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# CONSULTING®

THE PEOPLE • THE PROFESSION • THE LIFESTYL

Volume Sixteen: Issue Two

February 2014

THE 2014

This year's winners increased revenue by 45% and billable consultants by 30%. And they're forecasting 35% growth for 2014

HOW DOES YOUR FIRM MEASURE UP?

# SMALL JEWELS

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS OF THE PROFESSION

# **PLUS**

**Seven to Watch** Consulting's up-and-coming firms

Consultants on Consulting: Point B's CEO on keeping

top-notch culture as you grow

Travel Advisory: Marriott opens tallest hotel in NYC

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ear in and year out, the Seven Small Jewels defy the odds and crank out eye-popping returns. They all, in one way or another, stood out from the rest. Collectively, our 2014 winners grew revenue by an astounding 45 percent last year. They also grew their number of billable consultants by 30 percent. And, they're forecasting another 35 percent growth this year. Can we doubt them? Only if we suspect that percentage will actually be higher. The stories of the seven winning firms are highlighted over the next eight pages. The stories are inspirational, for sure. At the end of the section, we also highlight this year's Seven To Watch-firms that impressed us immensely, but weren't quite ready for prime time. At least not yet.



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Daily Updates.

New Features.

Exclusive Stories.

# DO YOU KNOW A TOP 25 CONSULTANT?

Consulting magazine is once again looking for entries for its annual Top 25 Consultants award. Once again, winners and their firms will be featured in the May issue and honored at the Top 25 Awards Dinner in New York in June. To nominate a consultant for the Top 25 award, visit www. consultingmag.com and click on the Top 25 Consultants logo on the upper-left-hand side of the home page or e-mail Janie Setzer at jsetzer@ consultingmag.com and use "Top 25" as the subject line. Entry deadline is Mar. 10.

#### **ONLINE EXCLUSIVES**

#### **AVOID CONSULTANT HIRING MISTAKES**

How do you ensure that the candidates that you present to your hiring authorities are qualified? As professional recruiters, we cannot hide behind the veil of "well, we are not responsible for hiring candidates because that's the hiring manager's job". That thinking, in TalentRise's James O'Malley's opinion, is just wrong!

#### BIG DATA: PROBLEM SCOPE AND SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW

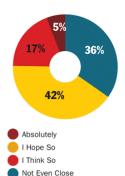
Companies have had data about their key stakeholders for as long as they've existed and as long as we've had computers, so what's new and what's different here? asks Babar Khan, Chief Marketing Officer at Ephlux.

#### 2014 CONSULTING MARKET TRENDS

All indications suggest nearly double-digit revenue growth within the consulting sector in 2014. That's excellent news. Targeting high-opportunity industry sectors—like healthcare and energy—will be essential for your firm to carve out its segment of the revenue pie, says Deltek's Claus Thorsgaard.

## CONSULTINGMAG.COM ONLINE READER POLL

Has the economy—finally now totally recovered from the Great Recession?



Consulting® FEBRUARY 2014



#### **JAMES MADISON AND THE SEVEN SMALL JEWELS**



For two years, I was the Sports Editor at James Madison University. Our football program was what was called Division I-AA. Basically, a step down from the big boys you see playing in front of 100,000 people on Saturday afternoons. Our stadium held 18,000 people.

Fewer fans means less fanfare, of course. But it also meant fewer schol-

arships, fewer standout stars and fewer big-name coaches. In fact, any coach that succeeds at the Division I-AA level is scooped up by the national powerhouse colleges. That's not to say the Division I-AA games weren't entertaining and competitive; they absolutely were. And every once in a while, headline writers and sportscasters are able to dust off their David and Goliath metaphors when an upstart upsets a powerhouse as James Madison did when it beat Virginia Tech 21-16 in 2010. I can only think how fun covering that game must've been for whoever the Sports Editor was at the time.

Year in and year out, the Seven Small Jewels defy the odds and crank out eye-popping returns. Collectively, our 2014 winners grew revenue by an astounding 45 percent last year.

