wait until December to show appreciation to your employees - especially when you're trying to avoid that slice of fruitcake and being up to your eyeballs in holiday shopping!

In fact, you might make it a more memorable and rewarding experience if you plan something new.

Here are some ideas we've found that work:

- **Throw a summer picnic** at a forest preserve, or an indoor picnic at an event destination (the Odeum in Villa Park comes to mind). My husband's former company used to host an annual summer picnic, and the president was the judge of the homemade dessert contest. He got to try every dessert first, and he loved it.
- **Explore your City**- try a Friday afternoon barbecue on a rooftop,

ways to keep your group happy without breaking the bank. Vickie Austin does a **Book Review** about a company that is known for it's employee loyalty and creating fun at work- **Southwest Airlines**. We have added the **Tech Corner** which will look at products and services on the market that might be helpful to our clients. Remember, you don't have to give a huge bonus or buy your employee a car in order to instill loyalty. Simple gestures go along way.

Sincerely,
[Laurie Swanson](#)
 The Laso Corporation

- do an Architectural tour. The president of a boating-related company, affectionately known as "The Captain," takes his team on a sailing excursion a couple of times a year.
- **Get Sporty**-A day at Arlington Park, a Cubs or White Sox baseball game or a trip to Six Flags-Great America all are popular events staged by local Chicago firms. It sounds simple, but even a company outing to the local bowling alley encourages camaraderie and creates fun... and funny... memories.
- Havi, a supplier to McDonalds, has an **annual breakfast** where the executive staff "cooks" breakfast for the staff.
- Resurrection Healthcare, a non-profit Catholic hospital system in Chicago, has an annual **black-tie affair**, the Monarch Ball, in which tickets are sold to employees with proceeds benefiting different Catholic charities each year - the incentive of "ownership" makes the Monarch Ball an event anticipated annually by the Resurrection staff.
- One of the most memorable gifts I ever received at Laso was the assortment of **items made by our clients**: kitchen utensils from home-improvement companies, a copy of the year's biggest movie from a DVD manufacturer, gift certificates to McDonald's, a computer mouse from a hardware distributor. This gesture reminded me that the work I do with my clients helps them to continue to prosper and I felt a part of their success.

Candidates Of The Month

*Candidate #40836

SAP Functional Analyst-10+ years of Information Technology experience and 2+ years of SAP functional experience with 2 full life cycle implementations. Has strong config skills and is best with SD and pricing applications.

*Candidate #23878

Oracle DBA-13 years of IT background and 6 years as a technical project lead. Responsible for performance tuning, capacity planning, space management, databases upwards of 4 Terabytes, multi-platform, data modeling and database design.

Candidate #42497

Business Objects Developer Analyst- 6 years experience with Data Warehousing and ETL methodologies, over 2 years experience with Business Objects and has been formally trained by Business Objects on XI R2. Very solid experience with Business Objects Data Integrator and the BO framework. Is currently responsible for the entire DW and Business Objects development and architecture. Extensive experience in Data Modeling, Stored Procedures, Data Masking, Data Mapping and Data Architecture. Windows and Unix platform experience.

Candidate #42503

.NET Analyst- Over 6 years experience in application development and 2 years experience in .NET and C#. A very

Things to keep in mind:

- **Upper management needs to commit** to the event and - most importantly - attend them. Employee events can be more than just empty cheerleading parties, if done right; they can create moments of genuine connection and understanding, where the staff can meet the execs in a relaxed environment and both sides can see their human sides. Moreover, executive absence from employee events undermines the meaning behind the event: it's hard to convince someone that the company cares about them when their boss doesn't even bother to show up.
- **Make your party an annual tradition.** Invite the families of your employees and you just may see company loyalty extended down the generations. When I was a kid, my father hosted a picnic for his staff every summer; I grew up seeing the same families every year and establishing bonds with the other children. I also saw the same adult faces year after year, smiling and laughing and appreciating working together. I still remain fond of that company, long after my father retired from it, and the lessons taught to me about loyalty, commitment and reward have stayed with me ever since.

The company holiday party will always be with us - complete with the occasional employee who consumes one too many egg-nogs, the spilled trade secret better left in the boardroom, the off-color joke that should have gone unsaid.

Next time you plan your Company Party, brighten your company's

strong understanding of object-oriented technologies as well as Web development architecture. Deep knowledge of Microsoft's .NET platform. 4 years of Web development experience with a strong background in JavaScript, HTML and ASP.NET and very strong experience with SQL Server 2000.

About Laso

Laso has been in business for over 12 years and Laurie Swanson have been recruiting now for almost 20 years!

Laso is committed to being your experts in helping you build your Information Technology teams with the best people available.

These could be people who are experts at implementing or integrating ERP packages like SAP, Oracle, JD Edwards, Data Warehousing technologists, AS/400 and certified e-commerce and web developers (Microsoft and Java), Enterprise and Solution Architects, Business Analysts, and Project Managers.

Laso has also grown along with our clients to incorporate our stellar search skills in the sourcing and placement of Management and Executive Professionals in Information Technology, Operations, Finance and Human Resources along with providing additional business consulting services as needed.

