

Case Study: Coliant Corp.

Temperament training was a key takeaway for John Swiatek, who participated in the Pure Michigan Business Connect Economic Gardening Network in early 2012.

“Understanding temperament (personality preferences, such as extroversion and introversion, and how people process information differently) is critical to managing employees and resolving some of the battles that naturally begin to break out as your company grows larger,” says Swiatek, CEO of Coliant Corp. in Warren, Mich.

A manufacturer of innovative electrical outlets and devices for the power sports market, Coliant employed 18 people when Swiatek and four of his key managers entered the economic gardening program. “As a second-stage company, you have different needs at different times,” Swiatek says. “I was at a point where I needed my management team to evolve and challenge each other — while still supporting each other.”

“Temperament training strikes at the very heart of helping people be better managers, whether they’re managing people, programs or suppliers,” Swiatek continues. “And the fact that the training came from outside experts really increases buy-in.”

Payoffs included:

- Coliant’s management team has become more cohesive and effective.
- Managers are able to motivate employees who may be resistant to change.
- Some employees have been re-slotted and placed in positions where they can play to their inherent strengths.

Swiatek is also working with his HR manager to implement temperament into the company’s hiring process. “Building a culture around temperament is no trivial task,” he says.

In October 2012, Coliant was on target to grow annual revenue by 35 percent, and Swiatek attributes a large share of this to the economic gardening services. “When you’re a startup, you need to hire people that can grab the bull by the horns and work independently,” he says. “But after you hit your first \$1 million in annual revenue you need people to begin working as a team.”

Swiatek has received other types of business assistance in the past, but what he particularly likes about economic gardening is its laser-like focus. “The research team doesn’t try to address everything,” he explains. “Instead, they identify what’s keeping you from getting to the next level and work on that.”



The Edward Lowe Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs, which are delivered through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs). The National Center for Economic Gardening is a partnership between the foundation and Chris Gibbons. NCEG delivers Economic Gardening services and maintains national standards in training and certification for both regional and state networks. For more info, visit www.edwardlowe.org.