

One Company's Approach to Liberating Greatness

A strengths-based approach to leadership and strategy consulting helps people and teams excel

When many coaching and consulting firms evaluate a company or project, they start with a gap analysis. They look for what's broken or what needs fixing, and identify the gap. The telos institute takes a different approach. "We appreciate what's working and use that as a springboard for forward progress," says CEO Rick Simmons.

People learn and grow the most during times of trial and tribulation—what cofounders Rick and Amy Simmons refer to as liminal spaces. They use these periods to help clients course correct. "We want to help people leverage liminal spaces—periods of discontinuity that create an openness to change," Rick says. Sometimes they encourage clients to trigger these periods for their own benefit, not simply waiting for them to naturally occur.

Clients might hire the telos institute to ensure a new C-suite executive's success, or they might work with a multi-national organization on larger scale initiatives.

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Husband-and-wife team Rick and Amy Simmons founded the telos institute in 2006. Before this, Rick was "the deal guy," helping individuals buy or divest businesses. "I saw a gap in the ability to meaningfully merge elements of strategy, leadership, and change, and doing it in a way that liberates greatness," he says. Amy's background in training and development led her to a strengths-based approach to transitions. "Rick and I are very different people. Early on, we were able to embrace our differences as strengths," says Amy, chief experience officer. They encourage the

same of team members and clients.

The use of lower case in the telos institute name is deliberate. "For us it is a tangible expression that when we walk in the room with our client, all the creativity, work ethic, and genius required for them to get where they want to go, it's on that side of the table. Our job is to be a liberating component," Rick says. The use of "institute" is deliberate as well. While the word can reference creation of a body of knowledge, it's also a verb. Seeing the insight put to work is the ultimate goal.

DO GOOD WORK

The telos institute's marketing approach is basic: "do good work," Rick says. "It may not sound groundbreaking, but doing good work never goes out of style." The team uses a project to program to partnership approach, often starting with one project. After the organization or leader trusts the telos institute, they often ask them to create programs, ultimately leading to a retainer relationship and true partnership. "About 85 percent of our clients who have been with us more than five years have a partnership-level relationship," Rick says.

Even if clients have a quarterly focus, "we adopt the long view, and clients appreciate that," Amy says.

Every engagement is tailored for the client. While the telos institute has core philosophies and frameworks to address issues, the solutions align with the client's uniqueness. "We're not selling off-the-shelf programs," Rick says.

THETELOSINSTITUTE.COM



the telos institute
co-founders
Rick Simmons &
Amy Simmons

telos.

