

# SOUTH CAROLINA PROVIDES COLGATE-PALMOLIVE UNMATCHED WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS



**W**hen Colgate-Palmolive needed to relocate manufacturing operations from an older facility in 2013, the decision was made to seek out an existing building that could be repurposed to fit their needs. After an extensive search, the company chose to locate their new facility at a site in Greenwood, South Carolina.

Brenda Przybyla, human resources manager at the Greenwood Colgate-Palmolive Facility, describes how readySC™ spearheaded a team, including Piedmont Technical College (PTC) and the local SC Works job placement center to aid the company's successful startup. Along the way, they teamed up to create a new recruiting model that resulted in significant cost-savings for Colgate-Palmolive.

**EDGE:** *How did Colgate-Palmolive get its start in South Carolina?*

**Brenda Przybyla:** We had a facility in Morristown, New Jersey that was a very old facility. There was not an opportunity for expansion or upgrades at that location, so that caused Colgate-Palmolive, to begin looking for a new site. There were a couple of different options, and South Carolina was the choice. That was at the end of 2013. I came to work for Colgate in May 2014 to begin the hiring process.

**EDGE:** *And how many employees do you have now?*

**BP:** We have more than 350 employees who are permanent Colgate employees. We also have several subject-matter experts from our corporate facility in Piscataway, New Jersey, here to help us with some of the technical challenges that we face.

**EDGE:** *How did your partnership with readySC begin?*

**BP:** A team met with readySC when Colgate-Palmolive was originally looking at the site to discuss incentives, and readySC described some of the programs they have done for other startups. So that relationship started even before I came on board.

When I came to Colgate, we wanted to recruit 300-plus employees. Given the market size in this area, we knew that we were going to need some expert advice on

what to do to be the most productive and get the most qualified candidates.

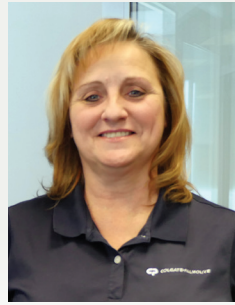
I met with readySC, and we talked about the type of recruiting processes and assessments that we needed at the site. They were invaluable in helping us understand what other companies had done, what had worked well and what had not worked well. They gave us a lot of input and insights into how we might want to proceed to make sure we maximized the state's resources as well as our own contributions to this process.

**EDGE:** *How did your collaboration with readySC and your local SC Works job placement center evolve into a new recruitment model for Colgate-Palmolive?*

**BP:** One of the things that Colgate has done in the past is use an outside agency to help with the recruiting process, from screening candidates to moving them through our system to making sure everybody's in the right location. They'd always done recruitment that way, but it's also very expensive. So, my suggestion to



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— BRENDA PRZYBYLA, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER AT THE GREENWOOD COLGATE-PALMOLIVE FACILITY



the company was, "readySC and SC Works have all of these great resources, and we need to take advantage of that."

So, we worked with the combined efforts of readySC and SC Works to put together what they could do for us, and they moved to take the lead with our recruitment. We gave them access to our system, which was a first for the company.

They were invaluable. They worked extremely well with us, and that process saved us a lot of time and money. In the end, when I calculate the cost-savings for all this assistance to Colgate, it's about \$300,000.

**EDGE:** *How did this new recruitment strategy work?*

**BP:** We have a pretty lengthy recruitment process because we have several aspects that we want to look at with the candidate before we make a hiring decision. So, one of the things that SC Works helped us with was moving candidates through that process. They helped us do phone screenings, schedule appointments, schedule interviews, schedule assessments, and to make sure that everything went smoothly for the candidate during that process.

Then our training facilities and assessment opportunities were not available at the time that we thought they

would be. We reached out to readySC, and they responded that they had an excellent solution at Piedmont Technical College. They went so far as to give us different rooms so that we could physically move candidates through each step of the process like an assembly line. Candidates easily moved through communication, interviews and assessments. readySC along with the college provided manpower and space management, and they helped us with incoming traffic. It worked out very well.

We ended up doing all our assessments and interviews for the first 13 to 14 months at Piedmont Tech through readySC and SC Works. They met our needs when we needed space for anything from interviewing, to meetings, to assessments. I can't say how helpful and critical that was to us in that early period.

**EDGE:** *Were there any other challenges that readySC helped you overcome?*

**BP:** We had a few challenges. One is that we had a mechanical assessment process that was time-consuming. They helped us determine what was the best way to schedule it, and what items we might combine. We minimized the number of times a candidate needed to come in, but it still gave us the maximum benefit for the assessments that we needed. They helped us think through that process.

One of the other major things that readySC did for us was help with training during our orientation program. We do a full three weeks of training with our candidates, and all of that is in the classroom. It gives them everything from what we expect and what they need to know about safety, quality and microbiology, since we have microbe-sensitive products. Their subject-matter experts helped us look at what we wanted to train and what readySC and Piedmont Tech could provide so that we didn't have to use all our resources during that training.

