

Business Courier

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Weak economy gives boost to Cincinnati consulting allies

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [Dan Monk](#) Senior Staff Reporter

Cincinnati business consultants Chuck Proudfit and Lynne Ruhl have joined forces on a marketing alliance.

The result is double-digit revenue growth for both companies: **SkillSource**, which Proudfit founded in 1995, and Perfect 10 Corporate Cultures, started by Ruhl in 2001. The combined enterprise has five project leaders and 50 company specialists available on a referral basis. Both companies operate as boutique agencies, with a network of independent contractors. Both consultants say a merger is possible, but for now they call their alliance a strategic partnership.



“Our companies are such a hand-in-glove fit that it seemed like doing something intentional would serve all of our clients,” said Ruhl, a former gymnast whose firm helps companies increase productivity through improved employee relations.

“The people component became very important last year,” said Proudfit, whose firm specializes in sales and marketing strategies. Proudfit is a **Harvard** MBA grad who was recruited to Cincinnati by **Procter & Gamble Co.** He said 2009’s weak economy caused stress on company cultures, as layoffs and cost cuts increased tension among those still employed.

Ruhl and Proudfit are approaching companies with a “cultural audit” offering that costs \$150 per employee and is aimed at quickly diagnosing impediments to company growth. They landed more than a half-dozen clients with the approach. Ruhl said companies are learning that solid employee management can be a competitive edge.

“Your competitors can duplicate your systems but they can’t duplicate how your people work together to get a job done,” Ruhl said.

Proudfit expects the new partnership to put SkillSource revenue over \$1 million this year, while Ruhl expects Perfect 10 to reach the same plateau in the next few years.

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