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Healthcare Consulting Firms and the Virtual Corporation, By Sean McPhillips, CPHIMS

Competition. All companies face this challenge against their market adversaries in an effort to maintain customer relationships, secure new business and survive in the marketplace long term. To date, traditional market strategies of consulting firms resulted in selling their skill-set comfort zone to whomever was willing to buy them. Many firms claim to sell solutions but in reality are performing staff augmentation with the specific focus on clearing their bench.

In reality, if a firm were truly acting in the customer's best interest, their sales strategy should be one that focuses on what the customer's business needs *really* are and then satisfying those needs with the best resources available. Unfortunately, most firms are more concerned with clearing their bench then satisfying the business needs of the customer.

So what's the customer to do? The answer is to challenge these firms to *truly* provide business solutions to real business problems. Better yet, customers should pursue those firms that focus their effort on customer needs and not on those with self-serving interests.

The Virtual Corporation model is not new to the American Business landscape. First introduced formally in a book of the same name over a decade ago, the premise is that a company can strip down to what

they do best, form strategic partnerships to provide short-term and long-term complimentary business relationships to satisfy mutually beneficial joint-venture projects, and disband when mutual benefit is no longer viable.

In consulting, this means that the most profitable and customer-oriented firms would be those that focus on understanding exactly what the customer needs are on the front end while simultaneously establishing a network of complimentary partnerships, building a substantive and quality resource base on the backend.

While many smaller, profitable firms simply act as staff augmentation brokers between independent consultants and customers, what they fail to grasp is the focus on providing the customer with a true business solution. To do this, the firm needs to understand the real business needs of the customer and then satisfy those needs by marrying the right resources at the right time.

While the majority of firms are locked in their self-serving business models of the past, others are capitalizing on the Virtual Corporation model as they forge towards the future. G2 Information Services, Inc. is one such company.

Based out of Morrow, Ohio, G2 has constructed a network of strategic and complimentary

Continued Page 2 Virtual Corporation

Virtual Corporation (cont.):

business partnerships with staffing firms that have defined themselves based on a narrow skill-set, such as a particular vendor solution set or business need (ex. Integration).

By employing this model, G2 does not maintain a bench and can therefore focus on the needs of the customer when securing new business. Customers deal directly with G2 for solutions planning and resource staffing, while G2 taps its strategic partners to construct cross-disciplinary teams based around the needs of the customer.

“So many companies recite the word **solution** as part of their tool set or state **solution** over and over in their collaterals. However, to most of them, the word **solution** means ‘*If we don’t have it, you don’t need it*,’” says Bruce Grambley, Founder and President of G2 Information Services. “Our approach is to take the time to understand the customer’s needs, business problems, and project scope. Then, we tap our network of resources to craft a custom solution set and resource team according to the customer’s specifications, budget, and timeline.”

The old model of consulting sales no longer applies in a real-time competitive market. Firms that insist on hiring resources based on the project and/or try to clear their bench for the purpose of maximizing short-term profit are being penny-wise and dollar-foolish.

Until more firms begin to listen to the needs of the customer and construct real solutions to satisfy their

business needs, customers will continue to see consultants as necessary evils instead of valuable business partners.

Member Spot Light:**Sean McPhillips, Principle Consultant, Macro Integration, LLC**

Sean has been very active in the CSOHIMSS Chapter and is serving on the board for his second straight year. Further, he also serves as the Editor of the CSOHIMSS Chapter Newsletter. Sean also had the opportunity of participating in the New York State Chapter of HIMSS, where he created and maintained the Chapter website. Recently, Sean was promoted to HIMSS Senior Member Status through the HIMSS Advancement Program.

Sean has over 12 years of experience in the healthcare industry with the last five years focusing on systems integration. Sean’s experience broadly covers the information systems environment, from operations to executive management. In addition, Sean holds two Masters Degrees in Business Administration and Public Administration, as well as being a Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems (CPHIMS).

