



INTRODUCTION

Recently, Rich Rosen was invited to speak at an internal, international leadership conference organized by a client of GLG's for over 200 of their managers and executives. The opportunity for Rich to present at the conference arose because a research group at GLG's client company has been working with Battelle for a couple of years on product innovation. The title of Rich's presentation was, "True Confessions of an Innovation Company."

At the beginning of his talk, Rich mentioned that it was a great coincidence that he had been invited to present at this conference, because he saw that GLG was working with them. (In addition to co-designing several of these conferences with this client, we also consult with them on several of their key strategies, and are coaching several of their senior executives.) He said that he had worked with GLG himself – in fact, at Battelle, many of the staff in their Product Development Solutions Group has been through core GLG training, and they use the skills they learned on a nearly daily basis. Rich attributes a large part of their effectiveness in working relationships with clients to the tools they acquired from GLG.

In addition, Rich's role has changed, and he is now pursuing his passion for education and corporate citizenship, still working as a part of Battelle.

THE WHOLE STORY

In a conversation with Rich following his generous remarks, he told the following story:

"I participated in GLG's executive development program back in 2001, along with a colleague of mine from Battelle, Rich Adams. We both found that program to be a great opportunity to refine our thinking about organizations, how we work with other people, and the very nature of how we approach our work. My career at Battelle had always been associated with some aspect of strategy, implementation, and advancement of our commercial business. Although strategy was a key component, relationships with people were at the core of what I did. Improving my understanding of how I interacted with people – and how they interacted with each other – would determine how work got done, and the quality of the outcomes that we were able to produce.

"In addition to the year-long executive development program that Rich and I attended, our group at Battelle brought GLG in a number of times to work with us on critical portions of projects that required breakthrough thinking. Our Product Development Group numbers about 150 people, largely engineering and analytical staff. GLG was directly involved in 3 or 4 different projects, touching about 50 to 70 people in some, to as few as 15 to 20 in others. Your tools were transferred in two ways:

- You facilitated projects in two to four day sessions, using the tools of listening, promises, breakthroughs and breakthrough thinking, design, accomplishments – all of which helped us advance our projects in a very short period of time.
- Rich Adams and I regularly conducted our own version of ‘GLG tool training’ with our people – so there are people who are still using the tools without ever having met a GLG person.

“In one case, a project was stalled. It was something that had required really intensive work, and people were fatigued and the pace of progress was in jeopardy of slowing down without some action. In essence, we needed to be remind ourselves that a marathon is 26 miles, and you can’t stop at 24 miles and still win the race! GLG spent two days working with a team of about 60 people uncovering and clearing up our complaints, resentments and regrets, and renewing our commitment to the project – and most importantly, to each other. Doing that work was an essential step in being able to get back to work, refreshed and ready to tackle the challenges that were still ahead of us. The project ended as a remarkable success for Battelle and our client.

“We had a number of memorable opportunities like that to work with GLG and internalize your tools and thinking. I’m not directly involved with that group at Battelle at this point – I’ll tell you more about that in a minute – but I’m still in touch with many of the people there, and I can feel the impact your tools have made in their work, more than five years later.

“If I had to say what core tools stuck with us – tools this group has internalized and still use every day at Battelle – I’d say the following:

- People make a real effort to listen – to each other, really hearing what’s being said, and allowing new ideas to percolate to the surface.
- We are good at appreciating one another, and appreciating what it takes to get the job done.
- We have learned how to handle conflict, both internally and with clients, so that it doesn’t stop the action but provides new ways of looking at the situation.
- We know how to use alignment to speed up our decisions and keep us all focused on our common commitment in the face of different ideas about how to move forward.
- We know the power of commitment, and use it to keep ourselves working toward our goals.

“In general, I think that the biggest impact has been on the fundamental ways we talk and listen – and the importance of those seemingly mundane tasks! Basically, GLG provided what I call ‘relational tools’ to the technical and management staff in this portion of Battelle. This aspect of learning was not part of their formal career training to that point, but many are now using the tools naturally and with significant success!

“The outcome of our regular practice of these tools is a good track record of product development performance, both for us and for our clients. We’ve learned how to navigate

with our customers when things go off target. What I mean by that is, because Battelle is involved in a lot of truly innovative development, some of what we do has never been done before, and you need to learn and adjust based on the results you are creating. Most often what you learn is that your original plan is no longer the right plan! So we have learned to bring our thinking and our projects to new places quickly, more successfully than we would have without these tools.

