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Principal  
Noble Street Charter School

### **Noble Street Charter School Gives High Marks to Taleo Business Edition**

Noble Street Charter School opened its doors in 1999 in an inner city neighborhood of Chicago. Founded by a married couple committed to bringing quality secondary school education to an area underserved by the city’s public schools, Noble Street will have nearly 300 employees and seven campuses—most within a five-mile radius by 2008. Indicative of the school’s commitment to excellence is Noble Vision 2020, Noble Street’s goal to prepare 2,020 new college graduates by the year 2020. No one thinks achieving the goal will be easy.

“Our biggest challenge is to find good teachers,” says Oliver Sicat, principal of one of the school’s campuses. “We spend a lot of time and money bringing in candidates.”

#### **Targeted Sourcing Delivers More Bang for the Buck**

Sicat and his colleagues realized early on that they needed help with their recruiting. Hundreds of teacher resumes were being passed among the school’s three hiring managers with the resumes tracked in Microsoft® Excel. Inevitably, the resumes ended up in stacks or set off to the side. Everyone agreed the system was inefficient.

Problems included not knowing the status of each candidate and the lack of standardized processes. Sicat says, “We wanted to narrow down where our applicants were coming from and where we could get the most bang for our buck. Because good teachers get snapped up quickly, we had to be faster. That meant moving our recruiting online.”

The principal and hiring managers looked at half a dozen applicant tracking systems before selecting Taleo Business Edition™. “It’s web-based, which is great. Others had software you had to download, which gets into server issues. We didn’t have time for that. The Taleo team modified Business Edition to match our website in less than an hour. What closed the case for us was using it free for 30 days. Within three days, we knew we couldn’t continue without it.”

“Taleo was the first thing we put online. It drove us to think, how do we do outreach and rebranding? How do we change HR?”

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#### **Cooperative Candidate Competition with Increased Visibility**

Taleo has helped Noble Street become more efficient with its sourcing. The school still advertises with educational organizations such as Teach for America and the National Board of Certified Teachers, but has cut back on traveling to career fairs. Sicat says that the tracking data supplied by Taleo is completely transparent and explains why this is important. “Because our campuses are so close to each other, candidates often apply to all seven schools. Taleo gives me visibility into where each school is in the hiring process with their candidates. Schools are encouraged to compete with each other for candidates, but not to the extent that we’re driving up salaries among ourselves. We can’t afford to cannibalize our recruiting function.”

#### **Making the Fit a Part of the Process**

Noble Street typically receives ten applications for every opening and wanted a method to more rapidly identify top candidates in the application process. Sicat attended the annual Taleo WORLD user conference where he learned how to frame questions that would pinpoint the most compatible candidates. Soon the school was customizing more qualifying questions and channeling the more promising applicants into a separate application process. As a result, time spent culling resumes has decreased sharply.

#### **Catalyst for HR Change and Employment Rebranding**

Sicat credits Business Edition with being much more than an applicant tracking system. “It’s really been a driver. Taleo was the first thing we put online. It drove us to think, how do we do outreach and rebranding? How do we change HR?”

The answer came when Noble Street unveiled the new website. Sicat notes that the website and career site are joined seamlessly with a look and feel that matches the school’s personality. Visitors can navigate between web pages to learn more about the organization and be steered to the careers section to apply. Email blasts in the same look and feel are used to invite candidates to career days. “We’re not only more representative of our organization now, but we have processes in place to reach people who live online. We do have a younger workforce,” says Sicat.

Evidence of this is found on the campuses. Every teacher has a laptop, there are screens in every classroom, and the schools are completely wireless. Sicat says it won’t be long before Noble Street begins tapping into social networking communities like LinkedIn® and Facebook® and gaining access to even more recruits.

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### **Becoming an Employer of Choice**

“Taleo really drove us to formalize our hiring process,” says Sicat. “Now we can hire as a network of schools as opposed to individual entities. This has helped us standardize practices and forced us to be more accountable and efficient. Like a business, we know we have to groom and retain talent. We have an excellent product. Our students are great and teachers here believe they can really make an impact.”

And yet Sicat knows that it’s still too early to begin feeling comfortable. The recruiting demand for Noble Street schools is so strong that two more campuses—numbers eight and nine—are scheduled to open in 2009. This will ratchet up the demand for good teachers even further. “We’re going to rely on Taleo more heavily,” says Sicat. “We know that Taleo Business Edition offers many features beyond processing candidates—for talent development, for instance—and we intend to explore all of them.”

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### **ABOUT TALEO**

Leading organizations worldwide use Taleo on demand talent management solutions to assess, acquire, develop, and align their workforce for improved business performance.

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