



**ALAMEDA
POWER & TELECOM**

A Department of the City of Alameda

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 6.G.1
MEETING DATE: 02/26/07**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT NO. 2007-039

TO: Honorable Public Utilities Board **Submitted by:** _____
William C. Garvine
Marketing & Customer
Service Manager

FROM: James P. Fleming
Telecom Operations Supervisor **Approved by:** _____
Girish Balachandran
General Manager

SUBJECT: Progress Report for Transitioning Door-to-Door Telecom Sales from a Contractor to Temporary, In-house, Part-time Staff

Recommendation:

For information, no action is required.

Background:

At the December 18, 2006, Public Utilities Board (Board) meeting, the Board directed staff to provide a monthly progress report regarding the proposed plan to transition from a contract door-to-door telecom sales firm to an in-house staff of four Direct Sales Representatives (a.k.a. “door knockers”) that would be recruited to work on a part-time basis and paid an hourly rate rather than a commission for business units sold.

This directive to recruit an in-house sales staff was based on a recommendation in the CCG Consulting (CCG) Report that stated the current “door knocking” campaign was successful, but was too expensive since a professional firm was being used that charges a “hefty” commission for each sale. CCG went on to recommend a force of four permanent part-time (20 hours per week) door knockers that would be paid an hourly rate without benefits and would collect no commissions. The target date for the recruitment of an in-house sales force is March 1, 2007.

Since the last report on January 22, 2007, the following actions have occurred:

- Since January 8, 2007, the Human Resources Department has referred ten (10) applications for the Direct Sales Representative position.

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- Of the ten applications received, three of the candidates have been interviewed. Two of the interviewees appear to be viable candidates and reference checks are underway. The third interviewee was also a viable candidate, but did not respond to a request for references and a second interview. Interviews are scheduled with other potential candidates the week of February 12, 2007. The remaining four applicants were either deemed unsuitable for the job due to lack of prior sales experience or were unresponsive to an interview request. The job recruitment announcement is open-ended and staff will continue to review and interview applicants until the four Direct Sales Representative positions are filled.
- On January 22, 2007, staff requested Human Resources (HR) to do additional recruitment outreach to generate more qualified applicants and also asked HR staff if it was appropriate to send the job announcement to all City of Alameda employees via the City's GroupWise e-mail system. In response, HR staff agreed to list the job announcement on Craig's List. Additionally, HR staff said it was permissible to send the job announcement to City of Alameda employees for the purpose of recruiting people they know that may be interested in applying for the position.
- On January 22, 2007, the Marketing and Customer Service Manager placed a job order with the College of Alameda "One-Stop Career Center." The job order will be posted at career centers throughout the Peralta College system.
- On February 7, 2007, the Telecom Operations Supervisor asked the Director of the Mastick Senior Center to post the job announcement on their job bulletin board. The Director committed to posting the job announcement in the center's public coffee area.
- The job announcement has been distributed to various Alameda P&T employees with a request to post it in common areas such as health clubs, etc.
- The job announcement is posted in the Alameda P&T customer lobby.
- At a "All Hands" meeting with Alameda P&T employees on February 7, 2007, the Marketing and Customer Service Manager discussed the efforts to recruit applicants for the Direct Sales Representative positions and encouraged attendees to let their families, friends and neighbors know about the positions. Three referral candidates have expressed interest in the position.
- Staff is developing a training program for the positions. It is expected that in-house Marketing and Customer Service staff will do the training of the new Direct Sales Representatives. Training time will take approximately two weeks.

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- Staff intends to designate one of the Direct Sales Representatives as a lead to handle evening escalated sales inquiries, minor administrative duties, scheduling of sales territories, and verification of sales performance among the other representatives.
- Staff is developing sales performance standards for the Direct Sales Representative position.
- The Telecom Operation Supervisor will provide day-to-day supervision and training of the Direct Sales Representatives, with assistance from a Customer Service Representative dedicated to telecom sales/retention, and the “Win-Back” effort recommended by CCG Consulting.

Budget/Financial Considerations:

There is no specific budget allocation for FY 2007 for these proposed temporary part-time Direct Sales Representative positions. Assuming there are four applicants hired for the proposed positions, the approximate cost for the period March 1, 2007, to June 30, 2007, will be approximately \$25,600. There are sufficient funds in the FY 2007 Marketing Department budget to cover this expenditure. Expenses under the Cyclone agreement for that portion of FY 2007 after February 10, 2007, were expected to be approximately \$33,000. These savings can be used to offset the cost of training and compensation of the new internal sales staff.

Exhibit:

None.