Providing Network Operations Center Engineers via an Exclusivity Partnership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TEKsystems partnered with a large communications company to provide nearly 100 highly skilled network engineers to run the client’s new network operations center (NOC) in Texas. Through an exclusivity contract, TEKsystems was able to save the client approximately $8 million.

Skill Sets Supported

Cisco equipment, radio access network (RAN) equipment, transport equipment, provisioning, project coordination, data analysis and dispatching.

Client Profile

Headquartered in Washington state, the client is one of the nation’s largest wireless voice, messaging and data providers delivering communications services to more than 59 million customers in the United States, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. TEKsystems has partnered with this client since 1998.

Situation

The client had recently established a new NOC in Texas; the center was responsible for supporting 24x7 data delivery for all new products across the client’s various delivery and support networks. While the client had plans to transition eight of their full-time employees to run and manage the brand new center, they did not have the internal technical resources needed to staff it. To fill the gap in personnel, the client submitted a bid to their staffing partners for four network engineers from the Dallas market.

Upon reviewing the bid, TEKsystems recognized an opportunity to provide additional value to the client by supplying all four engineers at a lower bill rate as part of an exclusivity partnership. TEKsystems’ account managers met with the client’s senior manager overseeing the NOC to discuss our solution and the possible cost savings associated with our proposed exclusivity contract. Based on the senior manager’s confidence in our ability to consistently and continuously provide skilled IT professionals, the client granted TEKsystems sole staffing privileges to supply technical personnel as the NOC grew.

Solution

As a former Marine, the senior manager at the client expressed an interest in tapping into our diversity and inclusion program involving veterans to fill a portion of the initial four engineering positions, due to veterans’ comfort in operating in 24x7 working environments. Leveraging this pool of candidates, as well as our access to highly skilled IT professionals through our proprietary Staffing Quality Process®, we sourced, screened and onboarded four Cisco engineers to support the NOC within two weeks of formalizing our partnership.

Over the next six years, we steadily ramped up the number of resources working at the NOC. To date we have provided nearly 100 consultants with diverse skill sets, spanning network engineering, RAN engineering, transport engineering, provisioning, project coordination, data analysis and dispatching. A large percentage of the resources we supplied were found using our extensive access to qualified former military members.
Benefits

In partnering with TEKsystems exclusively for NOC staffing support, we were able to provide the client with resources at a bill rate roughly 40 percent lower than the market average, allowing the client to realize nearly $8 million in savings to date.

Throughout the life of our partnership, referrals played a large role in delivering qualified candidates that fit the client’s needs and culture. Many of the long-term, on-site resources offered referrals when the need for additional personnel opened at the NOC. Approximately 75 percent of the resources we provided stemmed from existing consultant referrals.

As a result of TEKsystems' ability to consistently provide high-quality resources and cost savings, we strengthened our working relationship with the senior manager and helped streamline the formal resource hiring process. Previously, the senior manager personally interviewed candidates as part of the screening process. But as the manager grew more comfortable with our sourcing strategy and confident in the quality of reliable referrals that were driving talent acquisition, he felt his involvement in direct interviews could be eliminated altogether.

Our trusting relationship with the senior manager also provided an outlet for our team to have regular and candid conversations about upcoming NOC projects and initiatives. This additional insight positioned us to better anticipate the center’s upcoming staffing needs based on their forecasted pipeline. Through these conversations, we were able to preemptively help the client formulate a plan to address an upcoming tenure issue that could have otherwise derailed the NOC’s functionality.

As many of the on-site resources had been supporting the NOC for an extended period of time, the client was approaching tenure limitations that threatened to diminish their workforce by 44 percent if these resources were forced to stop working at the client for several months. We proposed a TEKsystems Global Services® solution to combat the client’s tenure situation. Our solution would also provide additional metrics around the success of NOC project initiatives and resources’ performance that would in turn help speed up productivity and drive efficiencies (e.g., fault analysis, faster onboarding and shorter time to task).