

Allied Search can fill your hard-to-fill job opening

Karen Woodshick didn't intend to become a head hunter

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

PETER KEY
STAFF WRITER

WEST CHESTER — The expression, “When life hands you lemons, make lemonade,” has become a cliché.

Nonetheless, it's still a perfect description of what Karen Woodshick did last year.

Woodshick does executive recruiting for technology companies as Allied Search LLC. And thanks to the economy, few of her clients and perspective clients were using outside head hunters in 2009.

“You had a lot of hiring managers who had a relationship with you that really wanted to hire you to do a search but just were not given the thumbs up to go ahead and do that,” she said.

Since she wasn't getting retained by companies, Woodshick decided to focus on candidates. She approached the most talented people in her database who had been laid off or were



UP CLOSE

NAME: Karen Woodshick
AGE: 35

COMPANY: Allied Search LLC

388 W. TURNBERRY COURT
WEST CHESTER, PA. 19382

BEST BUSINESS

DECISION: Changing the name of her company from Woodshick & Associates to Allied Search.

KEY CHALLENGE

OVERCOME: The market conditions of the past few years, which have led many companies to forego using search firms to fill openings.

ADVICE TO OTHER YOUNG

ENTREPRENEURS:

“Never accept no for an answer. Be tenacious. Know what you want, set your goals and go for it.”

Karen Woodshick finds the people others are looking for.

ALLIED: Woodeshick is especially proficient at fulfilling needs of young companies

looking for a new job and asked them to list the top three to four companies they'd like to work for.

"I marketed them to those companies and I made placements that way," she said.

That type of response to a difficult situation is typical for Woodeshick, according to some of the people who have hired her to do searches for them.

"She's smart, she's tenacious and she has done some things that are really hard to do," said Charles Gold, the vice president of marketing for Progress Software Corp. of Bedford, Mass.

Several years ago, Gold said, he was looking for a product marketing person with a very specific set of credentials — the person must have worked for a particular competitor of Gold's company in one of a small number of positions.

Gold said only about five to seven people in the world fit the description but Woodeshick found him two to three to interview, one of whom he hired.

"That is not a dime-a-dozen type skill set in the recruiting world," he said.

Woodeshick never intended to enter the recruiting world. Instead, she intended to become a physical therapist.

While completing her bachelor's degree in biology from Beaver College — now Arcadia University — in December 1995, she was looking for a pharmaceutical sales job to fill the six months before her master's program started.

In the process, she interviewed with search firms and was told she didn't have enough experience for the type of job she was looking for. But Center City-based Century Associates was impressed enough with her drive and attention to detail that it told her it was interested in hiring her itself.

Woodeshick began what would be her final interview with Century by saying that she needed an offer that day because she had to give up her dorm

room and needed to know if she should stay in the area or go back to Hanover, Luzerne County.

"They extended me an offer before I walked out the door, so I guess I did everything right without even realizing it at the time to really close and get what I wanted from an offer standpoint," she said.

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**Karen
Woodeshick**
Allied Search

Woodeshick had just broken into a field she had no intention of entering. But she didn't plan to stay in it.

"I thought, 'This is really great. This is something that's going to get me through six months and after six months I'll be right back at Beaver College again,'" she said.

"Here I am, 15 years later, absolutely loving recruiting and couldn't imagine doing anything else."

Woodeshick not only didn't end up in the pharmaceutical industry, she didn't end up recruiting for it either.

Century needed a recruiter for software companies and felt Woodeshick could quickly familiarize herself with the industry.

To do that, she started going to software-industry trade shows and reading software-industry magazines. At first, Woodeshick said, she read them like they were text books. Then she realized what she needed wasn't knowledge about software or the software industry overall, but knowledge about the specific companies in it.

That way, she, said, "When I had a company that called me to do a product market search, right off the top of my head I could say, 'OK, why don't we recruit out of these 10 companies?'"

Woodeshick worked for Century for about three-and-a-half years, then was affiliated with it as Woodeshick & Associates.

In 2003, she went out on her own under

that name, but soon realized she needed another one.

"I said, 'Woodeshick & Associates, my gosh, people can't spell my last name,'" she said.

Woodeshick bought the rights to the name Allied Search and worked with Mary Bea Damico, president of Malvern-based Vovéo Marketing Group Inc., to rebrand her company and design a logo and Web site for it.

Since her Century days, Woodeshick has expanded her focus to include all types of technology companies, not just software firms.

She works with companies of all sizes, but her specialty is recruiting sales and marketing executives for the fast-growing, young businesses sometimes called emerging growth companies.

Relationships are so important to Woodeshick that she still stays in touch with the first person she recruited.

"I call him every March 5 and wish him happy birthday," she said.

Woodeshick also will turn down searches if she knows she can't fill them.

"I've never taken anything and not filled it," she said.

Additionally, Woodeshick will go out of her way for a client when the client runs into trouble.

For example, last year, a company decided to put a search for which it had hired her on hold. Three months later, it came back to her and asked her if she could resume the search. She did, even though she wasn't obligated to.

One reason was that Woodeshick knew the company couldn't have foreseen the circumstances that caused it to delay the search, and so agreeing to resume the search was the right thing to do.

Another was that it further solidified her relationship with the company.

"I know that client will come back to me," she said, "and they'll utilize me again."

pkey@bizjournals.com | 215-238-5141