

COVER STORY

Hamilton Group

HUMAN CAPITAL SOLUTIONS
AT WORK SINCE 1972

The Hamilton Group is unlike any business consulting and technology-related company in the Midwest. Their motto is "Integrity, Intensity and Intelligence." Tom Hamilton, Jr. runs the group as he does his hobby. "Anyone who competes with me in triathlon knows how I prepare for an event. On race day, I have only one speed, and that's full throttle!" says Hamilton Jr., who is an All-American Triathlete. "Business is the same way: To be successful, you must plan and then execute with precise accuracy and speed."

The Hamilton Group's Executive Search Division is one of the most experienced executive search firms in Iowa, recruiting executives and leadership personnel. The Hamilton Group also offers other products for employee selection such as: Personality testing and background checks, Software to manage employee referral programs; and Software that runs the

online employment application process.

The Hamilton Group, with four main entities that provide different products and services, was formed by Tom Hamilton, Jr. in 1999. "The focus from day one has been to serve clients extremely well and to leverage technology for efficiencies. This allows us to be very effective while adding tremendous value. That's why our client base continues to grow year after year," Hamilton Jr. says. Today, The Hamilton Group serves hundreds of clients in 25 states.

Hamilton Associates, the executive search division of the Hamilton Group, works with clients primarily in the state of Iowa. "Whether it is a for-profit or non-profit organization, Hamilton Associates many times played a prominent role in the people behind the many great things occurring in Central Iowa today," Tom Hamilton Jr. says.

Different is Better: Most recruiters are contingency recruiters — they send out résumés and try to make a placement commission. "We work with clients in a different, more holistic way," Hamilton Jr. says. Hamilton Associates is a business advisor to the client, much like a company's CPA or Business Attorney. Hamilton Associates discusses strategically the organization's goals for growth and personnel. "Some companies spend more time and money evaluating a \$700 copier than they do a \$70,000 person, but we will not let them make that mistake," Hamilton Jr. says. "Companies are beginning to realize that making a hiring mistake is very costly in terms of time, lost productivity, and hard dollars. That is why our business advice is so valuable," Hamilton Jr. added.

As a retained business advisor, Hamilton Associates provides not only the recruiting, but also evaluates the job fit. "Our process



*Terry Lebo, Director of Recruiting,
The Hamilton Group*

has proved to be very successful," said Terry Lebo, Hamilton Associates Director of Recruiting. "Many of Central Iowa's top business leaders are successful in their careers because of the due diligence Hamilton Associates performs."

A commitment to the job frequently results in a commitment to the community. "We take great pride in the fact that so many business leaders we recruited are doing so much to help our community," says Hamilton Jr., who, like other Hamilton Group executives, sits on numerous boards throughout central Iowa.

AgRecruiter — President Bush and Governor Culver are touting renewable fuels as a way for the US to grow our economy while decreasing our reliance on foreign oil. However, to be successful, new BioFuels companies will need skilled groups of leaders to operate them. AgRecruiter specializes in searching



Tom Hamilton, Jr., President, The Hamilton Group



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realize they can count on us to recruit a key person, and leverage technology to hire better people while significantly reducing the high costs of turnover. This approach has led to very high customer satisfaction and loyalty," Hamilton Jr. added.

Selection Expertise

SelectionResources.com — Tom Hamilton, Sr. has 30 years experience with selecting people, and with his masters in psychology and testing, has the credentials to represent any testing product in the market. In 1999, he and Tom Jr. met with a top publisher in Dallas, Texas, and found exactly what they were looking for. They became the personality testing partner in the upper Midwest for the leading business testing instrument in the market today. "It has the best of everything, the Cadillac of assessments hands down. Its validity and reliability are statistically the best we have ever seen. We formed an immediate partnership that has been beneficial for us both," Hamilton Jr. added.

Today, SelectionResources specializes in providing clients an extremely cost-effective, legal and valid online assessment service featuring brief administration, no grading or annual fees. "The internet has changed everybody's business," adds Tom Hamilton Sr., "Technology has brought tremendous efficiencies. What used to take us five hours, now we can do in less than an hour, and we can work with anyone in the world, so we are extremely productive." High-potential candidates are identified by accurately benchmarking those unique traits that are prominent in a client's top performers. This process allows businesses to hire and manage smarter while helping to minimize employee turnover.

"Sometimes, the hardest part about hiring is not finding the person, but

selecting the best one for the job," Tom Hamilton, Jr. says. Using testing in the hiring process has become very scientific. SelectionResources.com's advanced technology makes it easy for clients to objectively evaluate candidates.

The company provides thousands of tests each year to clients as big as Hy-Vee, John Deere Credit, and Casey's; and to clients as small as start-ups.

"The process is fairly sophisticated and gives you great insight into an individual," Hamilton Sr. says. "There's a culture fit with every recruiting project, and technology has added a tremendous amount of information. We can furnish benchmarks by concurrent validation. Then we build a model of what skills and abilities the position should have and compare someone against the model. It's nondiscriminatory — we only know what it takes to do that job."

