“High Level” Project and Contract Staffing Solutions and Consulting for Bank Compliance, Risk, Audit and Cybersecurity

AccountAbilities Professional Group
1600 Dove, Suite 111
Newport Beach, California 92660
949-250-9499 ext. 109
www.aapsg.com

“As far as AccountAbilities Professional Services Group is concerned, it has grown over 650% year over year since inception. We are proud of that and Tom and his team have taken it to the next level.”
- Mark Levine

“There is an acute shortage of high-quality talent in the area of bank and regulatory compliance… There are probably only about five or six other companies in the country that do exactly what we do.”- Thomas Seavey

Mark Levine
President + COO
Corporate Resources Services, Inc.
(Parent Company)
(NASDAQ: CRRS)

Thomas Seavey
Managing Director
AccountAbilities Professional Group
About AccountAbilities Professional Group:
AccountAbilities Professional Group, (a division of Corporate Resource Services, Inc, CRRS / NASDAQ), was founded in early 2012 to provide “high level” project and contract staffing solutions within the segments of: Bank Compliance, Risk, Audit, and Cybersecurity. Our clients include a cadre of major domestic and international banks as well as the bank consulting divisions of some of the most formidable CPA and consulting firms in America. We have rapidly grown to become one of the most highly respected service providers within our disciplines in the U.S.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Seavey, your website indicates that AccountAbilities Professional Group is the new face of professional services. Would you elaborate?

Mr. Seavey: We are the new face because we provide a hybrid of not only just-in-time professional staffing but we also provide a consultative slant with high-end consulting insights to all of the individuals that we deploy with our clients. It gives them the best of both worlds. It provides them not only prompt responses as it relates to professional staff needs, but also that high level consultant subject matter expertise which is so important with the needs that we service.

CEOCFO: Many companies will talk about their consultative side and will talk about how they are able to work with both sides of their constituents. What do you understand fundamentally as a company that allows you to do it with greater depth and accuracy?

Mr. Seavey: I believe the bottom line is that we not only have had years of great success in the staffing industry, we also have had years of experience in the consulting industry. We understand what it is like to be on the other side of the desk and that the Chief Financial Officer is in a position where he/she may have critical consulting or consultant service related challenges that they need resolved. The approach we use with these types of organizations, as opposed to a traditional selling approach is more of a needs assessment process. We abstract information from the “process owner” so that we can clearly understand what their challenges are, and we can customize a high end professional staffing solution for them as opposed to providing them with a commodity. Henceforth at the end of the day, our model is based on one that is relationship oriented and solutions driven as opposed to being commodity driven.

CEOCFO: Do prospective clients understand the difference or is it the history they trust?

Mr. Seavey: I think it is a combination of both. At the end of the day, it is easy to tell what you have done in the past and it is easy to talk about your success. With the types of executives that we deal with who are results oriented, that is what they want to see. They want to see how you deliver. Oftentimes, you may have to go in and use the approach of, “We would like you to be able to sample our services and gain a comfort level of how we operate and our capabilities.” Once they do, that is when the “a -ha” moment occurs.

CEOCFO: Why was this the time for AccountAbilities Professional Group as a separate entity?

Mr. Levine: This is a good time for AccountAbilities Professional Services Group and CRS as a corporation to utilize the company as a
platform to grow a national practice. We started this vision of the corporation two years ago, and since that time we have realized incremental revenues with the group as well as higher gross margins than the traditional temporary staffing services that we provide throughout the US. There is a huge opportunity in the accounting finance marketplace right now and we are taking advantage of it by offering specialized hybrid types of services to our clients that address things such as risk compliance, accounting and financing needs, IT enterprise solutions and service offerings that traditional temporary staffing companies do not offer.

**CEOCFO: How do you stay on top of the regulations?**

**Mr. Seavey:** We never want to place ourselves in a position with our clients where we lend ourselves as being subject matter experts on a “hands-on” basis in the area of regulatory compliance and certainly we rely on our consultants to have that type of subject matter expertise. We do however conduct internet research and continuing education courses. In addition, we are continually participating in various associations we are involved with, such as the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists. We are one of their chief exhibitors at their conferences. We also attend many teaching and education seminars as well. It is critically important in the evaluation of talent that we have enough intellectual capital and sufficient current knowledge so that we can properly evaluate these individuals. Our interviewing process with these individuals is not just a “yes” or “no” process but a process where we really have to delve in and have them provide us with examples and validate the subject matter expertise that they have.

**CEOCFO: How much more difficult is it today with all the security and compliance issues and is it more important now for your company to be resource for customers?**

**Mr. Levine:** I would say it is more important today based on what has happened in the early 2000s and the new accounting regulations that were implemented with Sarbanes Oxley. It has put their shareholders companies in the positions where they need to be held accountable not only to themselves but to their investors as well. We have done a great job educating ourselves and our people on the topics that they need to be aware on in order to move forward as far as compliance issues. It has also enabled us to attract high-end talent because many companies have gone through cost containment initiatives throughout the US. There are many good people out there that are highly educated in the types of engagements that we provide and we are able to pick the high-end talent and place them with the clients we engage.