Sean’s humble beginnings started as a computer operator at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Sleepy Hollow, New York. After working with several consulting firms and hospitals in varying capacities, Sean opted to start his own small firm specializing in systems integration via the SeeBeyond Product Suite.

Success Story: Rapid SeeBeyond Conversion

Macro Integration, LLC, a local start-up firm specializing in the SeeBeyond Product Suite recently completed a successful conversion from DataGate-to-e*Gate.

While the successful conversion is not something normally celebrated, what makes this case interesting is that the project completed in 15% less time than estimated and 10% under budget.

In and of itself, this is cause for some celebration because integration projects, particularly those involving conversion, more often than not end up going over budget in both dollars and in estimated time.

What makes this success story more interesting is that the quality of the deliverables substantially exceeded customer expectations.

Macro Integration attributes project success due to their proprietary conversion methodology considered to be solid, thorough and complete.

By employing the proven methodology, Macro Integration provided the customer with a complete strategy up-front and in detail, enabling the customer to plan and manage their resources proactively.

The end-product not only included a successful engine conversion, it also included a set of documentation second to none, customized for the customer. Documents included a *Development Guide* and an *Operations Manual*, allowing for comprehensive staff mentoring and smooth transition of the integration environment post project completion.

Chapter Business, Activities and Participation:

Calendar of Events:

Event	Date & Time	Location	Registration Fee
No events scheduled at this time			

Open Positions:

Currently, the CSOHIMSS Chapter has several vacant positions on the Board of Directors. We are seeking any members of the CSOHIMSS Chapter to volunteer their services if they would be interested in filling any positions. The current open positions are:

- Telecommunications Liaison
- Chapter Secretary

Active participation has its advantages! Members who participate in this capacity earn valuable HIMSS points which are necessary for advancement to Senior Member or Fellow status within HIMSS.

In addition, you will be plugged into what is going on at the chapter level and have an influential voice in what activities and conferences our chapter sponsors.

If you are interested in any of these positions or if you are interested in volunteering in any other capacity, please contact Jerry Schwartz, Chapter President, for more information.

Open Request to Members:

The CSOHIMSS Chapter has an open request to all members for any subject or issue that they would like to see the chapter address.

Addressing the issue could be in the form of a feature article or a conference

presentation (either locally or nationally).

All suggestions welcome. Please consider those that are current, relevant and of pressing concern to the contemporary healthcare environment.

Presentation suggestions should be forwarded to Jerry Schwartz. Article suggestions should be forwarded to Sean McPhillips.

Academic Scholarships:

CSOHIMSS is considering offering two \$500 scholarships to college students for the 2003-2004 academic year.

The CSOHIMSS Board of Directors unanimously agreed to the program at the Board Retreat on June 6, 2003.

In addition to the scholarship awards, the winning applicants will receive a complimentary one-year membership in National HIMSS as well as membership in the CSOHIMSS Chapter.

If you know anyone who may be interested in applying for this scholarship, please contact Jerry Schwartz for more information.

Chapter Sponsorship:

As mentioned in last quarter's newsletter, the Board of Directors for the Central and Southern Ohio Chapter of HIMSS have simplified the Chapter Sponsorship to better serve the membership.

The new pricing structure and benefits are as follow:

Event Sponsor: \$150 per event. Company name appears as sponsor for one event.

Chapter Sponsor: \$400 per year. Company name and logo will appear on the Chapter Website and will also be considered a sponsor of all chapter events for the term of their sponsorship. Annual sponsorship terms begin July 1st and end the following June 30th. Any company that wishes to sponsor at some point during a term, the sponsorship fee will be prorated \$100 by quarter.

If your company is interested in becoming an Event/Chapter Sponsor or if you have any suggestions as to how companies may benefit better from sponsorship.

Note: Benefits may change to better serve our sponsors.

Member Feedback:

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

This section posts questions and comments from chapter members. If you have a comment or question, send them to Sean McPhillips at newsletter@csohimss.org for consideration.