

Case Study Holland & Knight (new corporate strategy for a large international law firm)

Profile

Holland & Knight is a large international law firm with approximately 1,100 attorneys. It has offices in many cities in Florida, as well as in Boston, New York, Washington DC, Northern Virginia, Chicago, Portland, Oregon, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Tokyo and Beijing. H&K also has several correspondent offices in cities in Latin America and Europe. Much of the growth of the firm occurred from the mid-1990s through 2001. <http://www.hklaw.com>

Situation

In 2003, dissatisfied with recent performance, H&K elected a new managing partner and decided to chart a new strategy. The director for strategic planning, after interviewing the top national law firm consultancies, chose AMCI to assist with this process—even though AMCI had no previous experience working with law firms.

Solution

In late 2003, AMCI began a methodical process to chart H&K's strategic vision and establish a plan for accomplishing that vision. We began by assembling approximately 40 leaders within the Firm and spent 3 days together in early February, 2004 doing an AMCI Catalyst. As attorneys, most of the invited participants were naturally cynical about the prospects for making any meaningful progress, particularly in such a short period of time. However, the weekend was a resounding success as the assembled leaders not only were able to agree upon a vision for the Firm, but were able to outline the Objectives for achieving the visions and the projects to achieve the Objectives. Even the avowed skeptics were impressed with the process as well as the structured follow-up. Over the next 2 years, H&K worked closely with AMCI to turn the Vision into actions, projects and progress. AMCI's careful stewardship of this process was critical, as was the coaching and training they provided to several of H&K directors. Holland & Knight rated AMCI's performance as excellent.

Benefits

Following the retreat in the next 3 years H&K experienced double digit growth in equity partner profits, per lawyer revenue and rose to number 3 of all top 200 firms in the nation in client service. Many significant initiatives referenced in the objectives were completed.

One senior director had this to say, "Following the retention of a new chief operating officer, the firm engaged other consultants and uniformly the leadership of the firm determined that AMCI produced far superior results. Of perhaps greater benefit was the training that was given in helping managers move forward on pursuing priorities established at the retreat. I now serve as Executive Partner of the Chicago office of Holland & Knight (its second largest office). The tools that were given to us in the training session have served me well in managing the business and professionals in my office."