

# Client Spotlight

## Host Marriott

With more than 120 properties and nearly 60,000 rooms, Host Marriott Corporation is the world's largest lodging Real Estate Investment Trust. Branded as the premier hospitality and real estate company, it wanted to ensure that the leadership skills of its people parallel the excellence that is Host Marriott. It held a lofty goal of not only reshaping the Host Marriott corporate culture, but to also be what CEO Christopher Nassetta calls the "Best in Class" in Human Resources. With that as her charge, Pamela Kaufman Wagoner, Host Marriott's Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Leadership Development had a revelation while visiting with Susan Butcher, who has won the Iditarod four times. Observing Butcher's dogs, Kaufman came to learn that only lead dogs were run in the Iditarod. Further, the dogs were not controlled by the people running them; the people were only there to guide and praise. It is the dogs who train the dogs. The older, lead dogs had the responsibility of training the more junior lead dogs, and the junior lead dogs had responsibility for training the puppies. Kaufman realized that instead of Host Marriott's senior management solving everyone's problems, the structure needed to work like that which Butcher established for her prize-winning team. With this model in mind, Kaufman rolled out a comprehensive process that included Situational Leadership® II (SLII®) and Situational Self Leadership delivered via a custom-designed combination of classroom sessions, online learning, and individual coaching.

**CHALLENGE:** To build and ensure leadership that is parallel to the excellence that is Host Marriott

**SOLUTION:** To create a blended leadership curriculum that focused on leadership skills, partnering, goal setting, and communication

**RESULTS:** Improved leadership skills and role clarity, improved goal and role clarity, and enhanced communication.

**The Payoff:** The changes have resulted in improvement in leadership skills and transfer of knowledge as executives determine what is important to them and understand their role in helping individuals grow and develop in the organization. Employees are required to rate themselves as being a "role model," being an "effective leader," or a "needing improvement." This self-assessment causes them to look at what they need to improve, which leads to enhanced goal setting. A newly implemented praise system solidifies a feeling of trust between executives and employees.

Pamela Kaufman Wagoner is the Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Leadership Development with Host Marriott Corporation. She leads the organization's development initiatives, performance management, benefits and compensation programs, and succession planning and leadership development, ensuring alignment of business objectives with the values and culture of the company.