

HELLY HANSEN Case Study

Helly Hansen (U.S.) Inc. manufactures and sells high quality protective technical apparel for athletes, professionals, and outdoor enthusiasts. Based outside Seattle, Wash., the company is enjoying rapid growth, with the addition of four corporate-owned stores and 16 licensed locations over the past two years, and revenues up 25 percent in that same period. Currently, Helly has 67 employees in eight states.

The Challenge

As a small but growing business, Helly Hansen faced the same range of human resource issues that many larger companies do, including keeping on top of employment laws and regulations in multiple states. The company needed executive-level HR guidance *and* flawless hands-on administration of payroll and benefits – but couldn't afford to create an in-house human resources department with that range of expertise.

The Solution

In 1999, Helly Hansen turned to HRnovations for human resource consulting. HRnovations conducted a complete overhaul of Helly Hansen's human resources functions, including a review of its existing systems, processes, compliance procedures, and analysis of its future growth needs. For the next three years, HRnovations was responsible for:

- Recruiting, hiring, and new employee orientation;
- Designing and implementing a performance review system;
- Creating a compensation program;
- Employee and management training sessions;
- Providing human resources counseling to Helly's executive management team; and
- Providing human resources support during company restructuring and executive team transition

In 2001, Helly Hansen decided to extend its contract with HRnovations to include professional employer organization (PEO) services. Under the PEO arrangement, Helly Hansen and HRnovations are co-employers. Helly still controls the content and quality of the employees' work, but HRnovations takes care of all other HR-related issues.

The Results

By letting HRnovations handle all of its human resources functions, Helly Hansen's executives can concentrate their attention on the future of the company and the issues that affect its bottom line. The company has access to a human resources brain trust, for about the same cost as staffing a two-person in-house HR department.

HRnovations created an employee policy manual and makes sure that all relevant employment regulations are complied with. When new employees are hired, HRnovations recruits candidates and conducts preliminary interviews, passing the top candidates to Helly for the final decision. HRnovations provides training for supervisors and managers, and assists with counseling employees when there are performance problems. And HRnovations' certified payroll professionals make sure that paychecks are always accurate and payroll taxes are paid on time.

When Helly had a 30-day window to open a new store in Aspen, Colo., CFO Scott Sutherland had his hands full negotiating the lease and arranging myriad other financial details. This was

Helly's first foray into the state; no one at the company was familiar with Colorado employment laws and regulations. HRnovations was able to take care of the human resources and payroll side of things quickly and efficiently, enabling Helly to take full advantage of an important business opportunity.

"With HRnovations, I have access to a world-class team of human resources specialists who can provide exactly the level of assistance I need, whenever I need it," says CFO Scott Sutherland. "They handle everything from hiring and payroll administration, to designing a performance review system, to regulatory compliance, to supervisory and management training. Most importantly, since I don't have to supervise in-house HR staff, I can spend more of my time focusing on things that will directly affect our bottom line."