

# Pride At Work

## **Executive Summary**

Pride at Work (PAW) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the education and integration of “at risk” young men and women into the corporate environment. PAW began twenty years ago and has placed over 100 individuals in corporate sponsors. PAW provides candidates with the opportunity to develop technical, interpersonal and workplace skills in the information technology sector. PAW offers motivated individuals an opportunity to change their lives. PAW is predicated upon the usage of standard economic motivators and does not rely upon charity, philanthropy or altruism.

More than ever, the call for viable career paths in underprivileged communities is needed. An inadequate public education system, the lack of realistic role models, the deterioration of the family unit and the absence of spiritual underpinnings are some of the contributing factors that are conspiring to reduce the quality of career opportunities for the underprivileged. Additionally, the growing trends of outsourcing and “off-shoring” in the technology sector disproportionately affect the underprivileged and minority communities. PAW simultaneously provides individuals with life altering opportunities, enhances the technological skills of our workforce, and enables host corporations to employ resources more reflective of the markets they serve.

And, it doesn't cost the host corporation a thing. Indeed, these candidates often fill jobs with host corporations at lower price points (wages) than competitive alternatives.

## **Process**

PAW brings together five different entities to complete the process:

1. Feeder organization (local outreach program)
2. Sponsor organization (e.g., Pride)
3. Technology company (e.g., IBM)
4. Host corporation (e.g., Con Edison)
5. Candidate

Orchestrating the natural economic propensities of these five entities is the essence of PAW. It is also the secret of its success. PAW does not rely upon charity, philanthropy or altruism. PAW relies on basic economic principles as its engine.

The process begins with the selection of motivated candidates. PAW selects these candidates through a feeder system. This feeder system is comprised of community outreach programs in major cities across America. Candidates are selected based upon a number of criteria including background, motivation and aptitude.

Once identified, these individuals are conducted through a two-year program. PAW breaks the educational process into three stages: technical, interpersonal and social, and workplace.

Often, these candidates have failed in traditional educational settings and they have limited financial resources. In conjunction with companies in the technology sector (e.g.,

HP, Cisco), PAW provides the candidates with certified technical training. This training is highly structured and formalized. It often extends over several months and includes elaborate course materials, accredited instruction, and hands-on experience. During this process, candidates often come to believe in the importance of education. They begin to develop the self-esteem and work ethic necessary to complete the process. And, they earn a wage.

During the technical training, they begin to receive interpersonal and social training from role models with similar backgrounds. Some of the interpersonal and social skills highlighted include attire, personal hygiene, professional conduct, and business ethics.

After the candidate has achieved a technical and social proficiency, he or she is placed in a host corporation. This stage is the most important aspect of the candidate's training. Through the course of daily interactions in the workplace, the candidate learns those skills that will enable him/her to remain productive throughout his/her life. There is no substitute for this "on-the-job" training.

PAW carefully manages and monitors the candidate's progress during all stages of the program. PAW assumes full responsibility for the candidate's work product and conduct throughout the program. The identity of the candidate is kept confidential to a small group of administrators and key individuals at the corporate sponsor. At several points during the process, the candidate is reviewed and given feedback as to his/her performance. An executive mentor is assigned to each candidate to provide counseling and advice during the process.

PAW presents an enormous opportunity for all parties. There is no downside. Clearly, it involves considerable effort and there are failures. However, this is consistent with all economic endeavors. By orchestrating the natural economic propensity of the five constituent entities, lives are changed for the better. Certainly, the return on investment is positive from a successful candidates point of view. The beauty of PAW is that the economic ROI is also positive from all points of view.