

One on One with DLC's Tom Sweeney

Every day, finance and accounting professionals consider careers in consulting but often have second thoughts when confronted with the reality of long hours and extensive travel. One highly successful alternative model is DLC, a finance and accounting professional services firm. The firm currently employs about 150 people across offices in California, Chicago and Dallas and has a five-year plan to more than triple the size of the business. To learn more, Consulting's One on One sat down with DLC's CEO Tom Sweeney.



Tom Sweeney,
CEO,
DLC

Consulting: What's unique about DLC?

Sweeney: We only hire Big 4 CPAs and/or Top 25 MBAs with hands-on functional experience in *Fortune* 1000 companies. Any number of firms offer assistance with a similar menu of services [financial planning and analysis, financial accounting and reporting, financial systems implementation, etc.], but it's the intersection of our unique employment model and our unique operating model that drives our value proposition. In contrast to our model, the consulting arms of Big 4 hire people right out of business school or the assurance practice whom, often, lack industry experience. All of our practitioners have extensive experience executing work in the complex environments of the *Fortune* 1000.

Consulting: There are staffing firms that offer industry veterans to help run a finance or accounting group on an interim basis. How does DLC differ from those firms?

Sweeney: Generally, those firms only pay their employees when they are billable. DLC consultants are salaried employees and are paid whether they are on a project or not. Among several other elements of the model, our consultants also have one year employment agreements and are compensated for hours billed in excess of 40 per week. These benefits, in addition to our local deployment model, provide our clients with increased consultant focus and commitment to delivering satisfying project results.

Consulting: What's the typical employee that your model attracts?

Sweeney: People join DLC for two reasons: either they want a long term career in consulting or they are interested in accelerating their skills and experience.

Consulting: How did the firm develop this model?

Sweeney: David Lewis founded the firm in June 2001. David recognized an unmet or poorly met need-state for on-demand and flexible solutions to solve finance and accounting issues. He then architected a model to address the gaps in services provided by global consulting and other staffing models, inspiring the highly effective model we operate today.

Consulting: The marketplace has changed significantly in the last ten years. Is demand still strong?

Sweeney: While demand has certainly declined during the great recession, we still continue to serve many of the same *Fortune* 1000 companies we have served over the last 10 years. Our utilization rates have typically averaged at, or around 90 percent. While we are very interested in scaling the business profitably, we recognize it's very important to create a world class organization for our consultants. In fact, five of our former alumni have elected to return to the firm in the last six months.

Copyright © 2011