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CEO's Say Talent Management is a Top Business Challenge According to *PDI Pulse on Leaders Study*

CEOs Rank Talent Management Challenges Even Higher than Meeting Financial Objectives

MINNEAPOLIS (October 21, 2008) – A recent *Pulse on Leaders* study by Personnel Decisions International (PDI) analyzed data on a group of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to find out what keeps them up at night. When asked open-endedly what business challenges they need to address, the top three responses were achieving top-line growth, talent management and meeting financial objectives.

“It’s a very telling indication of how crucial talent management issues are to company success when CEOs mention talent management challenges over the challenge of meeting financial objectives,” said Brian Davis, Ph. D., executive vice president, PDI. “In the current business environment, talent is the most important asset for organizations and company leaders recognize how essential addressing talent management issues are to the overall performance and success of the business.”

“The war for talent is over and the talent won,” said Carl Camden, CEO of Kelly Services. “We no longer have a bottomless pool of talent to do the work that is needed. Even highly successful businesses are scrambling to tap this limited pool and are adapting the business and work place to address a new normal.”

The 90 surveyed CEOs were evaluated in assessment centers by PDI in 2006 and 2007. This study focuses on their answers to the question: “Within the scope of your current role, what are the business challenges you need to address over the next year?”

Nearly half of the CEOs surveyed said that top-line growth was a business challenge that they would be addressing in the next year, 33 percent said talent management is a top business challenge and just 26 percent said meeting financial objectives was a top challenge. The top ten business challenges noted by CEOs include:

- Achieving top-line growth (46 percent)
- Talent management (33 percent)
- Meeting financial objectives (23 percent)
- Implementing business strategy (13 percent)
- Developing business strategy (13 percent)
- Infrastructure/operations issues (12 percent)
- Mergers and acquisitions (11 percent)
- Current customers (11 percent)
- Capitalization/cash flow (11 percent)
- Organizational culture/change (9 percent)

“In our business we see every day how important talent management issues are to overall success and growth of a company,” said Davis. “What this research shows us is that CEOs across industries have talent management issues top-of-mind in what they need to do to differentiate from competitors and ensure organizational success.”

“We suggest aligning your talent strategies with overall business strategies from the very beginning and taking a proactive and long-term approach to talent management issues,” Davis adds. “The companies that do this the best are consistently in the top of their fields and have the staying power to outpace competitors and overcome challenging economic cycles.”

MEDIA NOTE

Look for future data releases from the *PDI Pulse on Leaders*.

The *PDI Pulse on Leaders* analyzes different workplace questions on a regular basis and can be used as a source for gaining insight on the inner values of talent management and leadership development.

ABOUT PERSONNEL DECISIONS INTERNATIONAL

Personnel Decisions International (PDI) and Ninth House recently combined to create PDI Ninth House. We are the premier global leadership solutions company with distinctive expertise in accelerating leadership effectiveness to maximize organizational performance. We help clients identify, manage, develop, and promote superior leaders, across all levels of the organization. We use a unique combination of innovative, field-tested strategies, state-of-the art technology, and proven processes to tailor specific solutions for our clients.

With 750 team members in 30 offices around the globe, we partner with the world’s leading organizations, enabling them to address critical leadership challenges with innovative solutions. We have the privilege of serving over 2000 clients, including 80 percent of U.S. *Fortune* 100 firms and 75 percent of *Forbes* Global 100.

Our aim is simple—the well-placed confidence that clients’ current and future leaders are distinctively stronger than their competition, resulting in sustained, superior performance.

For more information, contact client relations at 1.920.997.6995 (in the U.S. 1.800.633.4410) or visit our website at www.pdininthhouse.com.

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