In some ways, it's similar to the Seven Small Jewels. Let's face it-much of the news in this profession is driven by a few dozen enterprise firms. There isn't really a way around that. But a few times a year—Seven Small Jewels and Best Small

Firms to Work For-I get to drill down into the inner workings of the smaller firms. And it's a blast! They are, without doubt, the little engines that can in consulting.

Year in and year out, the Seven Small Jewels defy the odds and crank out eye-popping returns. Collectively, our 2014 winners grew revenue by an astounding 45 percent last year. They also grew their number of billable consultants by 30 percent. And, they're forecasting another 35 percent growth this year.

Small Jewels boast revenue and growth that would make enterprise firms envious, but they also possess employee satisfaction in spades. At these firms, culture is king, recruiting is by referral and retention rates are through the roof.

And, every once in a while, James Madison shows up and makes things even more interesting.

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# hortTakes Trends, Views and Analysis

## **Capco's Recruiting Push**

Ismail Amla, North American CEO, says firm expects to grow between 30 and 70 percent



Global business and technology consulting firm Capco has been on a roll. The firm has grown from 100 consultants in 2009 to about 1,000 today. And they aren't slowing down. North America CEO Ismail Amla says he expects growth in 2014 alone to be between 30 and 70 percent. To keep up this blistering momentum, Capco has launched a recruiting drive across all business domains from New York to Chicago to Washington to Toronto. Known for its strong company culture, Amla says personality and entrepreneurial spirit weighs heavily into their image of an ideal recruit. He recently sat down with Consulting to discuss how recruiting, hiring and retaining top talent factors into the firm's overall plans.

**Consulting:** What is Capco looking for in a recruit?

**Amla:** We generally get two categories of recruits; one is from industry and has that deep brand focus. Probably 60 to 70 percent of our recruits are from industry, people who have been practitioners either in technology or financial services. The rest of our recruits are from consulting. Generally we find consultants working in the tier-1 consultancies who are looking to still do great work with great clients but are looking for a different culture to work in. We are hiring at all levels right from partner on through to associates, and we are hiring form all schools, technology and the art schools.

**Consulting:** How are you finding the quality of the talent pool overall?

Amla: Excellent, actually. Getting access to it in the time we need is a challenge. As long as we are targeting people who are performing above average or exceeding expectations, we will attract the right sort of talent. Then at the more junior levels we're finding it's a combination, there's a lot of raw talent out there. The additional filter we apply to that is around personality and the outlook people are taking regarding what sort of career they want. People who are more entrepreneurial, who are looking to engineer change at whatever level they may be at in their career, are the ones that will be more successful at Capco.

**Consulting:** What are some of the differentiators about Capco that make it attractive for recruits?

Amla: Well I guess if you compared it to Maslow's hierarchy of needs at least, we need to be giving compensation models, which are at least as attractive as they can get in industry or with competitors. We think we not only do that, but do a level of profit share and bonuses at all levels of the organization you probably wouldn't find in our competition. Everybody in that organization gets the benefit of Capco's success no matter what level you're at. Another differentiator is that Capco is almost an inverted pyramid. We expect the people on the front lines to define our company's culture. We do a lot of crowdsourcing around corporate strategy and the crowd in this case is our employee workforce. The ability to get involved in defining what a company will look like, what

FERRIJARY 2014 Consulting®

# **ShortTakes**

its culture is, those are some of the things I think make a difference over our competitors in the market.

**Consulting:** What are clients demanding?

**Amla:** In the last six months we have had three large, global, tier-1 financial services organizations who have hired us on five-year engagements, each with over 100 people. The competition was long, it was hard, and it was against all our tier-1 competitors you'd expect. In the final analysis when we'd been awarded the work, in the top 3 reasons why they had given the work the first reason always seems to be culture, and the fact that we have a set of people who feel empowered to drive change and bring different DNA to the client organization.

As a result of the culture we're creating, it seems to be something the client has come to ask for. Something different from what they've had historically. Something that will engineer and push change in their own organization. Pretty much every organization we're talking to is going through massive transformation.

