

The Integration Imperative

REVIEWED BY CARL FRIESEN, CMC

“Hello, I’m in business development.” “Good to meet you, I’m in marketing.” One was thinking, “She’s an event organizer,” and the other, “He’s all show, but no go.” And so they just stood there looking at each other, with nothing to say.

This is the kind of disconnect professional services management consultant Suzanne Lowe addresses in her second book, *The Integration Imperative*. She takes direct aim at the functional silos found in many professional services firms, which result in a disconnect between the BD and marketing functions.

In one situation she describes, a firm’s marketing department produced documents on the firm’s leading-edge thought, but the BD people weren’t using them in their meetings with clients and prospects.

The book first builds a case that there really is a disconnect between the BD and marketing functions, and that disconnect hurts a firm’s effectiveness—which provides useful ammunition for anyone who needs to convince a firm’s leadership that there is a problem that needs solving. For example, some marketing departments are kept in a support role only, not allowed to give input for strategic-level decisions, and kept from any direct contact with clients.

Lowe then goes into her recommendation that BD and marketing should be better integrated and indeed should be an aspect of the responsibilities of every member of the firm, each in their own way. This is followed by some implementation models and several in-depth case studies that confirm the validity and practicality of her ideas.

In the interests of full disclosure, Suzanne Lowe was my mentor for about three years in the early years of my own consulting practice. I’ve always been impressed with her willingness to conduct surveys and do other research to understand where professional services firms and B2B businesses are working well and where they need to improve. Her book fairly bristles with research findings, both her own and those of other authorities. She cites her collaboration with well-known names in professional services firm management



The Integration Imperative: Erasing Marketing and Business Development Silos—Once and for All—in Professional Service Firms

by Suzanne C. Lowe

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and marketing, such as Ken Lizotte, Larry Bodine, and the Bloom Group. This provides readers with the reassurance that her recommendations are based on real-world data and contrasts with the books of some other well-known gurus in the field. With Suzanne Lowe, it’s crystal clear that she’s done her homework.

The Integration Imperative is intended for senior management people in professional services firms. Marketing staff can benefit as well, in that the book provides good perspective on how they must develop their careers in order to add the most value for their employers.

One limitation I found was that most of the information is solely from an American perspective, meaning that the book may not have as much relevance for other parts of the world. It also seems focused largely on the situations facing mid-sized to large organizations, without as much that could be implemented by small organizations or sole practitioners.

In all, it is helpful to any marketer who wants to add value and build career-enhancing skills in the process. **m**

About the Reviewer



Contributing Editor Carl Friesen, MBA, CMC, is a senior associate with Emerson Consulting Group Inc., where he helps business professionals build their profile through getting published in magazines and books. He is based in Mississauga, ON, and is author of two books: *The Fame Game* (SMPS, 2002) and *Writing Magazine Articles* (Xlibris, 2003). Contact him at 289.232.4057 or carl@thoughtleading.com.