"Every company's situation is unique," says Tom Hamilton Sr. "Technology can

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for leadership personnel in agriculture-related businesses.

"We provide Ag and BioFuels clients with access to people they can't find through any other resource," says Terry Lebo, AgRecruiter Director of Recruiting. "Both the candidate and client are more precise in what they're looking for. No one's looking at the broad background anymore. They want a candidate or career that fits exactly. We can deliver this person and that career to them," Lebo explains. "This specialty niche is poised for growth, as we see agriculture playing a more prominent role in energy and feeding the world," Lebo added.

Hamilton Associates and AgRecruiter often recruit a leadership level position for the client, and that educates them on the advantages of using pre-employment testing and background checks. "Clients often begin to utilize these selection tools at all levels in the organization because they see they are very effective. Quickly, they



From left to right: Tom Hamilton, Jr., Tom Hamilton, Sr., Terry Lebo

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result in a better group of people being brought in for interviews. What we're doing for businesses is helping them make a much better educated decision on who to hire," Sr. added.

Background Checking: The Society for Human Resource Management estimates that 53 percent of all job applications contain false information. Based on a survey of 2.6 million job applicants, 44 percent lied about work experience, 23 percent fabricated credentials or licenses, and 41 percent lied about their education. According to the FBI, a half million people in the U.S. falsely claim to have a college degree. Many individuals try to hide a clouded past, and employers may not give references or comment on a former employee. Negligent hiring is the real threat of liability to employers today. To avoid a costly mistake it's becoming a standard to perform a background search before hiring.

The Hamilton Group helps clients create a background check policy or update an existing one. The reason? Simple...avoid situations like that of the Notre Dame football coach who was fired days after being hired because it was found that he lied on his résumé, or the local college President who was growing marijuana in his basement.

"These are high-profile examples of situations that could have been avoided if the organization would have had us run background checks," Tom Hamilton, Jr. said. An online system allows clients to tap into information in every state and county court in the U.S. and Canada. "We never just rely on a database. We actually have people who go to the courthouses to insure accuracy of the information. We run hundreds of checks per month for employers that want to make sure the person they are about to spend thousands of dollars on is who he/she says they are."

Tom Hamilton, Jr. says, "Database search firms, although quick and inexpensive, are often selling outdated and incomplete information. In the eyes of the

law, the results may not be compliant. It is a prudent step to check the backgrounds of new hires, but you must have reliable data. We do not use databases, and you would not believe what we find in people's pasts."

Employment Referral Marketing

— Executives and human resource professionals agree that referred employees are their best performers! But, how do organizations manage a program so it efficiently maintains records for payment of referral awards? In 2000, Tom Hamilton, Jr. set out to improve the efficiency of the best recruiting tool available...a company's workforce.

After two years and development costs reaching well into the six figures, Referral-Trac® software entered the market. Referral-Trac® was developed as a means for human resource departments to expand their employee referral program (ERP) without employing additional time or resources.

Referral-Trac® is a web-based application that improves employee referral program performance, simplifies administration, and lowers cost-per-hire. The advanced software improves HR's ability to increase ERP awareness and participation across the entire organization. Putting the details of a referral program online includes rewards, rules and frequently asked questions, and saves HR administration time and money.

"A referral from an existing employee is the best source of new employees," Hamilton Jr. says, "but the real challenge is keeping track of who was referred, and delivering the appropriate candidate information to a hiring authority. Referral-Trac® automates the communication to the hiring authorities, employees, candidates, and the payroll department. This is a big time saver for HR. All referrals are stored in a private database, and data is available in real-time. Referral-Trac® is accessible 24/7, can be linked from a corporate intranet, and is easy for employees and HR staff to use.

"Companies as large as British Petroleum and as small as YMCAs utilize our software with tremendous results," Hamilton Jr.

says. "We are helping BP meet their international challenges of recruiting top people to the company."

Snap Apply — Online applications make a big difference in hiring efficiencies when organizations are handling a large volume of applications. Organizations including Hy-Vee and The Greater Des Moines YMCA utilize this sophisticated screening technology to help sort through hourly applicants and get the top applicants in for interviews immediately.

"With a shortage of labor at the hourly level, speed is of the essence," Hamilton Jr. says. "We screen out the poor candidates with targeted pre-screen questions, testing, and background checks. It improves the staffing process tremendously, and creates easy to find records if government audits should happen."

"We are in business to help business succeed. When you add value to the hiring process, clients will continue to use your services and refer others to you. This is what continues to fuel our growth today," Hamilton Jr. says. ■

The Hamilton Group has a complete menu of products and services to help businesses hire top performers. Contact the Hamilton Group today at 515-221-1733, or www.HamiltonAssociates.com.



Tom Hamilton, Jr. shown with Referral-Trac® software.