**Consulting:** What are some of the biggest areas of transformation clients are grappling with?

**Amla:** The first would be cost transformation. All the financial services organizations are seeing that returns are not what they were 10 years ago. Revenues are not what they were, so cost needs to be transformed in a radical way. We're getting involved in helping them think through how they do that cost transformation but also providing ways through outsourcing and chainsourcing and smartsourcing ways they can actually get structural change in their cost base.

Another would be digital. Digital and mobile have been around forever in the wider world, but in financial services the ability to get access to all the services through all the devices is just taking off. There's a huge focus on driving the organization to that platform and everything that goes with it.



#### **CASE STUDY**

#### Slalom Helps Chart a Course for Holland America's Mobile App

Holland America Line (HAL) knew it was time to explore the uncharted waters of mobile technology, but wasn't sure where to begin. The Seattle-based cruise line turned to Slalom Consulting for strategic guidance on making their once-in-a-lifetime experiences come to life on a mobile device.

#### The Challenge

After helping construct their mobile strategy and soliciting employee suggestions for the company's debut mobile application, the Slalom project team was entrusted with HAL's first

mobile initiative: a
user-friendly tablet
app for Shore Excursion
(Shorex) Managers.
User interviews provided
insight into challenges and real-

world use cases, such as limited connectivity at sea, the distractions of a bustling ship, and periodic lines at the ship's shore excursion desk.

#### **The Solution**

HAL's Shorex managers needed an intuitive app to give passengers an at-a-glance overview of shore excursions, complete with colorful pictures, trip details and availability, and booking functionality. The Slalom team delivered a sleek tablet app that empowers Shorex Managers to provide guests with informed excursion opportunities—with booking capabilities—

from onboard the ship.

#### The Result

Delivered on time and on budget, our solution broadens the reach of Shorex managers, minimizes

lines for guests, and improves the guest experience. Now, instead of straining to see a manager's desk monitor, guests can swipe to browse a visual collection of exciting destinations and activities from the comfort of a pool chair. This tablet app is just the start for Holland America Line. Together with Slalom, the cruise line is navigating the next steps in their mobile strategy with a primary goal in mind: enriching the guest experience. Slalom's app for HAL was recognized with a 2013 Mobilizer Award by *Mobile Enterprise Magazine*.

# **ShortTakes**

#### **News Briefs**

#### **BCG DIGITAL VENTURES LAUNCHES**

The Boston Consulting Group, one of the world's leading management consultancies, announced today the launch of BCG Digital Ventures, a digital innovation, product development, and commercialization firm. BCG Digital Ventures goes beyond providing consulting, design, and technology services to form strategic venture teams with its clients in order to rapidly develop, launch, and grow transformational digital products, platforms, and businesses. The new firm is a wholly owned business unit headquartered in Manhattan Beach, Calif., with offices in San Francisco, Seattle, Boston and London. With BCG's digital assets and resources from around the world at its disposal, BCG Digital Ventures will combine hundreds of experienced practitioners and leverage BCG's substantial intellectual property. To run this new business unit, BCG has hired a number of seasoned operators, entrepreneurs, and advisors. Jeff Schumacher, former managing director and cofounder of Booz Digital, has been named CEO.

#### IMPACT NAMES CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Impact Advisors announced today that Dr. Steven Schlossberg has joined the organization as a Vice President and Chief Medical Officer. As a member of the Executive Team, Dr. Schlossberg will further enhance Impact's Clinical Consulting capabilities and provide physician executive-level assistance to Impact's clients. With more than 20 years of clinical experience, Dr. ß has extensive knowledge spanning the healthcare information technology lifecycle, from technology planning to system selection and solution implementation to clinical process and workflow optimization activities. "We are very pleased that Dr. Schlossberg has joined our team," said Andy Smith, President and Co-Founder of Impact Advisors. "He is able to relate to clients from a distinctive point of view-marrying together clinical expertise and information technology. He will help us further improve the quality and value of our capabilities and services, while helping our clients improve their results."



