

November 27, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Chief of Party for the Cambodia MSME Project, I provide this letter of recommendation to Ripple Effect Consulting and Mr. Todd Smith without hesitation.

In mid 2010, after two high-performance years implementing culture-changing rural economic development activities in 17 provinces of Cambodia, the MSME team was showing signs of wear and stress. With two more years to go to the end of the project, the MSME management team could not afford to begin losing well-trained team members or to slow our momentum. The stress indicators were obvious; unusually small problems became magnified into major ones due, mostly, to too much travel, long hours away from the family, and an exhausting work schedule.

The MSME management scanned Cambodia and the region for a team building course that could keep us at high-performance and give us practical tools for ignoring or solving the small problems that all teams experience. We needed a team building course that wouldn't be boring, but also, since we had no major team-related problems, not create problems that didn't exist.

Many members of the team had already experienced two, rather boring, week-long, listen-to-the-expert, "this is how a team works" self-realization-style courses since 2005, first with the MSME-1 Project and then shortly after beginning the MSME-2 Project; everyone knew what we didn't want, but it was difficult to describe precisely what we did want.

The management team had previously observed how the team had sat through the classroom-style courses and then returned to work business-as-usual; this time we wanted the team arrive back to work excited and happy, not tired and worn out after sitting in a chair for five days. What we wanted was a course that would improve teamwork, increase the team's energy level, create a required level of anxiety from self-realization and yet be fun, with lots of laughing and team interaction.

We advertised regionally, received several expressions of interest, and began the interview task. Each firm we interviewed invariably presented a version of what we had had before - classroom instruction for five days. All the firms, except one.

When Todd Smith, representing Ripple Effect Consulting, came for his interview, our instincts told us that our advertisement had attracted a person and firm that would listen to us to understand what we wanted and then carefully craft a unique team building training to meet our requirements. Unlike with the other firms, most of that first discussion with Todd Smith centered on what result **we** intended to have by the end of the training. Mr. Smith came back the

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following week with a list of creative ideas; there was nothing ordinary or boring to what he presented. The MSME management team chose Ripple Effect Consulting to conduct our training shortly thereafter.

The Ripple Effect Team facilitated five full-day and five two-hour training sessions over a two-month time frame. This schedule fit well and, most importantly, allowed our team to learn and practice what they learned after each session before returning to learn from the next session.

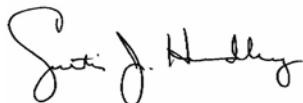
To make a longer story short, the training that the Ripple Effect Team facilitated was highly-participatory and down-right fun. Instead of “this-is-how-high-performance-teams-work” lectures, the MSME team participated in fun, interesting, and thought-provoking group exercises.

What the MSME team didn’t realize was that Mr. Smith and the high-performance Ripple Effect team were facilitating activities that craftily demonstrated how teams work best and maintained high-performance. That was exactly the approach we wanted to take from the very beginning. Mr. Smith listened to our requirements and produced a product that met our specifications and expectations to a tee.

During the course of two months, the MSME team learned to laugh again, play better together, and respect each other for the differences as much as the similarities each member possesses. And unlike after past training courses, not one team member has come to the management team since the courses ended and informed us that the Ripple Effect Consulting team’s approach was boring. My team’s written evaluation of the team building course indicated an ultra high satisfaction level.

We are already discussing future trainings with Mr. Smith and his fabulous team; that’s about the best reference there is, right?

Regards,



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