**EDGE:** *How effective was readySC's Discovery process at defining and developing your training?*

**BP:** When we originally started, we met with readySC and walked through our training needs. Then they showed us what classes they had provided for other companies. There was Food and Drug Administration (FDA) readiness, hand safety, knife safety, working from heights, etc. They understood that we have certain standards specific to Colgate and made sure to ask us what those were and incorporate them.



For example, our standards around FDA readiness and those requirements were more stringent.

So, our quality experts provided details of what we needed, and it became a collaboration between them and readySC's subject-matter experts to develop Colgate-specific classes. Then almost immediately readySC provided a program for us to review. We made very minor changes after that point because they were so spot-on with what they provided.

**EDGE:** *Is there anything specific that you'd like to highlight about readySC and its training program?*

**BP:** If I wanted to highlight something specific about readySC, it would be their knowledge, background, and understanding of manufacturing and what we need to teach our employees. Their expertise is in that area, and it really saved us a lot of time and effort. They already knew what we needed to teach our people, they just needed to know what specific things from a Colgate perspective that needed to be added to what they already had. I would say it's their professionalism and the expertise that readySC provided that was the main highlight.

**EDGE:** *How smooth was the transition from readySC's training program to Piedmont Tech?*

**BP:** Once we were transitioning from startup and outside of the initial scope of work with readySC, Piedmont Tech still provided instructors for every one of our waves of orientation. We've seen no

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change now that we're solely working through Piedmont Tech, so I would say that transition has gone seamlessly. Some of the individual instructors may have changed, but you would never know that from the impact, and the value that we get out of it. They all worked so well together.

**EDGE:** *If you had the chance to talk to somebody about readySC and the programs that they offer, what would you tell them?*

**BP:** Actually, I had that opportunity recently. We had a company that came into Greenwood that had made the decision to start up here, but really didn't know where to begin. So readySC gave their human resources manager my name. When I met with this individual, I said, "first thing, partner with readySC and SC Works. They have all the expertise, all the professionalism that you need. Don't recreate the wheel. They know what they're doing, and you need to use what they already have."

I've kept in contact with that person, and she provided me feedback that it was great advice and has worked well for her.

**EDGE:** *What kind of impact would you say that Colgate has had on the Greenwood community?*

**BP:** When we came in, Greenwood had lost a lot of textile manufacturing. An international company like Colgate-Palmolive hiring 350 local people has had a huge impact on the economic status of the community. We hired a lot of people that had unfortunately had to go through a downsizing process, so it gave them new life to come here. I'm glad that Colgate made the decision to choose South Carolina.

One of the other things that we do at Colgate is that we like for all our new hires to get involved in the community. So, as a part of their onboarding process, we have a half day where we reach out to the United Way and other agencies and say, "what project do you have that we can help you with?" We do that with every new hire orientation. We want them to understand how Colgate is committed to the community. We also participate in the Day of Action every year, and any other such programs that are available. We want people to realize that Colgate is indeed a community partner.

**EDGE:** *If you had to sum up your overall experience with the resources that South Carolina provides to new companies, what would you say?*

**BP:** I think Colgate made the right decision in coming

to South Carolina, because I don't believe other states can compare to the resources it offers. It's seamless professional support at no cost to the company, and it's just invaluable. You would never be able to match what they offer anywhere else.

Also, one of the things that I liked most about the partnership between readySC, SC Works and Piedmont Tech, is that if I had a need, I could reach out to my one point of contact with readySC. I would let her know what my needs were, what my concerns were and what my challenges were. She would reach out to all those other resources and say, "Hey, Colgate needs this." Having a lead person who could pull these resources together was extremely helpful. I didn't have to call ten different people to get ten different things done because readySC did all the for me, and that was greatly appreciated. ■



## Colgate-Palmolive

Colgate-Palmolive is a leading global consumer products company that focuses on Oral Care, Personal Care, Home Care and Pet Nutrition. The company can trace its long history to 1806 and a small soap and candles business begun by William Colgate in New York. Today, Colgate serves hundreds of millions of consumers in over 200 countries and territories.

One of the World's Most Admired Companies according to Fortune Magazine, Colgate is committed to making products that guarantee human health while having a minimal impact on the world. Its products include such internationally recognized brand names as Colgate, Palmolive, Speed Stick, Lady Speed Stick, Softsoap, Irish Spring, Protex, Sorriso, Kolynos, elmex, Tom's of Maine, Sanex, Ajax, Axion, Fabuloso, Soupline and Suavitel, as well as Hill's Science Diet, Hill's Prescription Diet and Hill's Ideal Balance.

Science is at the core of Colgate-Palmolive's commitment to making safe and effective products that improve the health and well-being of its customers.