Must-do Tips No 68 - Hail The Silo Breakers

The interest generated by last month's issue on **Cross Selling** got us thinking about the surrounding issues that inhibit a professional firm's ability to market its range of services to fullest effect. A major problem being the inability of many to exploit the synergies that exist between the various service streams run by their practice groups or departments.

This is one of THE biggest areas where client needs are ignored. Because those same client needs - often the more complex and profitable ones - have the temerity to not fit neatly within 'our' practice group boundaries! And as most departments tend to operate in silos with very thick and impenetrable walls, the necessary intra-firm co-operation just doesn't happen. Thus, the opportunity to offer really innovative service packages rarely emerges.

But there are a few pockets of hope, usually from enlightened and self-motivated individuals who get together to break down these barriers, reaping the reward of exciting and novel client offerings that benefit their practice groups **and** the firm's revenue and profit streams. This month we offer three pieces of advice that can help begin the process of penetrating those silo walls.

Tip 1 – start with clients...

...as usual, and what we are doing for them. In order to understand where the cross-departmental potential lies, examine a range of typical transactions that involve the same cross-functional teams. We are looking for the underlying market or business needs that these service combinations are currently meeting - and then some. Could we offer a better/fuller service...or even develop a new combination? What additional knowledge or experience/expertise needs to be added? And from where within the firm?

Tip 2 - build 'ideas teams'

Good firms see the potential in Tip 1 - and then do something about it. They enlist the help and commitment of knowledgeable and motivated colleagues to form 'ideas teams'. By getting to know each other, over time, the membership of these teams builds a good appreciation of each others' practice areas, acquiring knowledge and mutual trust to generate and develop relevant, workable ideas.

Tip 3 - then make time to play

The teams need to be given time to play with and evaluate their ideas. Ideally, through running quick brainstorming sessions that generate the 'crazy' in order to get to the 'probable'. And, if possible, filtering the best outputs through input from clients (THIS is where good secondees can come into their own).

It is not a rigorous process, will have many false starts and the occasional blind alley - very frustrating things for some transaction-focused professionals. So the help of external catalysts (e.g. the firm's Marketing and Business Development specialists) is very often necessary to help and guide them through it.

However, this is a complex area in which firms may not have much experience and may benefit from external expertise. We work with teams of professionals to help them develop their new service ideas. For more information, hit 'Reply' and type ***new service development***. Or call us on 01227 730411.

For information on us, what we do, and who we work with, go to our website at www.peoplescope.com.

We welcome feedback on what you think about "Must-Do Tips". If you like it, hit 'Reply' and tell us specifically what you have enjoyed. If there is a topic or issue that you would like us to cover what is it? And if there is something that annoys, tell us too! We want to improve.

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Best regards.

JAMES NEWBERRY

People Scope, 6 River Court, Chartham, Canterbury CT4 7JN, United Kingdom. Telephone: 01227 730411.