



NJPA | CASE STUDY

Overview

NJPA is a contracting agency for government and education agencies based in the US and Canada with over \$2 billion in revenues.

Problem

NJPA (National Joint Powers Alliance) is a State of Minnesota chartered contract purchasing agency providing pre-bid for-profit company contract solutions for 50,000 education, government and non-profit organizations in the United States and Canada. This year NJPA will process \$2 billion in sales while projecting continued rapid growth into the years ahead. NJPA's nimble entrepreneurial culture breaks the stereotype of government intransigence and offers a working model for effective partnership between private and public sectors.

This accelerated expansion has resulting in staffing increases of 30% per year and every new employee entering the NJPA culture faces one of two challenges: recruits from other public sector agencies are often stunned by the "free-market" mindset of this government entity and have no frame of reference for adjusting to their results-driven mindset. Employees coming from business however are often baffled by the passion of the NJPA culture generated outside any profit incentive. Each side struggles to assimilate the uniquely ingenious NJPA culture.



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Solution

GiANT Worldwide first partnered with NJPA three years ago to create a common organizational culture “bridge” spanning the chasm between existing and incoming employees. GiANT has accomplished this objective with three initiatives:

1. Language creates culture; therefore, GiANT taught simple, scalable and sustainable leadership principles in a “sticky” visual-tool language accessible to all NJPA employees. GiANT then helped NJPA apply these principles into daily, real time challenges through cross-functional groups of seven individuals. We call these CORE Groups.
2. GiANT developed an intentional “apprenticeship” training process where new employees or emerging leaders could pull competencies of NJPA’s legacy leaders who relay, 1) the unique narrative of the organization, 2) the values that drive decisions, 3) the specific skills required to bridge the public and private sectors, 4) the relational network of trusted relationships that comprise NJPA’s circles of influence.
3. GiANT guided NJPA leaders as they contextualized the visual leadership language into NJPA’s own organizational “constitution” - vision, values, structure and strategy. The deliverable here is their own NJPA Leadership Toolkit.”



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Results

GiANT's partnership with NJPA has generated remarkable and measurable results:

- ▶ NJPA continues to surpass their own ambitious growth projections. Though operating more than two hours from a metropolitan center they successfully filled every pending job opening with individuals qualified in both character and competencies.
- ▶ NJPA has used GiANT-inspired communication rules of engagement to successfully navigate political challenges surrounding their initiative to complete a physical plant expansion doubling its usable square footage and significantly extending its technological capacity.
- ▶ GiANT's apprenticeship process guided NJPA through a challenging three-year executive succession: Their highly effective business development director just retired after apprenticing his replacement.
- ▶ This year NJPA is "paying forward" their own success in leadership development by helping create a nationwide "leadership academy" for public school superintendents.
- ▶ On February 22, 2017 Chad Coauette, Executive Director of NJPA stood before his staff and introduced the culmination of his organization's partnership with GiANT – the NJPA Leadership Toolkit, incorporating the NJPA mission and values with GiANT's visually depicted communication rules of engagement. Chad announced that NJPA would now "take up the baton" of leadership development, and he invited GiANT into a mutually beneficial commitment to expand liberating leadership across the nation. In GiANT's metric of success, there is no higher accomplishment.

