CASE STUDIES

inspiring results.
Muse’s leadership initiatives contributed largely to Tarragon’s value as a company, realized not just on real estate assets or bottom line results alone, but garnered from a far more valuable asset...its innovative, capable, and caring employees. Acknowledging this simple, yet powerful fact enabled Muse, along with Tarragon’s executive management team, to improve employee retention over a 3 year period, and the benefits were evident in every aspect of their business.

**The Company**
Tarragon Corporation

**The Program**
Employee Retention Program

**The Facts**
1. Number of Employees as of September 2004.
   - 596 - Tarragon Corp.
   - 347 - Tarragon Management

2. Factors positively impacting employee satisfaction were: Tarragon University, Tarragon Ambassador Program, enhanced educational opportunities, manager retreats, and rewards initiatives.

3. Employee satisfaction increased significantly from 2001 – 2004; in 2001 employee turnover rate was 55%. By 2004 Muse related leadership initiatives reduced turnover rate to 31%, well below same store stats.
Findings by Muse

The Value of Retention
One of the most important predictors of whether an employee will stay with his/her current employer is the employee’s satisfaction with the opportunities provided for learning and development.

• More hours of formal learning = greater retention.

• A firm’s ability to retain its key employees is, in turn, a fundamental determinant of a number of important outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, sales per employee, and market capitalization.

• These findings are fitting with outcomes experienced while implementing Tarragon’s employee retention initiatives.

Muse built Tarragon University (TU) from concept through fruition. TU is the cornerstone of Tarragon’s training for all employees under the property management division.

Muse helped quantify for Tarragon’s executive leadership team how career development and training are critical to a company’s success and translate to long-term profitability. Muse’s hard work building TU paid off because it elevated the performance of on-site individuals, built strong teams, and motivated employees to achieve more. Muse’s forward thinking and hard work raised the value of an entire organization.

The Company
Tarragon Management, Inc.

The Program
Tarragon University (TU)

The Results
1. TU’s educational curricula was designed on two major fields of study: Maintenance and Management.
2. Muse orchestrated the man power and resources to offer 50 classes; taught by the TU education team and TU professors, coupled with an addition of 100+ online lessons.
3. Tarragon employees were offered classes covering compliance, leasing and sales, customer service, maintenance, bookkeeping, management, leadership and interpersonal skills.
4. An added benefit of TU is the opportunity to interact with other team members throughout the company and build a strong cohort support network.
Training Curricula with a Back to the Basics Approach

Tarragon University (TU) – Designed and implemented by MUSE was the cornerstone of Tarragon’s training for all associates within the property management division. MUSE lives the “belief that our associates are the foundation of success… Training ensures that our associates are clear on objectives and expectations.” To that end, TU has two major fields of study: Maintenance and Management.

MUSE found that team members thrive on the learning process and results. An added benefit of TU was the opportunity to interact with other team members throughout the company. MUSE’s training approach focuses on “Sweating the Small Stuff,” when it comes to training and interacting with management teams. MUSE’s curricula builds on the essentials, “if teams do the basics really well they have the building blocks to create exceptional value for their owners.

Some examples of Back to the Basics Approaches:

• All Regional Managers walk their communities on a regular basis to look at the details, including walking rent readies each time they are on a property to focus the team on the basics. They saw an improvement in the quality of our rent readies, and have realized that it is much easier to maintain the threshold of 50% or greater vacant available ready at all times.

• All employees adhere to a strict dress code to build professionalism and morale throughout each community. Since implementing, there has been a marked improvement in the overall pride of both our team and customer as to the level of service that we provide.

• VPs visit each property more than quarterly and reinforce each concept described above. They take a hands-on-approach and make it their top priority to visit with the front line, to listen, to problem solve challenges, and to support our most precious assets, our people.

Investment in Education
Building Tarragon University
While taking a look at other successful companies for reasons turnover in their organization is low and efficiency is high, it was clear that starting on the right foot from day one of employment is key. Many companies struggle with what to do day one when they have properties located throughout the country while the HR department is in one geographic area. To overcome this challenge, MUSE works with HR departments to spearhead the formation of an Ambassador Program.

