Voices from the Front

“Keeping group pride high takes work!”

Job Description:

I am responsible for implementing creative marketing strategies for my specific recruitment territory, building relationships with a variety of internal and external constituencies, and managing various projects related to recruitment of qualified students. I also communicate the value of a private education and financing alternatives, and actively participate in a team-based environment. We are a part of the Enrollment Division, which is divided into Admissions and Financial Aid. I participate in a number of small groups (both morale boosting and strategic) within our admissions team, as well as the large division-wide group.

Narration:

When I took my first step into the university’s Admissions Office, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect of the team. I knew a lot of young, recent grads worked in the Admissions Office, but I wasn’t sure if my new co-workers would be professional, competitive, personal, or flat-out boring. A lot of my first conversations ended in utter confusion—I never quite understood why people were so obsessed with seafood... There was talk of a FISH team, FISH goals, FISH days, and FISHY people. I quickly confirmed that it was not seafood my new co-workers were infatuated with, but an attitude.

Our workplace takes the FISH approach to work life. We create a positive environment for both our staff and our guests by choosing our attitude, being there for each other and guests, working hard yet playing hard, and finally we strive to have fun. This philosophy was derived from the fish markets in Seattle. The fishermen had early mornings, late nights, and not the most glamorous job. Even so, they kept a great attitude, had fun, and were present in their job.

A long standing FISH tradition of our office is a two-day retreat to our campus in southern Minnesota, the Gainey Retreat Center. Our entire division is split into teams and dresses accordingly. For example, this year’s theme was “Holiday Inn,” based on the classic movie. My team was December Holidays so we made holiday cookies for the other teams, dressed in holiday sweaters, and handed out pre-made holiday cards with our picture. This gave my group a wonderful sense of who we were.

This retreat does two things for our enrollment team. First and foremost, it brings our entire division together to work on building a cohesive team, a sense of “we” and group pride, and building outside-work memories together. These memories carry us through the year, talking about costumes, the great Gainey food, and the ever-exciting dance at the end of the evening. New employees in our division count down the days until Gainey so they can feel the sense of “we” and become a part of the memories. Gainey is a tradition that all enrollment team members participate in and look forward to year after year. It is extremely evident not only that Gainey brings us closer personally, but that those two simple days away from the office build trust within our team and commitment to success.