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Turning Employees into Filmmakers

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Paula Santonocito

Turning Employees into Filmmakers

Among the best known film festivals are Cannes, Sundance, and Tribeca. Now, an unlikely participant has gotten into the act.

[Deloitte & Touche USA LLP \(Deloitte\)](#) recently launched the first-ever Deloitte Film Festival. No, these films aren't intended to get the attention of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Forget Oscar; that is, unless he's a Gen-Y job seeker.

The film festival was aimed at creating films that will appeal to job seekers; its objective was also to drive workforce engagement by getting employees to participate in filmmaking. Thus far, it certainly seems to have tapped into the latter group.

Launching the initiative with "What's Your Deloitte?" as a theme, the company invited its employees to make and submit short films that express the organization's culture and values. To encourage participation, film production kits, which included a high resolution Panasonic PV-GS320 Mini DV camera, were offered to the first 250 registrants. Interest in the film festival surpassed Deloitte's expectations, and the company made an additional 100 cameras available.

More than 370 short films were submitted by teams of Deloitte employees (one to seven individuals per team) from offices throughout the United States. The films were then posted on an internal "You Tube-like" intranet

site, where they were viewed and rated by Deloitte employees. The best films will be integrated into campus recruiting programs.

Deloitte indicates it relied on trend data in coming up with the filmmaking program. Among the trends it cites are:

- Generation Y is the fastest-growing population in the workforce, representing 22 percent of all workers.
- By 2010, approximately 10 million more Gen Yers are expected to join the working world, outnumbering their predecessors.
- Film is a medium used to connect and engage on an emotional level, and Reality TV has shaped the perspectives of young men and women in or entering the workforce.
- Social networking and user-generated content have migrated from a pure social tool to a medium harnessed in the identification and recruitment of talent across many industries.
- The Society for Human Resource Management's 2007 Job Satisfaction Survey reports that overall corporate culture is "very important" to more than one-third (36 percent) of respondents.

A September press release provides additional reasons for the program: "With the explosive growth of social networking sites and the mass democratization of filmmaking (hand-held cameras, user-friendly software), it's very clear to us that the integration of self-expression opportunities through film and other media are essential to recruiting and retaining top talent. Plus it's a heck of a lot of fun," says Cathy Benko, managing principal of talent for Deloitte & Touche USA LLP.

Deloitte indicates the winning films will soon be available at its site. It also indicates that, as part of its community involvement initiatives, it will donate cameras and equipment used in the film festival to nonprofit organizations that use the power of film to support displaced people around the world; these organizations include [FilmAid International](#) and [IFP](#).

The Deloitte Film Festival may not produce an Academy Award winning film, but given the many benefits of the initiative, this reel tool definitely earns a nomination as an AIRS Real Tool.

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