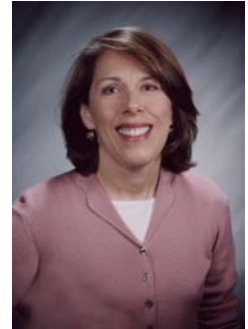


May's newsletter makes the point: having the right people in the right jobs directly impacts organizational success.

AND THE JAPANESE GARDEN PROJECT IS AWARDED TO?

By Carol Bergeron

Just a few weeks ago I spent time visiting my sister. She had her sights set on designing a Japanese Garden which became our goal for the weekend. As she and I gabbed I learned a lot. For instance, the essential elements of the garden include water, waterfalls, garden plants, trees, stones, and bridges. Evergreens and mosses are a mainstay and symbolize eternity. A splash of color is accomplished through blooming plants such as the deep pink of the azalea, red berry of the bamboo like nandina and flowering plum, pine, magnolia, willow and cherry trees. Collectively the elements form a quiet, tranquil sanctuary in which to relax, reflect and meditate.



Our design began with scoping out the location in her backyard where there was both sunlight and shade. We visualized different designs. We determined where the water would flow from and to (symbolized by flat river stones) while making the most of the natural surroundings. We decided on only a few colorful plantings so as not to detract from the tranquil green landscape. The plantings included my favorite – the Japanese maple. We envisioned where the pagoda would reside in addition to a weeping cherry tree.

Next on our list? Visit three nurseries. At each we scouted out our initial planting picks and were careful not to limit ourselves. Sure enough we discovered other beautiful plantings worthy consideration and more.

The first nursery was mid-sized. Its' plantings were reasonably organized and in good shape. The selection of plantings for a Japanese Garden left a little to be desired. It had a store in which gardening paraphernalia was on display. We did not have luck finding someone to field our questions so we moved onto the second nursery.

The second nursery was huge and "spic n span" clean by comparison. The paved sidewalks and overall grounds were impeccable. The plantings were organized to the hilt so we could quickly focus our scanning efforts. We had questions when we got to the cherry trees. It took us a while to find a nursery expert. We asked if there were different varieties of cherry trees that do better in sun vs. shade. The answer was "no, however cherry trees in the shade produce fewer blooms than those in the sun." We got our answer from a nice enough guy who was impeccably dressed much like the nursery itself.

We moved onto the third and smallest of the nurseries. The grounds and organization of the shrubs were not so impressive though the plants were in terrific shape. We asked the cherry tree question again of an employee who had obviously been working feverishly on replanting shrubs. He had long hair, a scraggly beard and looked like he had been rolling around in the dirt (it had just rained). Let's call him Joe. Joe enlightened us about cherry trees not by giving canned answers but by asking questions about the environment in which the tree would be planted. The conversation between my sister and Joe went something like this:

Joe: "Is the garden sunny or shady?"

Sis: "Both."

Joe: "Is the spot for the cherry tree sunny or shady?"

Sis: "Both."

Joe: "There are not cherry varieties that do better in shade or sun. Cherry trees in the sun will produce more blossoms than those in the shade. If the spot you have in mind for the tree has both sun and shade, you may end up with a lopsided cherry tree. That is because the branches will naturally grow in the direction of the sunlight resulting in more growth and blooms.

Sis: "Hmmm"

Joe: "What is blocking the sun in the shady area?"

Sis: "Tall trees."

Joe: "Are you planning to cut them down?"
Sis: "Well maybe one."
Joe: "You might take special note of which trees block the sunlight during various times of the day. Maybe they offset each other so it's a non-issue. Observing the light may also help you figure out a better location for the cherry, a place where the entire tree is drenched in sunlight or shade."
Sis: "Good point."
Joe: "Have you considered something other than a cherry?"
Sis: "Nope, have my heart set on a cherry tree."
Joe: "You might consider taking down more trees so that the entire tree gets the same amount of sunlight."

The synopsis of this conversation does not do Joe justice. He was the guy. He was the expert who was heavily sought after for information not just by us but by passing co-workers too. What did he do differently? He started by giving us his undivided attention. He fully explored the environment in which we were working. He educated us. He inquired about our flexibility before suggesting alternative solutions. He was always respectful of our preferences. He was not in sales mode. He was in customized solution mode and it worked. Neither he nor his nursery was the best dressed, but Joe got the business! Imagine a nonchalant spring weekend activity making such a strong case for getting the right people in the right jobs to improve results.

Your feedback is requested:

1. How does this story format compare with the step-by-step format used in previous newsletters?
2. Contact me if you want to learn more from Joe on Japanese Gardens.
3. Please let me know if you are an executive and would like to participate in a study this summer on best practices in performance management at the enterprise level (see below).

Happy gardening!

2006 ENTERPRISE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STUDY – COMING SOON!

[Bergeron Associates](#) and [Insight Management Group](#) have teamed up to explore enterprise-wide performance management practices, project and human capital management methods and their effectiveness. We are conducting a confidential study among executives, of firms with 5,000 or fewer employees, who are responsible for establishing strategic direction and producing successful outcomes. Stay tuned for a link to our on-line survey. To participate in a one-on-one interview please contact Carol Bergeron (carol@bergeronassociates.com) and benefit from reflecting on what your organization is doing to improve enterprise-wide performance. Once the results are in, you will receive a complimentary copy of the summary report.

UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERESTING RESOURCES

2006 Schedule for Educational Workshops at www.bergeronassociates.com/calendar.htm.

Resource for Workforce Effectiveness Information

Articles and electronic newsletters filled with practical tips on how to enhance the performance of people and organizations. Explore our publications: www.bergeronassociates.com/publications.htm

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Bergeron Associates
101 Middlesex Tpke, Ste 6, PMB 326
Burlington, MA 01803-4914
781-376-4071

carol@bergeronassociates.com
www.bergeronassociates.com

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BERGERON ASSOCIATESSM
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MAY 2006 NEWSLETTER

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