# **IBM Launches 'Interactive Experience' Consulting Practice**

Practice fuses strategy, data and design from Customer Experience Lab

BM unveiled a global consulting practice that anticipates the emerging client demand for irresistible user experiences as the point of entry to high-value relationships with their customers, employees, prospects and partners.

The global consulting practice, IBM Interactive Experience, creates a next-generation services capability that integrates the leading design capabilities and user experience experts from IBM Interactive with the innovation and data expertise of more than 100 IBM Researchers from the company's Customer Experience Lab.

The practice will help clients create the essential front-end, individual engagement, assimilate massive volumes of data—including the information on individual decisions, choices, preferences and attitudes—then convert that insight into high-value outcomes ranging from personalization to business model redesign, says Bridget van Kralingen, Senior Vice President of IBM Global Business Services.

Clients are now engaging with IBM to create new models of individual engagement, including Australian retailer David Jones, leading Mexican bank Banorte, Peru's insurance company Rimac, and Jaguar Land Rover.

"Our clients understand that the experience any individual has with their brands, products, services or strategy is the new point of entry to sustainable business relationships," says van Kralingen. "That experience will generate the most valuable information any enterprise can ever possess—information on individual preferences. So as our clients' front-office agendas drive the next era of business transformation, we're going to see traditional distinctions between strategy, analytic applications, and the design of the individual experience, disappear."

# As part of the announcement, IBM is releasing new data-driven capabilities for the C-level suite including:

#### • LIFE EVENT DETECTION

Analyzes unstructured social media data to detect important events in customers' lives. For example, this technology can assess specific "life events" like a marriage and then make correlations to a range of financial decisions.

#### BEHAVIORAL PRICING

An algorithm that combines behavioral models on consumer response to pricing, such as 'surprise' and 'thrill of a deal', with historical transaction data to help retailers design personalized pricing strategies that help consumers make purchasing decisions and improve their experience.

#### PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ANALYTICS

An algorithm that combines the psychology of language with social media data to understand inherent personality traits of individuals and identify their preferences. This technology goes beyond generalizations and recognizes the individuals to identify how they prefer to receive and consume information and offers.

The practice will also drive new innovation across IBM's Smarter Commerce and Smarter Workforce initiatives, where offerings like the IBM Kenexa Talent Suite are transforming how business leaders gain new insights into the data created every day by their workforce, says Paul Papas, the new Managing Partner of the IBM Interactive Experience practice.

"We intentionally created this practice inside the broader consulting capability of our newly formed Strategy and Analytics Service Line, because the definition of high-value in business services is evolving across a continuum of experience design, data, and business strategy," Papas says. "This level of integration anticipates that client agenda and creates the next-generation services organization—the first true digital agency, consultancy, and systems integrator."

According to a forthcoming IBM study of in-person interviews with more than 500 CMOs, 94 percent of market leaders believe advanced analytics will play a significant role in helping them reach their goals.

The study also reveals a significant increase in the number of CMOs who say their organizations are under-prepared to capitalize on the Big Data explosion—83 percent today compared to 71 percent three years ago.

The new IBM Interactive Experience practice is aimed at exactly that kind of gap—helping CMOs and other C-suite leaders make better of use of data to inform their design, customer interaction and business strategy.

# **ShortTakes**

#### **News Briefs**

#### **HURON: HOSPITALS NEED TO CUT COSTS**

Huron Consulting Group announced the release of a new Huron Healthcare report which indicates that even healthy hospitals will need to reduce cost by 20 to 40 percent. In addition, the report notes that this year hospital and health system CEOs will be addressing transformative changes to the way care is delivered and striving to integrate this change across the enterprise. The report, "Achieving Healthcare Transformation: Insights from the Huron Healthcare CEO Forum," provides perspectives from nearly 25 executives from healthcare organizations around the country who participated in the fourth annual Huron Healthcare CEO Forum. "To successfully implement this magnitude of change, healthcare leaders are examining key aspects of their business, and determining their path forward," said Gordon Mountford, executive vice president, Huron Healthcare. "Clinical transformation, revenue transition, scale and integration, and operational excellence are the four levers they will need to pull—in varying combinations—to achieve quality and financial goals, and advance their missions."

