“You improve and invest when there is a downturn”

Carola Heinig, with
Alexander Schröder-Frerkes
Bird & Bird, Germany
The Integration Imperative
Suzanne Lowe – Professional Services Books £13.25/$29.95

In this book management consultant Suzanne Lowe talks of a professional services firm whose marketing department produced well-developed 'think pieces' demonstrating the firm's thought-leading credentials. However, the documents saw little use – partly because the business development team members didn't know about the materials and so didn't use them in client meetings.

This is the sort of disconnect I've observed in many professional services firms, where the BD and marketing staffs work in separate silos and seemingly in separate worlds. Different personalities, different methods, different values.

Well-researched and highly relevant to professional services marketers, I found the book to have two limitations. One is that the examples, conditions and situations are almost all American, with only the occasional nod to other parts of the world including Australia, Europe and the UK. This may limit its international usefulness. Also, Lowe appears to focus on midsize to large organisations, perhaps because it is only they who have fully-developed marketing and BD staffs. There is less in the book that could be implemented by smaller firms.

However, the book is a well-considered look at a serious issue facing today's professional service firms and business-to-business enterprises, with some sound suggestions on how to remedy the situation.

Carl Friesen Emerson Consulting Group Inc.

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COMPETITION

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firms why they can and must integrate the often-separate functions of BD and marketing. In the book, Lowe first builds a case that the BD and marketing are not relevant to her or his situation. For example, the part discussing the reality and consequences of the marketing/BD divide are most useful to readers who do not understand the situation, or who need to convince others of its seriousness.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its basis in sound research. In the interests of full disclosure, Suzanne Lowe was my mentor for about three years in the early years of my own consulting practice.

Right from our first acquaintance a decade ago, I was impressed with the annual surveys she carried out on various aspects of professional services firm marketing, which provided fresh information each year for her extensive public speaking tours. She's continued this emphasis on original research in her books – both of them fairly bristle with research findings, both her own and those she credits to other authorities. She cites her collaboration with well-known names in professional services firm management and marketing, such as Ken Lizotte, Larry Bodine and the Bloom Group. This gives readers confidence that these are not just Suzanne Lowe's opinions – they are conclusions based on hard data.