



# VALERIE SCHLITT ASSOCIATES

## Today's Labor Pool Changes How Companies Recruit

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When Lisa Dougherty joined VSA, Inc. in 2010, she was glad she knew how to multi-task. Every day, she made outbound cold calls, hour after hour, and represented 3 or 4 of VSA's clients. Even though she technically worked for VSA, she always introduced herself on the phone as working for another company.

As a Client Associate at VSA, Dougherty's job was to help companies sell by identifying qualified business leads and setting sales appointments. Dougherty excelled, even though she knew only the basics about the products she represented and the companies she called for.

Dougherty joined VSA after raising her 3 children. She learned about VSA from a friend. She was not unique at VSA.

Valerie Schlitt started the business prospecting firm from her Haddonfield, NJ family room in 2001 with the help of two women from her town. These women had teenage children at home and they wanted to earn additional money. All the while, they wanted to retain the flexibility needed to attend school events, take their turn in carpools, and be home with children who were sick.

In the early days, most of VSA's employees were in fact women who were returning to work. There was a

significant network of women in the neighboring towns who knew each other and regularly referred new employees to VSA. These women typically had no prior sales experience. Most had no prior business experience. Yet, they were fully capable of speaking to senior level executives and produced excellent results for VSA's clients.

"For years, we were able to recruit smart, well-spoken, responsible and committed employees from a pool of underappreciated applicants: educated, back-to-work moms. We knew their lack of relevant work experience was immaterial. We gave them flexibility. In return they learned quickly and were a gold mine for talent," says Schlitt, recalling the early days of VSA's growth.

All that changed over the past 16 years. In 2008, 100% of employees were still women returning to the workforce. In 2012, this percentage dropped slightly to 80%, and a growing number of employees were men. Today, only 45% of VSA employees are women with small children. A full 28% are men. Men comprise the fastest growing segment of VSA's new hires.

"The 'stay at home mom' is totally elusive today," Schlitt says. "That pool has dried up, and we now recruit from a wide range of applicants."

Schlitt acknowledges that VSA is experiencing the same growing pains in finding good, new employees as virtually all firms. "Most women today work throughout their child rearing years. We have been forced to branch out. And the overall pool of available employees is also shrinking."

As the business has grown, VSA has increased its employee base by over 200% since 2001. Without a ready referral network of new employees, the screening process is much more stringent today. The firm mainly uses online tools and requires employees to fulfill a trial week prior to making a final offer.

Despite VSA's growth in clients and employees, and its changing recruitment process, the firm has retained its commitment to a flexible work schedule, where employees choose their own hours. Schlitt believes that this perk is a benefit to all employees, not just mothers.

For more information about VSA, Inc. go to [www.vsapropecting.com](http://www.vsapropecting.com).

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**VSA, Inc.**

*VSA, Inc. is a premiere B2B lead generation, appointment setting and outbound calling firm. We shine when clients have complex products and services, or need complex prospecting approaches. We serve companies, large and small, across the US and Canada.*

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