

Published October 23rd, 2013

CaHR: Back to Lafayette to Manage Human Resources

By Sophie Braccini



From left, CaHR V.P. of Sales Michael Harrison and CEO Matt Delaney. Photo Sophie Braccini

There is no place like home, for family or for work, according to Matt Delaney, who returned to his home town of Lafayette to develop and expand the business he started in Hawaii five years ago. Almost a business adventurer, Delaney looks like nothing would be able to slow him down, not even the cancer that struck him some 15 years ago. Still going back to Hawaii regularly while his family is settled here, the CEO is focusing his energy on developing the California market for managing and outsourcing human resources functions, and more, and is thinking about expanding to the rest of the states.

And his Lafayette company is hiring.

Everything at CaHR in Lafayette speaks of local connections re-activated. The building Delaney is leasing belongs to his next door neighbor from a family he knew when he was growing up. To kick start his implementation in California he bought a Lafayette firm called Human Resource Advisor that belonged to Barbara Freet, whose daughter, Amy, went to Stanley Middle School with Delaney. Coming back to Lafayette to raise his family in Burton Valley and establish his California headquarters, he reconnected with many friends, including Michael Harrison, a Campolindo High School buddy who became a baseball pro before hanging up his mitt and going into sales; he is now CaHR's vice president of sales.

Delaney's professional life, however, has taken him quite far from Lafayette. After graduating from USC in accounting, he worked for E&Y Kenneth Leventhal Real Estate Group where he was a senior consultant and CPA. He became part of Sunterra's acquisition and development team, before becoming the CEO of Marc Resorts Hawaii which operated 22 resort properties with over 1,000 employees. Twelve years before creating the HiGroup, Delaney held various executive positions in Hawaii. It is there that he saw an untapped market for human resource services. In the meantime, he found the time to marry Karen, his Campo sweet heart.

HiHR in Hawaii has 100 internal employees with 286 clients last year representing 5,000 employees - a nearly 500 percent increase in clients from the end of 2009, translating to \$71 million in revenue.

The Lafayette office will provide human resource services for businesses of all sizes. "Businesses do not always have the resources to manage their workers' comp, payroll, and now the Affordable Care Act (ACA) benefits," says Delaney. He adds that the ACA, which can be confusing to a lot of business owners, is not something new to his company. "In Hawaii, we have had the pre-paid health care act since 1974 that companies have to subscribe to even if they have only one employee, so we know the game of eligibility, tracking the hours, et cetera," he said. "Right now there is so much confusion, and reporting compliance requirements, business owners will have to turn to somebody."

CaHR is a full resource outsourcing firm. "There are two models to manage employment and administrative functions," says Delaney. "PEOs (Professional Employer Organizations) where we are the co-employer handling all the back-office and taking responsibility for it, and ASOs (Administrative Service Organizations) providing the same services but with the paperwork being filed under the client's federal employer's identification number." CaHR also does full staffing and recruiting.

"We already have clients in many states, but to develop the California market, it is important to have a local office," says Delaney, who believes in creating relationships with his clients, which means that he is looking for the right partners to expand in other regions. He also plans to diversify the services in California by adding accounting and marketing, just like HiHR does in Hawaii. "In a few years, all the subsidiaries will be regrouped under a national holding called Demand HR," he adds.

The market of CaHR is mostly small companies. "The laws in California are a pain in the neck for small companies," Delaney says, "but there is opportunity for us to come in and help." He adds that size is not an absolute limiting factor. "In Hawaii our smaller client has one employee, the biggest has 800."

Right now CaHR is looking for a receptionist, an executive/personal assistant, a staffing manager, a recruiter, some sales people, a benefits specialist, and a payroll specialist.

The Hawaiian blessing of the office - a traditional blessing in the islands that honors those of the past, present, and future - by Kahu Curt Kekuna, is scheduled from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Oct. 25 at 201 Lafayette Circle, Suite 200. The energy, or "mana" (power within), left behind from the people who once held a place here, and even those before

are honored and blessed, as they allow new energy to enter, dwell, and prosper. To RSVP, email mdelaney@ca-hr.com. For more information, visit www.ca-hr.com or call (925) 310-5400.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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