Are You an MP3 Player or a Vinyl 45?



Think back, or try to imagine, how it was a few decades ago. You would

spin a 45 rpm record and if you wanted a new song (wanted to access a new piece of data) you had to physically move the needle. Today, we use the MP3 player and quickly move between songs, artists, videos etc. There are no moving parts. This type of memory-flash memory-is a form of Ram-based or solid state storage.

Black Diamond Technologies, based

horizon with an enriching experience that enhances your corporate culture year-round - any time of year!

The History of...McCormick Place

This series, which focuses on the history of a specific industry or local company, will be included in the next several newsletters. This month we are looking at Chicago's premier event location, McCormick Place.

Let's start with the facts: McCormick Place is huge!

- 2.2 million square feet of exhibit halls
- 1.6 million square feet all on one level
- 112 meeting rooms
- 358,000 square feet of meeting room space
- 3 million visitors every year

McCormick Place hosts some of the world's biggest and most well-known conferences. The National Restaurant Show, the Chicago Boat, RV and Outdoors Show, the World of Wheels, the Chicago Auto Show and the International Manufacturing Technology Show are just a few of the major events held there.

None of this should be a surprise: Chicago's been hosting major events since the 1933 World's Fair (and we're hoping to do it again with the 2016 Olympics). But McCormick Place almost didn't come to be, especially after it burned to the ground!

The building is named after Colonel Robert R. McCormick, a longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune, who for decades pushed for the city to build a permanent exhibit hall before it came to pass. (The World's Fair sites were largely dismantled after the expo.) In fact, he died five years before the first hall was opened in 1960.

In 1967, however, the original McCormick Place was destroyed by a fire - a sad Chicago tradition, it appears - and it took another three years for it to be re-opened. Two more expansions were added in 1986 and 1996, and a fourth was expected to be complete this July, eight months ahead of schedule.

In the City of Broad Shoulders, the humongous McCormick Place convention center is about as broad as they come. Have an hour or three? Maybe it's time for a visit!

Celebrating With Heart From the People Who Brought You Nuts! - A Book Review

in Chicago, is the subject matter expert when it comes to Ram Based Storage. Ram Based Storage helps companies process more information faster, allows for more concurrent users to access the same data and thus reduces the growth of the existing hardware and software infrastructure needs. This saves money and extends the life of your current IT investment.

Be a Player!

For more information, please contact [Tim Heath](#) (312.924.1098) at [Black Diamond Technologies](#)

A Laso Poll

Tell us about an event or celebration that your company did that was fun and/or unusual.
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Few business case studies can bring on the kind of excitement and enthusiasm as that of Southwest Airlines, the maverick carrier that fought long and hard-all the way to the Supreme Court-to have the right to fly first within Texas and later throughout the U.S. The history of this extraordinary company and its unconventional path to success, led by the irreverent and inspiring chief executive officer Herb Kelleher, is told by Kevin and Jackie Freiberg in the book *Nuts!: Southwest Airlines' Crazy Recipe for Business and Personal Success*.

The authors are a husband and wife team who both studied Southwest Airlines for their doctoral work at the University of San Diego. Kevin talked his way into the executive suite to study the company and the people who made it successful. While the copyright of the book is 1996, the essence of the book contains principles that still apply today. Those principles have made Southwest a consistently profitable company during the years when other airlines were declaring bankruptcy or disappearing altogether.

Southwest Airlines is known for its consistent on-time service, its commitment to fun and the company's emphasis on its employees. In a chapter entitled "Celebrating People With Big Hearts: Honoring Those You Love," the authors share some guidelines the airline company has for celebrating the success of its people. "Values decay without attention; celebrations are one way of raising people's consciousness about the values that drive the business," write the authors.

These guidelines work for Southwest and could work for any company:

- The celebration must be authentic. Senior executives at Southwest don't just go through the motions-they honestly believe their success is contingent on their employee's dedication, commitment and creativity.
- The celebration must raise people's dignity and self-esteem.
- The celebration must be done right. There's a lot of artistry in the company's execution of its celebrations and the events are designed to suit the occasion with an investment of time and energy.
- The celebration must appeal to all the senses. The tenor of Southwest's events have the all flavor of show business and more than a little bit of Disney.
- The celebration must be seen as an investment versus just a cost. Southwest views celebrations as a way to raise morale, job satisfaction and productivity. According to the latest 2007 quarterly analysts' conference call for Southwest Airlines, productivity was up 25%.
- The celebration must be cost-effective. The company, known as the low-cost, no-frills airline, depends on its people and

inside resources for the talent that makes the celebrations so memorable and unique. And when they must go with outside vendors, they tend to barter for flight passes.

Any business leader would do well to read *Nuts!* to study how honoring employees and associates pays big dividends over the long haul. From its chapters on hiring for attitude and training for skills to the message about "coloring outside the lines," this book is a handbook for inspiring people to greatness and building a company from the heart.

Vickie Austin is a business and career coach and is founder of [CHOICES Worldwide](#) based in Wheaton, with offices in Chicago and Phoenix. She can be reached at vaustin@choicesworldwide.com.

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