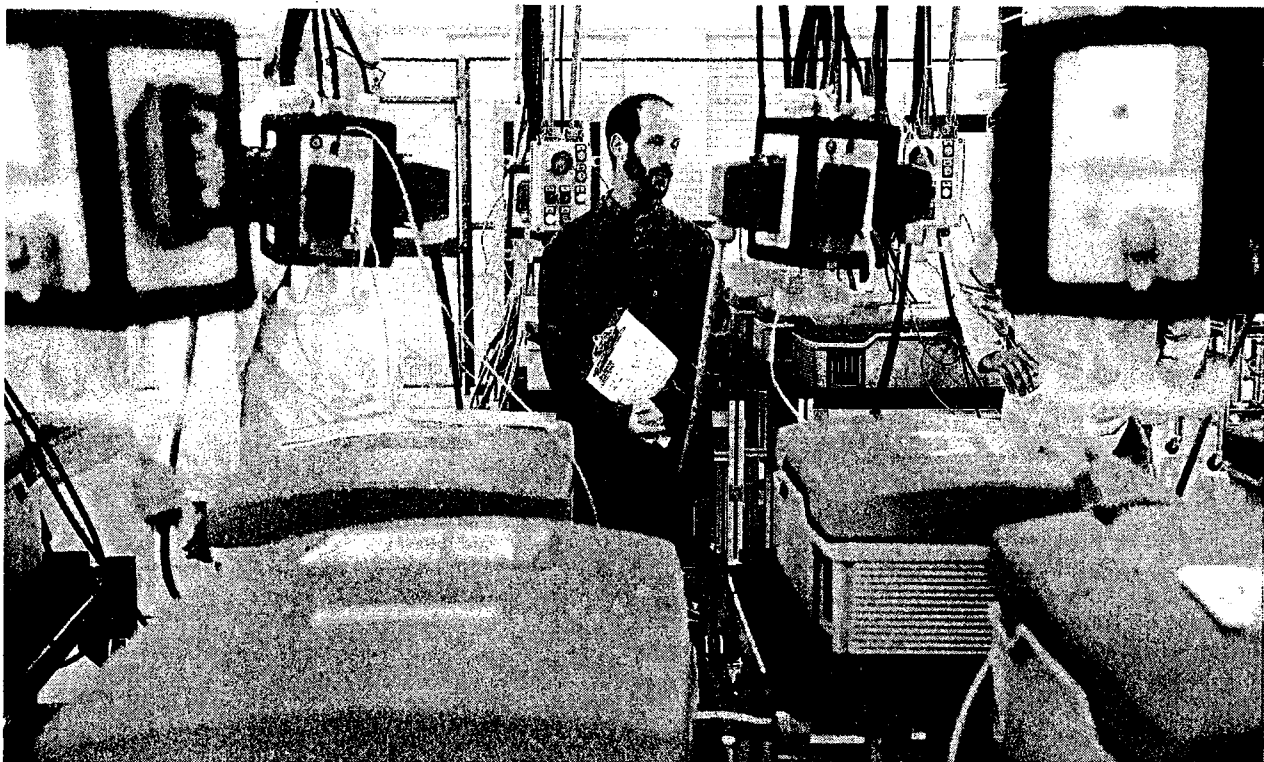


InsideView» Ryan Hellman, president, Hellman & Associates Inc.

Ken Schmerber, a Hellman & Associates consultant, inspects a work area at SMA Solar Technology's Aurora plant. Hellman & Associates is an environmental health and safety consulting firm. *Reza A. Marvashti, The Denver Post*

Quick help, fast results

EDITOR'S NOTE: This occasional column aims to highlight problems confronted by small businesses in Colorado and how they were solved. This installment is in the words of Ryan Hellman, president of Hellman & Associates Inc.

The Company: Hellman & Associates is an environmental health and safety consulting firm that works across multiple industries to monitor changing OSHA regulations, assess job sites for hazards, train English- and Spanish-speaking workers and document safety and environmental programs.

The Problem: An outside sales consultant uncovered a flaw in H&A's business development strategy that disincented the consulting team from driving organic growth (i.e. seeking service contract renewals of existing clients and upselling new business). Overall team goals had been established rather than individual goals, which created a sense of internal competition for some and disdain for others. While client-facing

consultants are more service-oriented and less sales-focused, they were still expected to maintain their accounts and attempt to grow them. Overall, there was great frustration that they were now being held accountable for their billable hours and expected to both service and sell their accounts.

The Solution: At the request of H&A's president, an outside consultant was asked to interview the staff that next week, without senior management around, to better understand their concerns and learn more about their motivations. In addition to the frustrations about sales activities, other issues affecting morale included a desire for more frequent performance reviews and an alternative auto expense reimbursement policy.

Within days of the staff interview, the president and the consultant discussed her findings and recommendations. Within 10 days, a new commission program had been developed that incented the consultants on an individual basis, gave them a choice on the auto expense policy and in-

creased the number of performance reviews per year. The new changes were first rolled out to senior management for their feedback and then to staff the following day.

The Outcome: Although these events have all happened within the February/March 2010 time frame, there have been two notable outcomes:

1) requests for proposals as generated by the consultants with their existing clients have doubled so far in April.

2) 100 percent of the consultants are now working on a proposal, whereas only 25 percent initiated new opportunities in previous months. Though there are no new deals closed, as yet, this revised strategy appears to have motivated the team enough to participate more successfully in the business development process.

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