

Good afternoon, everyone.

My task today is to talk in more detail about how consultants and agents can be used effectively to support the marketing team of the future.

A little background: Publishers Communication Group is a marketing consultancy that helps publishers market, sell, and develop strategies to grow their customer base, particularly with the library market. My background is in scholarly publishing from the nonprofit side and based in the journals marketplace. PCG celebrated its 25th anniversary last year, and I have been with the company since 2004. PCG is owned by Ingenta, a technology company providing hosting and enterprise solutions to publishers around the world.

PCG's core services include:

- Sales representation around the world
- Teleservices and marketing to promote publisher content
- Market research to help publishers better understand and grow their position in the library marketplace.

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This slide shows what I'm going to cover:

- What is a consultant?
- When might you consider using one?
- How would you go about it? Where would you find them?
- And finally, how can an agent help your marketing and sales team?

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I imagine some of you might gulp when you think of hiring a consultant. You may assume they are too expensive to be possible for your organization. But consider how much it would cost a small business in mistakes and lost business if the market research part is skipped or done badly. Taken in that light, spending the money on a good consultant can be a good strategy.

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When might you consider hiring a consultant?

- To do the research to develop a new product or reach into a new market before committing yourself to a new internal hire.
- To double-check your instincts about a new market or product and provide expert advice to the higher ups in the organization.
- Consultants have deeper experience in the area and can therefore provide a broader view of what strategies are being used by others and what would work for you.

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What is a consultant?

First and foremost, they are Experienced professionals who provides expert knowledge. Fees range widely but vary most based on the time anticipated to do the research you are looking for. Consultants can work alone or in a small agency (Delta Think, Clarke & Company, Kaufman Wills Fusting). They generally have been in publishing for a long time, and they often specialize in a particular type of project.

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Types of consulting you typically see in publishing are:

- **Business transformation consultants** who specialize in identifying new **business opportunities** and **advising on** solutions to enable the organization to take advantage of them.
- **Marketing consultants** who deal particularly with marketing and product development, including marketing strategy, communication plans and messaging, collateral development, and gap analysis.
- **Strategy consultants** (aka **management consultants**) who work alongside senior management on the development of and improvements to organizational strategy.

Some examples in scholarly publishing:

- Market Analysis – how much potential might there be in, for example, the community college marketplace of the corporate marketplace
- Marketing Plan Development – a plan to reach a particular segment of the market, and it could include collateral, email marketing, and messaging
- Society Membership Growth Strategy – several agents specialize in advising scholarly association publishers on membership marketing
- SWOT Analysis – identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a publisher and where the opportunities and threats are
- Competitive Analysis – what are other publishers doing as far as open access, bundling, pricing, tiering
- Usage Data Review – analyzing web traffic reports to identify institutions where there is interest but no subscription, or identifying institutions with low usage where the renewal could be in danger
- Editorial Review – gathering feedback from faculty, authors, members as to the focus of the publication. Is it still current? Has it been eclipsed by another journal?
- Digital Strategy – developing RFPs for platform vendors and advising on bundling strategy and pricing for online content
- New Product Development – researching the market for a potential new product

- Usability Study – soliciting user feedback on website delivery of content or ease of use of an author submission system
- Focus Group Management – getting feedback from a small group of researchers or librarians on a particular strategic question
- Audience Development – advising on which parts of the market have the most potential for your product and how to approach them
- Tier Pricing Review – comparing your established tiering system with actual usage to determine if it’s working well or needs revision; could also be setting up tiered pricing for your content
- Surveys – particularly online surveys of librarians, authors, researchers, etc. about your product
- Specialized Training – like sales training for a new staff person, or training about a specific region of the world, could also be training videos on use of your content
- Marketing Collateral Development – design and copy development which can include purchasing email lists and execution of an email marketing campaign

Also, social networking strategy is another type of project that comes up.

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Case study examples:

- Market Opportunities Analysis (aka Gap Analysis)

Comparing current subscription list with institutions with particular degree programs or that take competing titles. A publisher could think they have a particular market sewed up when they might be missing a chunk in a parallel discipline.
- Focus Groups

Faculty interaction with librarians – a meeting with local faculty to probe how often or in what context do they communicate with librarians, and if they would like that to change; also to learn what is the best way to tell faculty about new products in their area.

Product bundling strategy – how might a key reference work that is now digitized be added into your current online package and suggested pricing for the changes
- White papers and training videos

A publisher wants to help a particular constituency understand how their content can be used effectively. This would likely involve interviewing a range of users and collecting insights from available research that can inform the constituency.
- Librarian support page analysis

The publisher wants a review of the librarian tools they offer as compared to what other publishers are offering. This could involve talking with librarians as well about what materials and tools they find helpful in promoting a publisher’s content internally in their institution.

And finally, what about agencies? What can they do for you?

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An agent can:

- Sell your content in a region that's new for you and that needs a personalized on-the-ground approach
- To manage a sales team when the publisher doesn't want to deal with the staffing, incentivizing and reporting themselves.
- To show off your content at local library conferences and meet with individual librarians on your behalf.

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An agent can be:

- A **company** with employees in a range of territories. (PCG, Accucoms, iGroup)
- An **individual** representing a group of publishers in a particular region. (David Charles)
- A **subscription agent** with sales agents around the world selling their database content. (Ebsco)
- A **company in one country** dedicated to selling in only that region. (Maruzen, Kinokuniya, Globe)
- An **individual working on behalf of a group of publishers** being sold together. (Dragonfly and ISPG, Accucoms)

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Agents will vary in their terms such as:

- Commission only (new business, can include renewals or not)
- Management fee + commission
- Part time or full time
- Bundled with other publishers, or not
- Country or region
- Exclusive or not

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Agents typically work with publishers in the following ways:

- With a contact in Marketing or a top-level Publishing Director
- The agent and publisher should agree on sales targets. (This is easier with some types of agents and not others.)
- The publisher should provide promotional material for the agent to use
- Agents should confirm pricing with the publisher when a consortia negotiation is going on.
- Agents should provide regular reports to the publisher on things such as progress to targets, pipeline, market intelligence, and future plans.