“Speaking for myself personally, I would say that I am a different person in the way I think and interact as a result of my GLG experience. In my nearly 26 years with Battelle, I have been held management positions of increasing responsibility across several operating divisions. Throughout the entire journey, Battelle has been a fascinating place to be. The core mission is the translation of discovery into applications of benefit to society, and to use our proceeds to advance important societal and education causes. My Dad, and mentors at Battelle and elsewhere, have helped me establish a personal philosophy that goes something like this, ‘I don’t exactly know what I want to do, but I know how I want to feel while I’m doing it.’ A few years ago, just after completing the executive excellence program at GLG, I was becoming much more involved with external and university relationships, economic development and education. With some new awareness that I had gained through the GLG experience, I found that being involved in mobilizing new ideas in education really resonated with me as something that felt right. In essence, I was seeing a new and different level of contribution that I could make to the world around me, and it built on a proven area of personal strength. Committing myself to this pursuit was increasingly in conflict with my role as an operating manager for a group at Battelle, so that neither could be done with the level of time and attention required. So, I made a decision to exit a traditional division operating management role to pursue an area of passion. After a discussion with our CEO, a corporate position for External Business Relations was created and I have been in that role since 2002.

“One of Battelle’s core missions is education. As a primary part of my role with Battelle, we are committed to advancing the state of education in the United States. A year ago, we declared that Battelle would be ‘a catalyst for sustainable positive change in math and science education,’ a critical issue for this nation’s future competitiveness. In GLG terms, we were using the power of declaration to bring a new idea into reality. We didn’t know how we were going to make a difference at that scale, but clearly we knew we had created conversation at the right scale, and one that would involve mobilizing both Battelle and other concerned corporations around this topic.

“Lots of organizations have tried to make a difference in education but so far, few projects or efforts have reached any scale of significance. We wondered if the language of educators and the language of business were so different that people couldn’t make a bridge between the two or sustain a meaningful relationship to allow for true collaboration and impact. Battelle had donated million of dollars to education in last couple of years, but we wanted to do more than donate money – we wanted to involved the people, passions and facilities at our disposal, and work on projects that could be scaled and replicated.

“We have spent the last year basically listening. I personally spent six to seven months traveling around the country, talking to senators, governors, school teachers, parents, and university professors, asking, ‘Given our aspirations, what do you think the best and highest use of Battelle would be?’

“Those conversations help us clarify the areas of impact, and showed us where we could solve problems or generate new information of importance. When we announced our ideas, it seems like there was a great awakening, and people said they wanted to be involved. Hundreds of volunteers emerged across Battelle’s operating sites, with many more to follow. In a little over one year, we have already created some good breakthrough results.

“In May 2006, we announced a gift to create a new center for mathematics and science education policy at John Glenn School of Public Affairs in The Ohio State University. The Battelle Center’s goals are to bring people in higher education together with leaders in K-12 education, business, technology and government to develop policies and practices that will increase the number of students who are prepared to be leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“In less than a year, we have partnered with Ohio State University and 16 public school districts to create and open a new high school, a model public school emphasizing math, science and technology. This school is open to all on a lottery basis, with the only prerequisite being a passion to go to college. There are no academic requirements for entry, and the first year of students represent a highly diverse set of learning styles. The school is unique in its ‘small school, big footprint’ objective in that it includes partnerships with the surrounding districts so that all teachers and school systems can benefit from the school programs, not just the students that formally attend the school.

“In all of this, I would say that GLG provided a way of thinking and building awareness – a framework to help me think about things, and a pathway to expressing my passion and contribution, while allowing others to contribute too.

“As a testament to the longevity of the tools and new thinking that GLG gave Battelle, your involvement with Battelle was from 1997 to 2001 – and we are still using your ideas now. Of course, that doesn’t do a lot for your business because you haven’t been directly involved with us for a while! But it’s not the kind of training where people say, ‘I did that course and I think the notebook is on my shelf somewhere.’ I know one of your core principles is to leave behind the tools you teach, and that has definitely happened at Battelle.

“One last thing I’d like to share. At the conference mentioned at the start of this article, I had a chance to listen to some of the executives and managers who were presenting their ideas and visions. I could see GLG’s impact in what people were saying, even if they weren’t using your language. I’ve always said that it’s easier to present to 1000 people you don’t know than to 15 that you know, because that 15 know you, and they’ll hold

you accountable – they’ll know if you do what you said! I was impressed to see these presenters standing in front of their colleagues, talking about how they work, the future they can see, and the promises they will make. They were talking about things that they had really internalized – not just using some new buzzwords.”

To read more about some of Battelle’s work in education, go to the following link:

<http://www.battelle.org/news/06/05-19-06MathCenter.stm>