#### **A.T. KEARNEY GROWS PARTNERSHIP 12%**

A.T. Kearney grew its global partnership by 45 partners in 2013, an increase of 12 percent over the last year. The firm elected 29 new partners during the second half of the year, attracting 12 experienced partners to join the firm from other consulting firms or industry and promoting 17 new partners from within the firm. A.T. Kearney now has 314 partners in 58 offices across 40 countries. Seventeen of the newly elected partners were principals with A.T. Kearney who were promoted during the firm's year-end partner selection process. A.T. Kearney has grown its partner ranks and global revenue by more than 50 percent since 2006, says Johan C. Aurik, managing partner and chairman of the board of A.T. Kearney.



# THE 2014

# SMALL SEWELS

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS OF THE PROFESSION

n what can only be described as an up-and-down, roller-coaster ride for the economy over the last decade, it appears we're finally in an "up" cycle. Of course, whether it's a sustained cycle or a short-lived one remains to be seen. But one thing has remained consistent throughout every frustrating phase of the economy—Consulting's Seven Small Jewels simply outperform the overall market every time. And this year is no exception.

These days, most consulting firms seem content to take whatever growth they can muster up in a fiscal year and run with it. Growth, we learned the hard way, simply can not be taken for granted. But one could forgive us if we took our Seven Small Jewels a little for granted. Year in and year out, these little engines that can defy the odds and crank out eye-popping returns.

They all, in one way or another, stood out from the rest. Collectively, our 2014 winners grew revenue by an astounding 45 percent last year. They also grew their number of billable consultants by 30 percent. And, they're forecasting another 35 percent growth this year. Can we doubt them? Only if we suspect that percentage will actually be higher.

The stories of the seven winning firms are highlighted over the next eight pages. The stories are inspirational, for sure. At the end of the section, we also highlight this year's Seven To Watch—firms that impressed us immensely, but weren't quite ready for prime time. At least not yet.







**HQ: DENVER** 

OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS:

SERVICE LINES: IT, Strategy

**CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:** Healthcare

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 80 2013: 100

2014: 120 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$14.2M 2013: \$18.7M

2014: \$23M (projected)

## **ASPEN ADVISORS**

Denver-based Aspen Advisors is no stranger to recognition and accolades. The IT and Strategy healthcare firm was recently ranked among the Top 20 healthcare employers by Modern Healthcare for a third consecutive year. It placed fourth overall and was the top-ranked consultancy. Klas Research also named Aspen as a Category Leader for ICD-10 consulting services. And Aspen also was recognized by Consulting as one of our Seven to Watch in 2011 and one of our Best Small Firms in 2012.

Of course, when a firm achieves a 42 percent compound annual growth rate since launching in 2006, people are bound to notice. Last year, Aspen grew 32 percent, added 27 new clients and 25 new associates.

"Our vision was to create a world with better healthcare," says Dan Herman, founder and Managing Principal. "We saw a need in the marketplace to make healthcare better through the strategic and effective use of technology. We thought we'd be able to make a difference, both in the

market and in our own organization. I think we've been able to do that, and we're proud of the type of environment we've created."

Dan Coate, who joined Herman early on in 2006, says the two have always focused on how Aspen could help clients improve their operations and enhance the quality of outcomes through technology.

And have they ever.

As Herman says, Aspen did a great job skating to where it thought the puck was going to be. "We saw this coming," he says. Although he admits he had no idea back in 2006 how big of a role healthcare would play with the Affordable Care Act.

And, regardless of the legislation, Coate says healthcare was always going to be a front-bunter issue. "The Baby Boomers are turning 65, and we all know we spend more on healthcare as we get older. And when you combine that with the 19 percent of the gross domestic product healthcare currently accounts for, the future had already arrived," he says.

