

January 2014

Inside Outsourcing™



INTERVIEWED BY LARRY JANIS

Jonathan M. Shean, President, Continuum

Continuum is a professional services firm that helps Fortune 2000 companies buy and manage print more effectively, reducing their costs and enabling them to better focus on their core business. As a result our print management solutions also help executives accomplish strategic objectives in other areas of their business.



LJ: Please share an overview of the services and processes that your firm offers.

JS: Continuum is a professional services organization that helps Fortune 2000 companies buy and manage their print more effectively, thus reducing their costs and enabling them to better focus on their core business.

Our primary offering is Continuum OnSourcing™, a turn-key print management solution that features a dedicated on-site team, transparent open-book model, shared economic incentives, and contractually guaranteed savings. Continuum OnSourcing allows us to become a true extension of our clients' organizations. And the work we do day-in and day-out on behalf of our clients helps to minimize their costs while increasing the visibility and control they have over a critical area of spend.

Every Continuum solution is customized based on that client's specific needs. So a key part of our process is working closely with a client upfront to attain a deep understanding of their business, strategic and cultural priorities. Only then can we work collaboratively to design the optimal solution for their organization and build a sustainable win/win partnership.

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FROM THE EDITOR

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Inside Outsourcing's goal is to provide you with articles of interest and with a forum for the exchange of information in this rapidly evolving industry.

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LJ: Why would a company want to engage with Continuum for these types of services?

JS: First, for the vast majority of companies print procurement is no longer a core function. Second, though we live in a multi-channel world, print is still a key component of most marketing strategies and it remains a large area of spend for many organizations. Third, visibility into that spend is typically very low because print touches many different departments and people, both internal and external to the organization.

As more and more companies leverage outsourcing in areas like IT and HR to focus on their core business, print outsourcing represents a huge opportunity for driving further organizational focus along with substantial cost savings. Print is a very unique category that requires specific expertise and knowledge and as such engaging an expert in the space like Continuum is key.

LJ: As you go to market, who is the target buyer of your services (both industry sector and decision maker)?

JS: Continuum's core market is Business to Consumer, which for us includes Retail, Direct Marketers, Hospitality, Healthcare, Not for Profit, Telco/Cable, Financial, Insurance and Grocery.

We work with C-level marketing, operations and finance executives who make the final decision based on their ownership of the budget and the people involved. Ultimately the procurement team also participates, helping to implement the solution. However, we interact almost exclusively with the budget owners at the outset.

Specifically the engagement process for a successful partnership with Continuum begins with an executive sponsor. This individual is typically highly engaged in the overarching strategic direction of the company and is able to own the success of the initiative while delegating the specific tasks related to our assessment process to others on his or her team.

Additionally we work with consulting and outsourcing firms when they have clients looking to reduce costs and/or increase efficiencies in their print spend. These types of firms frequently call on us to leverage our core expertise of optimizing the print supply chain.

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LJ: *Given that this is a competitive marketplace, what is your advantage in the sector?*

JS: Continuum has several advantages over competing companies:

Scale and Stability: Continuum is a division of Central National-Gottesman, one of the largest global pulp and paper companies with annual revenues of \$4 Billion. With this kind of financial backing, market focus and resources, our clients are assured that Continuum is capable of delivering on its commitments and will be there for them over the long term.

Solution Customization: Based on our clients' stated business objectives as well as their readiness and cultural fit, we can offer our solution as a co-sourcing model on one end of the spectrum or conversely as a fully engaged BPO model on the other end of the spectrum. In both model scenarios the client can retain as much decision making control as they need and want. We see these model options as a unique attribute to our business and competitive differentiator. It allows companies to either ease into Print Management if they are new to outsourcing or simply hand it over as a fully outsourced arrangement after co-developing the go-forward solution.

People and Expertise: The Continuum team is comprised of industry experts with a minimum of fifteen years experience in the print and/or print management space working with Fortune 2000 clients.

Additionally – and this is unique to Continuum – we are able to leverage the expertise and resources of our sister companies – A.T. Clayton and J.S. Eliezer – to provide clients with a breadth and depth of related expertise unlike any other provider can offer – including paper procurement, mill sourcing strategies and negotiations, as well as long run print and distribution consulting.

By working with our sister companies to address specific landed cost attributes across the entire print supply chain we're able to offer an end-to-end solution and value proposition that is unrivaled in the industry.

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LJ: What is the biggest concern a prospective client has about your offerings?

JS: Typically the biggest concern is change. Any solution that impacts an existing process within a company and potentially effects employees' day-to-day activities is going to require change. Additionally, print is an emotional category, unlike IT and payroll for example, because it involves a company's brand and touches many departments and people, both inside and outside of a company. This combination of change and emotion requires the unique expertise and experience that only a company like Continuum can provide.

We mitigate these client concerns by co-developing our solutions with the key stakeholders inside an organization. With stakeholders who are invested in the "future state" we essentially develop internal partners who sponsor the solution and manage the resulting change that occurs, facilitating a successful partnership.

LJ: What are your current responsibilities at Continuum?

JS: As president of Continuum I am primarily responsible for providing strategic leadership for the company and working with management to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans, and policies. I balance that with ensuring that we over achieve on our contracted commitments to our clients and exceed their expectations.

Sales and marketing also fall under my purview where my main priority is to ensure that my team is working collaboratively with clients and prospects to solve their problems in the most effective manner possible.

And of course, I spend a considerable amount of time working to add highly talented employees to our team.

LJ: As you look to acquire talent, what do you look for when evaluating a perspective candidate?

JS: A key element of our differentiation is our people and the expertise they bring to a client. So first and foremost we look for industry experience and a track record of success. Ideally candidates will have been in printing and/or print management for 10+ years and will have worked closely with large customers. Also critical for us is a candidate's cultural fit, commercial savvy and capability for customer empathy

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LJ: What has enabled Continuum to be successful?

JS: It's really the combination of everything we've covered in this piece... our people, our approach to custom solutions, the way we work with clients to establish win/win partnerships. And, of course, the unique position we're in as a company as a division of Central National-Gottesman and the relationship we have with A.T. Clayton and J.S. Eliezer Associates. These companies have been in business for decades and have delivered untold value to hundreds of clients in the form of sustained savings, lean processes and increased efficiencies. The ability of Continuum to provide its print management solutions alone, or as part of a complete paper and print supply chain management solution, is something that no other provider in our space can deliver. And that's an exciting place for us to be as a company.

Integrated Search Solutions Group

Integrated Search Solutions does more than just put people into companies. We approach every engagement with a unique focus on the successful alignment of executive talent with the client's business strategy and target markets. Partnering for the long term, we genuinely learn each client's business – operational and strategic -to produce lasting results.

When you partner with us, you also benefit from our consultative, analytical, business, market, and executive search experience. Our expertise, combined with our total commitment to driving quality in every aspect of what we do, provides you with a talent acquisition solution that consistently exceeds your expectations.

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