



Welcome

Welcome to our first Newsletter for Bureaus. It is a forum to stimulate ideas in your company, to identify trends, and to comment on issues you should discuss at your management meetings.

Mega Bureaus

The '90s were difficult for many Bureaus. We helped a number of you survive those years. Today we want to remind you of the forecast we gave at Xplor in 1992 when we said, "...a major trend will be the creation of Mega Bureaus."

Since then, many Mega Bureaus have been formed. Some have suffered reversals of fortune and are hoping for *survival by reorganization*, while others have prospered and are getting bigger and better.

Mega Bureaus are evolving, and more are on the way! You need a strategy to survive among them. The good ones are now planning for the impact of e-bills and the second wave of the Replacement Market on their businesses. Their planning efforts, if implemented effectively, will disturb the market and, thus, affect smaller Bureaus.

Some of you have strategies for dealing with these friendly or not-so-friendly giants in your backyard, such as soliciting *ad hoc* work from them. Other bureaus have had to live on smaller jobs that do not suit the giants' appetites.

Core Question – Have you a formal plan to manage the impact of an evolving Mega Bureau successfully selling to your key customers?

Core Question – Have you studied the market factors affecting your clients' and prospects' outsourcing plans and presented them with a strategy for the Replacement Market? Or are you leaving that to your competitors?

Core Question – Are you doing enough to ensure the continued existence of your Bureau in this evolving market, or will you have to sell and be consolidated into a larger bureau?

The Printer Replacement Market – Round Two

Ten years ago we accurately predicted the *Printer Replacement Market*, defined complex, compound, composed, competitive pages (4CPs) and identified the need for an *Information Presentation Strategy (IPS)*. Ten years on, it has happened. Printer technologies have been replaced and the industry leaders are printing 4CPs on the new machines as part of their initial 'market-of-one' activities.

We are now in a second phase of the Printer Replacement Market. Banks, insurance companies, and utilities are all considering their options, concerned about the impact of e-bills and the capital costs of replacing their existing printing technology. Should they make the capital investment or outsource? For the bureau the challenge is to manage their risks as they decide how much to invest and in what technologies. The high level of risk for bureaus may drive further consolidation in the bureau market.

Core Question – Have you a formal plan to manage the impact of e-bills or will you have to survive on reduced revenue and increased unit costs?

IPS and Your Business

Another issue for bureaus is how they will deal with the market requirement for an Information Presentation Strategy (IPS). An IPS is not a print strategy but rather a higher level and more complex IT strategy and is key to serving the market-of-one.

Unfortunately, many firms operate without an *IPS* and thus, 'gate', their customer communication capability. The problem was that vendors sold sizzle, before substance. Now some firms are looking for a 'fix' to this IT problem by contracting out to a bureau that can help them establish an IPS.

Core Question – Have you got the skills to advise your clients on building and maintaining an IPS strategy or are you leaving that to your competitors?

Ashburnham's Clients Grow

Some of the projects we have undertaken for Bureaus show how a strong multi-disciplinary consulting firm can help to grow your business in such a period of change.

Project One:

Ashburnham undertook a **Corporate Positioning Review** to identify a Bureau's strengths and what would limit its revenues and profit growth over the next five years. The result was a new approach to sales and marketing.

Project Two:

A Bureau engaged Ashburnham to review the services that it could offer to a major client. Our independence let the Bureau's client openly discuss with us their business issues and we found ways for the Bureau to save its client over \$1,300,000 US annually.

Project Three:

Ashburnham helped a Bureau **create a winning response** to a major RFP. Our help included guiding discussions concerning the direction the bid would take, finding competitive advantages, and physically writing and editing large parts of the bid. Three hundred pages of appendices had to be assembled to support the bid. Our help with the tender response also minimized the impact of the bid preparation work on the Bureau's day-to-day operations and sales activities.

Project Four:

A DocuTech-based Bureau engaged Ashburnham to advise its senior executives. Our advice helped it grow its revenues 30% in one year and acquire three new businesses for future growth.

Upcoming Survey

In the early '90s, Ashburnham Group ran a survey of the major issues in the Bureau Market. This year we will, again, run a multi-nation Bureau survey. Individual responses will be kept confidential but included in the general survey results. Please write to us at Survey@ashburnham.com to participate in our survey. We will give a copy of the highlights of the survey to every participant.

How to Contact Ashburnham Group

Email

Sales_Department@Ashburnham.com

Tel: 1-705-939-2300

Tel in UK: (44) 1273-623214

Ashburnham's Bureau Support

Consider the following Ashburnham services in your fiscal planning for the year 2001.

Corporate Positioning Review — we will help you position your business for growth in the next 3 to 5 years. A number of well-known names in the industry have benefited from our focused review;

Vendor Support Review — we will give you a clear understanding of how well your vendors are helping your profitability, and show you how to enhance vendor relations;

Sales Training — we will assess your sales processes and prepare your sales teams for new markets. This service can include ongoing telephone and email sales support;

Major Account Review — we will show you ways to increase your revenue from your best accounts and also show you how to defend them from competitive attack;

Positioning for Sale? — if you would like to sell your firm, or part of it, then a number of steps must be taken to get a good price. Ashburnham Group has a plan to enhance and fortify your profitability and to present you and your company for top price;

Knowledgeable Outside Director — With a member of Ashburnham as a non-executive director, we will help your Board to guide your company's growth. Our retainer fee typically covers two days work a month, one to attend Board meetings and one is to prepare briefings for the Board on key subjects.

Document and Process Design: We have partnered with a proven supplier to provide professional document design support. We supply the technical, business and IPS support, and our partner the writing and design skills. Using this service you may extend your firm's value proposition, especially to banks, insurance companies and utilities. ✍