**CEOCFO: What is the key to matching up correctly?**

**Mr. Levine:** We have a unique approach to our applicant acceptance process especially in the high level positions that we fill. We are not having a traditional recruiter go out and source the type of individuals that we are placing on these engagements. It is a long, tedious process with a lot of upfront screening and psychological questions, including skills assessment and discussions that we have with our potential consultants. This is all conducted by a higher level type of person than is typical of a traditional temporary staffing recruiter. The individuals that are interviewing and sourcing the candidates we are putting out on engagements have been in those roles themselves and some of them have been partners at major consulting firms throughout the US.
Mr. Seavey: I think I will piggyback on that a little bit. When we are talking to these people and doing the high-end screening process, it is not just a matter of being able to validate their technical skills. It is also a matter of psychological analysis to a certain extent meaning what kind of “business acumen” do the individuals maintain? You can have someone who is talented from a technical perspective, but if they do not have a level of business acumen that fits into our client’s culture particular given the fact that we do a lot of high-end staff deployment, they won’t meet our selection criterion. Many of the clients that we work with are major CPA firms and consulting firms and have critically important engagements going on. They are short staffed and they will come to us and say they need five people that we need to seamlessly integrate under our umbrella. They need to be a part of our team to effectively work as a part of this project. That individual may have the technical skills but if they cannot properly fit into the culture from a business acumen environment then we are not going to deploy them.

CEOCFO: What do you look for in your own staff? What are the intangibles?

Mr. Levine: We want to see individuals that have a great work ethic as well as similar education level to the people that they are placing that have experience in the consulting world. As far as recruiting and project management, there is a career path within our organization that many times would bring somebody in as a practice leader and they will oversee a certain segment of our Accountabilities Professional Services Group. We have people that are ex-partners of consulting firms, individuals who have worked in CPA firms, business development and higher level project management. The key to our success is to look for people with those types of skill sets that enable them ultimately to move up through the organization and manage the overall process or consulting engagements.

CEOCFO: You are a global company, are there some geographies where you would like to see more activity?

Mr. Levine: I would say that right now we are global and have a presence currently in the UK. There are several initiatives going on from a company-wide perspective to increase our presence in the UK because of the opportunity there and the similar customer base we share. There are companies that we currently service in the US that have a stake in the ground in the UK where we have been able to cross-sell those international opportunities as an organization. We operate currently in 42 states and have over 244 locations in the US, so we have a large footprint. We are always looking to expand into areas of opportunity and we will continue to look for those areas as an organization.

CEOCFO: Are there industries or types of positions or people that should be coming to AccountAbilities but do not yet recognize your expertise?

Mr. Seavey: There is an acute shortage of high-quality talent in the area of bank and regulatory compliance. We foresaw this when we decided that we wanted to start AccountAbilities Professional Group back in early 2012. We have rapidly grown just through our reputation, our consultants and our clients and ability to be able to execute and thusly become one of the premiere providers of bank regulatory compliance project staff in the US. There are probably only about five or six other companies in the country that do exactly what we do. We are constantly striving and putting forth effort every day and this is one of the reasons we are
speaking with you and are thankful to have the opportunity. This is also why we are actively involved in many of the associations tied to the banking industry so that people who are not aware of us can become aware of us. There are other segments within our company as a whole that Mark can talk about that people should be aware of.

Mr. Levine: We have a strong customer base in the retail industry; we serve as major retailers throughout the US as well as call-center business with major distributors throughout the US and internationally. We have a large service offering within the transportation logistics arena throughout the US. As you can imagine, being a company of our size and just exceeding a billion dollars, we are fortunate enough to have marquis clients throughout the US that offer us several opportunities throughout all segments of our service offerings, so we are able to go in and provide individuals from CFOs all the way to people that work in picketing and data entry.

CEOCFO: What might be different a year from now at AccountAbilities?

Mr. Levine: A year from now we will have a more diversified service offering and increase the overall professional services business both organically and through acquisitions. What else will be different is there will be more brand awareness. We have hired NFL legend Dan Marino to be the face and company spokesperson and business advisor to the corporation. Dan’s role is to go out and help us generate additional customers as well as attend different media events to increase the overall awareness of CRS in the marketplace. Dan has already been on CNBC, Yahoo Finance, Bloomberg, Fox and Friends. He has been interviewed about Corporate Resource Services and why he is here and what he plans on doing. Since Dan has joined the team, we have been fortunate enough to pick up additional business that he has personally brought in and I see that expanding as well over the next year. I see CRS being more of a value-added provider of services not only in staffing but consulting as well.

CEOCFO: What are the challenges looking forward?

Mr. Levine: The challenges are that we continue to manage our growth correctly and we have grown tremendously through acquisitions. It is important that we focus on our internal growth and organic growth as well. Last year, over 2012 we grew in excess of 25% organically and that is something to be proud of because we have outperformed the industry. As far as AccountAbilities Professional Services Group is concerned, it has grown over 650% year over year since inception. We are proud of that and Tom and his team have taken it to the next level.

CEOCFO: Why pay attention to AccountAbilities Professional Group?

Mr. Seavey: There are many organizations out there that have mission statements where if you were to put them side by side, they would be identical. Maybe they would be somewhat paraphrased but the message would be pretty much the same. I would say to all of your executives who in my opinion in the roles that they are in do not have time for fluff or for someone to talk about all of the wonderful things that they can do for them, their commitment and how pleased they will be if they utilize our company’s services. They need someone who has not only the confidence and wherewithal to perform but they need someone who can prove it. When we lay our cards on the table with every organization that
we talk to there are two messages that we send. First we want to know what your points of pain and your challenges are, in order to see how best we can help you. If we commit to helping you, then unless we are 100% sure that we are going to be able to deliver, we would rather turn down the business than be in a situation where we put you in a compromising position.

**CEOCFO: Final thoughts?**

**Mr. Levine:** We are a value-added solutions provider and I think you can see that based on the services we offer, we’re not just providing laborers to our clients. We have a diversified portfolio of service offerings. We focus on the value-add for our clients that improves their overall efficiencies and profitability and that is where once we get established with our customers, there are long-term relationships that develop.