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PCTEL Case Study

PCTEL did not need an organization in China, but needed a Design Team who could help them sell in Asia. They needed two electrical antenna engineers and two mechanical antenna engineers and each needed to be able to speak English. In the world, there were only a handful of people who can meet their requirements and the cost of these was high. We exceeded their expectations in who we found and the team remains strong 5 years later with only slight adjustments.

As the search began, it became apparent that the number of high level Wireless Engineers in China was very limited. China had no recognized advanced degree program in wireless at all. The concept in China was still just gathering steam. Demand for these people was high. They had head hunters calling them every week. They could name their salary and get it. You could offer them three times the salary of the other engineers and they would not come. Mechanical Design Engineers with Wireless experience were also in short supply, but the electronics were the key. We needed a team leader who was an experienced wireless engineer and then a more junior person. All four of them needed excellent English.

Beijing was the chosen location as likely no other place in China could have such people. By networking, we identified and contacted the Flextronics Design Team Leader. She had a doctorate in Wireless from a good Japanese University. She was ethnically Mongolian and so could master Japanese more easily to get her Doctorate in a difficult program abroad when none existed in China. We encouraged her to accept and interview with us. She came and we carefully asked questions while recruiting her. Gradually, we realized, she not only had very high level experience and ability in wireless like China did not naturally possess, but she also had a very high level of emotional intelligence. It was so unusual for an Engineer at her level. We realized that we could build a team around her that would stick as they would love working for her and she would develop the whole team. She was not ready to make the move. She had a high paying job at a world famous American Contract manufacturer. She oversaw ten design engineers at Flextronics and would only oversee three here.

We felt the change would be good for her. She would get a raise to astronomical Chinese heights and would be able to be the top person in China for them, while she was nobody at Flextronics. It was too big to give you any room.

I started to develop a friendship with her that extends to today. As she gradually realized that I was not trying to trick her, her defenses came down and she could hear why I thought the move would be good for her. She started to think about it and I kept in touch with her over a few weeks and helped her talk through her concerns. In December of 2007, she agreed to take a step forward. They did a Skype interview with her on my computer. They were impressed. PCTEL invited her to their facility in Chicago to know her and woo her further. We managed all the logistics. They loved her as we knew they would, and she agreed to join their team. We eased her way in and held her by the hand as she started to give her all the service she needed. If she was happy, the whole thing would fly. I was her oversight in China while PCTEL managed her directly by Skype from Chicago.

Finding the other three people was hard and took months, but she was attractive as a leader to all candidates, and we could recruit excellent and trustworthy people around her. The team formed. I spent time each week attending her meetings with the team and hearing her concerns. For three years no one left and then one moved on. Three are still there including this very special woman who has made PCTEL very happy.