



Client Testimonial

Little Airplane Productions

Little Airplane Productions, Inc. is an internationally acclaimed and award-winning independent film and television production firm specializing in programming for young children. Some of their quality productions include such titles as *The Wonder Pets* produced for Nick, Jr., *Go, Baby!*, produced for Playhouse Disney, *Oobi!*, a Gold Parents' Choice Award-winner produced for NOGGIN, and *3rd & Bird* produced for the BBC. For this dynamic company, managing complex Human Resources (HR) matters had become challenging.

Little Airplane's Head of Production, Tom Brown, notes that the model they were previously using for managing issues outside of their core creative business was not serving the growing company well. "For a while, we were handling everything internally including payroll," said Brown. "It was not efficient at all. When we started to offer people more long-term staff jobs, we needed to confront how to deal with staff benefits and payroll. The nature of TV/film production is one that doesn't necessarily handle benefits, HR and such," continued Brown. "When we started to expand and offer long-term contracts, we needed a partner to assist us in managing these issues."

Little Airplane began its search for that "partner" by reaching out to other members of the television and film production industry facing similar challenges. It was from within the field that the recommendation of a PEO came. "We also considered doing it on our own," said Brown. "We thought about bringing in a dedicated HR person, searching for the best benefits deal, and so forth. That approach, however, seemed not viable at all."

Little Airplane learned that Alcott HR Group ("Alcott") would fulfill *all* of the organization's HR needs, from payroll to employee benefits and tax administration to regulatory compliance and a vast array of other employee benefits including health care and retirement plans. Additionally, the employees would gain access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as well as shopping, transportation, travel and entertainment, and fitness club membership discounts, among many other perks. For Little Airplane, a PEO definitely seemed a viable option and Alcott, the most suitable HR partner.

"After meeting a few of the larger PEO groups, we met Alcott," said Brown. "I felt that they could provide for us the personal touch that we may not receive from one of the larger firms. Another big factor was that Alcott was based in the New York

City area, which was important to us as we like to keep all aspects of production under one roof, when possible, or at least close by."

In 2004, Little Airplane made the decision to enter into a PEO agreement with Alcott. Little Airplane began the relationship with eight employees, which has grown to 80 employees at the height of production. Brown quickly realized the myriad of important benefits of having a PEO onboard to effectively manage its HR function. "We are now able to fully focus on our work and our core business which is making children's television." As for Little Airplane's employees, Brown noted that depending on the needs of the employees, they can take advantage of the wide variety of services Alcott provides. "Not all of them take advantage of everything, but knowing that the options are there is half the battle."

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Like many organizations, Little Airplane had some initial concerns about the relationship with Alcott and how it would affect the company and its unique corporate culture. "Initially, we were concerned that Little Airplane's culture would be altered with the addition of Alcott," said Brown. "We worked very closely with Alcott to ensure that our pre-school culture was maintained while complying

with all the necessary laws and regulations. Alcott was very conscious of this and helped us navigate and manage the transition. Their attitude and goal was always to be there to help us, not to take over or force their way or culture on us."

Little Airplane is now a strong proponent of HR outsourcing to a PEO like Alcott with Brown commenting that, "The entire area of HR can be confusing and overwhelming, especially to those who do not do that for a living. My advice is to leave that area of the business to those that are the experts. In doing so, you can focus on your core business. Alcott has been very supportive. It's as if we are part of one company. I had no idea it would be this seamless."

Brown offered these words of advice to companies working with an HR service provider and looking to realize the optimum relationship Little Airplane enjoys with Alcott. "I would have the HR company come and spend some time in the office. Have them see the corporate culture and meet the staff. A good HR company, like Alcott, will understand and get it."