THE RODENHAUSER REPORT'S INSIDE CONSULTING (4-14-99)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PONDER WEB MARKETING
Are web pages effective marketing tools? Many professional service firms report mixed results.

Expertise Marketing (www.expertisemarketing.com) surveyed 9,700 professional service firms for its annual Technology and Marketing study. The use of web pages far outpaces other marketing technologies, such as online newsletters, CD-ROMs and broadcast fax.

While 71% of the respondents are using Web pages, only 59% report that the Web has met their marketing expectations. CD-ROMs, meanwhile, enjoyed an 87% satisfaction rating.

Management consultancies lag behind law firms and accounting firms in using Web pages to promote their business, an interesting finding considering the latter groups' historical aversion to splashy advertising.

U.S. LAWYERS AS CONSULTANTS?
Like their accounting brethren, U.S. law firms are finding management advisory services an irresistible lure. The current issue of The National Law Journal (4-12) offers a provocative article on the budding consulting practice at Richmond, VA-based McGuire, Woods, Battle & Boothe.

Outside the U.S., blending professional services is commonplace -- measured by sheer numbers, several Big 5 accounting firms house some of the world's largest legal practices. In the U.S., it's still rare for law firms to have separate consulting divisions.

In the NLJ article, McGuire Woods' managing partner William Strickland says consulting "provide(s) a more complete package of services ... it didn't make sense to refer that work out when we could do it." In addition to servicing existing clients, the firm hopes to attract new business and possibly expand the practice to other offices.

Sounds a lot like the accounting world circa 1982.

(Ed Note: The May issue of The Rodenhauser Report will detail the consulting practices at major U.S. law firms.)

CONSULTING TO CONSULTANTS: A COTTAGE INDUSTRY?
Add another publication to the plethora of Consulting 101 bromides aimed at solo consultants and/or consultant wannabes.
Consulting Opportunities Journal (coj@bizhowto.com) is a resurrected version of the old Herman Holtz monthly on consulting marketing tactics. Founded in 1981 by legendary consulting instructor Herman Holtz, the new COJ is published by Lew Williams and New Ventures Publishing in Dallas, TX.

Most experienced pros may find the 1-2-3-style overly simplistic, but it’s an easy read for today’s consultant, whose attention span is measured in nanoseconds.

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Inside Consulting is written by Tom Rodenhauser as a free supplement to The Rodenhauser Report, a monthly briefing series on consulting trends and best practices circulated to senior advisors and business executives. The Rodenhauser Report costs $295/yr for 10 issues.

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Marketing

More service businesses make use of technology

Professional service firms are applying technologies to their marketing activities, according to a new national study.

The study, by Expertise Marketing of Concord, said that while firms use such technologies as Web pages, faxes, and CD-ROMs to promote themselves with the public, much of their marketing technology is used primarily to automate information obtained through traditional marketing activities.

For example, while 75 percent of respondents use contact databases as part of their marketing programs, only 30 percent take advantage of their databases' potential for mining and using valuable information.

Expertise interviewed more than 300 professional service firms between October and December 1998.

BRIAN O'NEILL