

# Maggie Peters

New Smyrna Beach, Florida



HR Options LLC

## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Maggie Peters:*

Born in Louisville, KY, Maggie Peters, owner of HR Options LLC, relocated with her family to Seminole County in 1971. After graduating from The University of Central Florida with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, Peters accepted an HR position with Telex, a company that manufactured telephone switches in Central Florida. After Telex, Peters spent seven years with Coleman Research Corporation, an aerospace engineering government defense contractor. As an HR Generalist, Peters further honed her human resources skill set and developed the knowledge and experience needed to advance in her career and eventually start her own business.

"After Coleman, I went to work for Collegis in Maitland," she said. "I started as a Manager of HR and was eventually promoted to Director of Leadership and Employee Development. Along the way, I also earned a

Masters in Business Administration. I spent eight years with Collegis before they were ultimately acquired by SunGard. In 2004, Collegis announced they were for sale and that's what first prompted me to start my own business on the side. I needed some protection in case my role with Collegis was eliminated."

Peters' position was eventually eliminated and, after working for a year for a professional services company in Heathrow, she found a great opportunity with a global \$17.4 billion distributor of electronic components, called Avnet. She spent 12 years with Avnet and rose to the position of HR Manager/Business Partner ("HRBP"). In May of 2018, it was finally time to take her side business to the next level.

"My position with Avnet was being centralized to Phoenix, which prompted my decision to go for it," she said. "When I first started my business on the side, it was called ML Peters Consulting Inc. The focus was on HR support and services for small to medium sized companies. I did benefits analysis, employee handbooks, job descriptions and various small projects related to HR. When it was time to go full-time, I identified an even bigger opportunity in the area of management development. The traction that an HR Business Partner has on the teams they support is getting harder and harder these days. This presented a real opportunity for me, as a consultant, to come in and garner the manager's and employee's time and attention. HRBP's aren't as strategic as they could be. They're too busy "fire-fighting" trying to do I-9s, on-boarding, benefits open enrollment and other operational things."

For Peters, the move to running her side business on a full-time basis was, and continues to be, a great fit. As she shared, she's better with

projects instead of doing the same thing every day. Whether it's developing policies and procedures documents, writing employee handbooks, crafting employee communications, presenting webinars or helping with coaching, leadership development, performance management or talent assessment, Peters offers an array of services for her clients.

Peters shared some of her early challenges and what she's done since May to grow the business. "Networking with the right target audience is something I'm learning the importance of," she said. "I'd prefer to not take a shotgun approach. I've also been focused on fine-tuning my customer prospect list. In my experience with companies from different sizes and industries, every company has a burr under their saddle. It usually comes down to a people issue. Whether it's retention, culture, the benefits aren't aligned, the on-boarding process is a mess, they lack management training or they have pay issues, there are usually concerns in these kinds of areas. Through various networking groups, I'm getting in front of the right people to help them address these issues. I really focus on listening to what they need and responding with a business-orientated solution. Part of what sets me apart is the fact that I speak business language and HR. I understand how HR fits into the overall business strategy."

What advice does Peters have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "I have three pieces of advice," she said. "First of all, know yourself and know what you're good at. Be clear with what you're offering and don't try to be all things to all people. Find your value and find a niche to apply it to. Second, use the resources around you. Keep an open mind and ask a lot of questions. Attend local chapters and networking events, even ask to

be a speaker. I recently joined the SE Volusia Chamber of Commerce as a way to get involved and make new connections. Third, get certifications and take courses to keep current. In the last six months, I've added two more certifications. It's important to stay relevant and keep up with the times in your field."

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