

## The Corporate Corner

### aha! Process Constructs in the Workplace

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#### The United Way of Chittenden County South Burlington, VT

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

2008 Pinnacle Award for “Working Bridges out of Poverty Project”

Excerpts from:

“Working Bridges Supports Economically Diverse Workplaces”

Champlain *Business Journal*, December, 2008

*“Working Bridges forged partnerships with local companies that employ economically diverse workforces. Bridges offers new ways to think about poverty, particularly intergenerational poverty and economic diversity. ... This motivates employers to create management strategies that better meet the needs of an economically diverse workforce, while reducing such costly negatives as high turnover rates, excessive absenteeism, and low employee morale for the company.”*

Rhino Foods—*“As a manufacturing business, with the bulk of production workers in the \$10–\$15/hr range, this was highly relevant for us. ... I felt I’d been let in on a little secret. It’s on a short list of things that have really changed the way I think.”*

Engelberth Construction—*“We now require all foremen and supervisors to attend the Bridges training, ... It’s considered a piece of their leadership training.”*

*“One of my favorite quotes from the Bridges training is ‘No significant learning happens without a significant relationship.’ We are continually building relationships with our employees. This has been a key factor in our employee retention, employee satisfaction, and company success.”*

—Gina Catanzarita, Director of Human Resources, Engelberth Construction

#### Cascade Engineering Grand Rapids, MI

*“By incorporating Bridges lessons into our corporate culture, we learned to support and not judge entering employees who were on welfare. Retention rates and morale improved for all.”*

—Fred Keller, CEO

*“Before we integrated the principles presented in Dr. Payne’s book A Framework for Understanding Poverty, our turnover rate was 40–60%. Since we integrated the Framework principles in our partnerships with local government and nonprofit organizations and redesigned our employee orientation program, our rate has reduced to less than 5% and has held at this level for the past five years. Businesses engaging in community-wide or regional change initiatives can significantly impact their bottom lines. In 2000, turnover costs for Cascade Engineering were \$3.6 million. In 2008, it cost \$492,956.”*

—Dave A. Barrett, Director of Talent Management

“Bridging the Cultures of Business and Poverty: Welfare to Career at Cascade Engineering, Inc.”

Stanford Graduate School of Business, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2003

[http://www.ssiereview.org/articles/entry/bridging\\_the\\_cultures\\_of\\_business\\_and\\_poverty/](http://www.ssiereview.org/articles/entry/bridging_the_cultures_of_business_and_poverty/)

## The Corporate Corner (continued)

### Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. Indianapolis, IN

*"The approach of aha! Process' Bridges out of Poverty and its Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World programs recognizes the complexity of social realities and the need for a comprehensive strategy to address the total social effect of poverty. Furthermore, it advocates a person-centered approach that provides each individual the ability to help design his/her plans for growth and success. Organizations that have used Bridges constructs report significant increases in job performance among employees from low-income households. Armed with a stronger understanding of the challenges for a family struggling to achieve self-sufficiency, Getting Ahead graduates are able to improve not only their personal resources but also the skills critical to their occupational success. It is this dual benefit—increasing 'mission impact' and improving work performance—that enables Getting Ahead to be a useful tool to further sharpen the operations and overall impact of our retail division."*

—Keith A. Reissaus, Vice President, Community and Workplace Initiatives

### Cincinnati Works Cincinnati, OH

*"When we discovered Ruby's work we found a language that we could use with our board, staff, and funders to understand the magnitude of poverty."*

—David C. Philips, Co-Founder

"Tapping a Risky Labor Pool"

Harvard Business Review, December, 2006

<http://hbr.harvardbusiness.org/2006/12/tapping-a-risky-labor-pool/ar/1>

### McDonalds Franchises Pensacola, FL

*"The information I've learned about the hidden rules of class from Bridges out of Poverty has been extremely valuable to my understanding of our labor market".*

— Peter Nowak, CEO, Nowak Enterprises, Inc.  
Owner of six quick-service restaurants

### Comcast Cable Knoxville, TN

*"The book has been very useful in understanding the divisions in class and expectations each class has of each other in the workplace."*

— Kirk Dale, VP East Tennessee Area, Comcast

*"I am using the book and information with leaders and managers in a Call Center environment. We have hundreds of employees and many have been hit hard through economic pressures. The book has really opened minds about how we incent our staff members and what makes them happy in the workplace."*

— Aaron Detwiler, Sr. Director East Tennessee Area Call Center