“Ambassadors” were nominated from each major region. Once selected, MUSE helped train Ambassadors on company history, organizational structure, and policy and procedures. They perform the very critical task of providing new hires a sense of their identity and importance to, and within, the company.

The Company
Ambassador Programs

The Program
Performance Enhancement Strategist and Trainer

The Results
In just a 9 month period, Muse helped one such company to go from the bottom 50% to place consistently in the top 5 out of 40 Participating Companies representing 4,985 total shops in the Ellis Multifamily Benchmark Performance Comparison.
The Exchange was a fractured loft condominium project in Fort Lauderdale in 2008 that converted to luxury rental lofts Spring 2009. Muse was charged with the mission to motivate both the market and on-site team members to lease the building, at aggressive above market rental rates... and fast.

Muse lead the charge along with the management, marketing and leasing teams to relaunch The Exchange Condos as Apartment Rental Lofts. The results were better than expected. The lease-up took just nine short months, unheard of for that time in Fort Lauderdale.

With a focus on outreach marketing, promotional events, and creative team performance incentives, the project met its numbers and exceeded expectations in the midst of very tough economic times.
STRATEGIC MARKETING
BUILDING LEASE UPS
STRATEGIC MARKETING
POSITIONING AND PROMOTION
Exchange Event | March 2009
Red Carpet Invitations
Event Promotion Identifying Who’s Who List
Community and National Brand Sponsorships
Laser Light Show by Rooftop Pool Grand Finale
Muse creates and provides fulfillment for Company Stores, such as Behringer Harvard Residential Company Store - The Boutique. Properties and employees can order corporate and property branded marketing items all in one place and products are in-hand on demand. Corporate offices can rest assured that pricing is consistent and items are quality approved.

The Company
Behringer Harvard

http://www.bhresboutique.com

The Program
Building a Company Store

Key Benefits
•Controlled Branding and Eliminate Brand Abuse
•Products in Central Location
•Ease of Access and Ordering
•Consistent Product Quality
•Controlled Purchasing and Cost Reduction
•Minimizes Administration
•Exceptional Time Savings for both Property and Executive Team Members
MUSE’s seamless integration with partners such as Ellis Mystery Shopping is an instant boost to leasing performance. Companies utilize Muse to help set front-line measurement tools and align their training curriculum to improve closing statistics and implement best practices portfolio-wide.

MUSE’s Alignment Workshops are one of the most profound investments an owner can make adding value to their real estate asset through measurement, training, and performance enhancement, which translates directly to bottom line results.

The Company
Ellis Partners in Mystery Shopping

The Program
Performance Enhancement Strategist and Trainer

The Results
In just a 12 month period, Muse helped one such company go from the bottom 50% to place consistently in the top 5 out of 40 Participating Companies representing approximately 4,985 total national shops in the Ellis Multifamily Benchmark Performance Comparison.
Muse created and managed, along with partner Brandi Bailey one of Tarragon’s greatest secret weapons, expense reducers, and revenue generating engines; Tarragon Graphics. One of Tarragon’s key strategies was to energize their portfolio from a visual prospective to maximize asset value. To accomplish this task, they created an internal advertising agency, Tarragon Graphics Group to initiate new marketing materials and fresh ideas. Management worked along side the in-house agency to hand select specific underperforming assets within the portfolio, and develop a seamless marketing and advertising plan with clear, targeted objectives designed to capitalize on the property’s creative direction and unique selling propositions.

By spending the extra time developing custom campaigns, apartment publication ads, websites, and marketing collateral, they gave their properties the added competitive advantage in each market. They found great success in celebrating what’s unique.

The Company
Tarragon Corporation

The Program
Creating Tarragon Graphics Group

The Results
• There was an approximate 200% return on investment in just the first year after creating the internal graphics group vs. outsourcing design work to agencies and other vendors.
• No wasted time spent on continuous estimates and proposals per assets. No agency fees.
• Each asset got individual attention and customized creative that gave them competitive advantage.
• No agency fees, collateral isn’t based on per item design cost. More value in time spent and intimate understanding of corporate initiatives and growing revenue.
• Branding each asset similarly often limits the creative possibilities of each of building marketing campaigns around each assets individual strengths and competitive advantage.