



FROM THE DESK OF BOB WILSON

Maximizing Results Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter

8/15/07

Re-born after 21 Years – Introducing Advisa

Dear Fellow CEO:

Almost nine months ago we held our 2nd Strategic Planning Meeting and, among other things, decided Bob Wilson & Associates needed something new – a different name. The gestation period is about complete and the birthing has been scheduled for October. We will be re-born as Advisa.

I'm going to try to describe both how challenging the process was, and ultimately, how fulfilling it became.

It started with the reality that Bob Wilson & Associates is not a name that will successfully survive me. I'm not planning on going anywhere in the near future, but I am, after all, 55 years old. The business is 21 years old and while I would like to think that both the business and I will still be around in 21 more years, my role will likely be, if I'm able, somewhat diminished. We concluded that we needed to find a name that would make branding the company for the future an easier and more sustaining task than working to better brand Bob Wilson & Associates.

The problem with successfully branding Bob Wilson & Associates started with me, long ago. I've never been uncomfortable with my name, white bread though it is. My father was a Bob Wilson, my father-in-law is a Bob and once the three of us played tennis with a fourth whose name was, co-incidentally, Bob Wilson. Talk about a situation predetermined to cause a communication problem. But, being one more Bob Wilson in a seeming world of them never really bothered me.

I just was embarrassed to say I worked for Bob Wilson & Associates. It sounded ostentatious coming out of my lips. It couldn't roll off my tongue. So, as I brought on and trained consultants they'd hear me say on the phone or in person, "Hi, this is Bob Wilson with Predictive Index" and they'd often repeat the same phrases in their introduction of themselves (with their names, of course). Thus, while we had 21 years to build a brand in our business, we built it, where we did, in the business of the company from whom we license Predictive Index, PI Worldwide. This wasn't that bad a thing, as P. I. has always been an important brick in the foundation of who we are. But, it hasn't been the whole of it. As time passed, we've developed additional products and services that have made us a broader-based consulting organization than our licensor and most of their licensees. Thus, while we had a very good reputation, we really didn't have a clearly defined brand beyond the brand of our licensor. We needed a new name to help clarify who we are in our own minds and, more importantly, in the minds of our clients.

To that end, we brainstormed names for several hours during our Strategic Planning Meeting. That didn't work. We continued brainstorming online for months. That didn't work. We went through a series of names that we thought described who we were and what we did. They included: MRP (Maximizing Results Through People) Group, People First Consulting, The Competitive Edge, Building Workforce Architecture (another BWA iteration), PRO Action Consulting, Alidade and many more. The list seemed to go on and on and on and it didn't provide satisfaction. It induced headache and indigestion. With almost 20 smart people dedicated to finding a name that was suitable to what we do and who we are, we couldn't find anything that everyone could buy into. None of the iterations said, "There's a name that makes sense for us!" It was seriously frustrating. No one was happy with the process, especially me.

Yet, I was convinced we could find a name that clearly described who we are and what we do – even if it drove us crazy.

Beth Claflin, one of our hiring advisors and a former Account Executive at a PR firm, suggested we find a "Naming" firm to assist us. I wasn't thrilled with the idea. It seemed with all the smart people we have working for us, we should be able to come up with something to call ourselves. But, the reality was that nothing we were doing was working. So, since Beth came up with the idea, and she was willing, she was given the task. I was acquiescent, if not optimistic.

Beth interviewed a number of organizations and found one, Element Three, she thought would be well suited for what we wanted to accomplish. After two meetings, we engaged them. They reviewed what we had done and began the process anew. Their team interviewed us and our clients. At the conclusion of their research, they came back to us with a picture of our brand essence and what it stood for to see if we agreed with their conclusions. This was both a very interesting and exciting exercise. We found that we and our clients were aligned in our vision of who we were and what we had become.

Element Three reflected our brand essence was: "Corporate Sage". They found (through their client research) that we are seen as an organization of consultants that bring wisdom to clients – making them better personally and allowing them to build stronger organizations. Clients see us as providing the tools, support and consultation to help them make more successful decisions. We bring organizational confidence, clarity and focus. We're seen as taking our clients from good to great. Additionally, there was a clear sense that we were an organization of high ethical standards. I couldn't have been prouder when reading the synopsis of what Element Three had discovered.

Element Three's team then took all of their information and started playing with names. They came back with four possibilities: Delta Achievement Strategies, Sage Strategies, Corporate Sage and Advisa. Our team talked and eventually voted. Our new name was settled on. It would be: "Advisa", with "Creating Confident Organizations" as our tag line.

With Beth's help (she's been a tremendous asset throughout), we laid out a plan to take us from the 21 years of Bob Wilson & Associates to the new name of Advisa starting in October of this year.

This CEO Newsletter is our first introduction of our new name to anyone outside of our organization. We're proud of what Element Three helped us come up with. We're thrilled about how we can leverage our new name into a stronger identity and brand. And, we're excited to share our new name with you. Beginning in October, we will become:

ADVISA

Building Confident Organizations

I think you'll enjoy working with us just as much as you enjoyed working with Bob Wilson & Associates. We'll do our best to make that happen.

Thank you for reading.



Bob Wilson, President
Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.
(Soon to be Advisa)