So the timing, for one, couldn't be better for an IT and Strategy healthcare firm, but Herman is well aware of what too much growth too soon can do to a firm. "We'd prefer to keep our growth in the 25 percent rate," Herman says. "Of course, many in the healthcare industry have far surpassed that growth rate, but I think what we're trying to do is manage it so we can stay true to our vision and true to our values."

Coate says he envisions the firm being able to maintain that target growth rate. "It'll probably slow a bit as we get bigger, but we know that growing too fast will erode our culture and would not take us in the direction we want to go."

And its culture is a big part of Aspen's success. The firm offers its consultants a few popular perks, such as: Five years of service earns four weeks of paid sabbatical, and three years of service gets consultants a \$1,000 vacation bonus.

It's no wonder Aspen boasts a retention rate of more than 96 percent. "We're finding people are actually reaching out and finding us," Coate says. "We're growing and we're doing real consulting, which is certainly something that is attractive to quality people, especially those who are looking to grow their career."

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 47 2013: 70

2014: 100 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$9.5M 2013: \$15.2M

2014: \$19M (projected)

#### HQ: SACRAMENTO, CA

#### **OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS:**

Olympia, Wash., Los Angeles, Washington, D.C.; Tallahassee,

#### **SERVICE LINES:**

IT, Operations, Strategy

#### **CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:**

Healthcare, State Government, Transportation, Financial Services



#### CAMBRIA SOLUTIONS

Cambria Solutions was started 10 years ago with a pair of Ikea desks and a goal to build something special, says CEO and Founder Robert Rodriguez. The first things he built, he jokes, were those two desks, but little did he know a decade later he'd be celebrating Cambria's 10th Anniversary with a companywide event in Lake Tahoe.

One of the reasons for the celebration—Cambria was coming off a year in which it grew 60 percent. This allowed the firm to double in size in terms of staff, offices and revenue in just the last two years. "There's no doubt about it, this is explosive growth for us," Rodriguez says.

A big reason is due to a decision Rodriguez and his team made a few years ago to pivot the firm into the healthcare space. "That decision has really paid dividends for us," he says. It's what has allowed us to grow as we have the last few years."

But it wasn't always easy sledding. Rodriguez says Cambria bid on, and lost, 18 consecutive projects. "That was painful," he says. "But then we won our first one, which happened to coincide with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and we were off to the races."

Before healthcare, the firm focused much of its energy on the transportation space, but the plan was always to diversify. "Early on, we identified healthcare as an opportunity, and this was before ACA," he says. "We identified the intersection of public service and healthcare and found an opportunity and—finally landed a large client in that space."

In 2014, healthcare will account for about 70 percent of all of Cambria's business. A lot of the healthcare growth, Rodriguez says, "is the culmination of a lot of really, really hard work over the last few years and then landing, what we would call a few whales, very large clients in states implementing state-based exchanges as part of the ACA."

Rodriguez began his career at a start-up and then moved to Deloitte. The differences between the firms were obvious, however, what the two firms had in common was their attention to detail in hiring really great people, he says. To that end, Rodriguez is very diligent about hiring.

"We bring a certain humanity to the table—we're collaborative, we're good listeners, we believe in teamwork," Rodriguez says. "And we bring ingenuity to the process, which means clever, creative solutions to very customized projects. We call the combination "HumanGenuity," and it's become a mantra for the firm.

This year, Cambria is forecasting about 30 percent growth, a rate Rodriguez is confident the firm will be able to keep up.

At that pace, Cambria will double again over the next three years.

Assuming that happens, the accolades will undoubtedly continue to pour in for Cambria, which has been recognized as one of *Inc. Magazine's* 5,000 fastest growing private companies in America for five years running. And now, they can add Seven Small Jewels, as well.

"The recognition is nice because it builds confidence that we're on the right path as a firm," he says. "It adds credibility to what we do with our clients. Clients don't have to take just our word for it, they can take a look at what others are saying about us and the work that we do."

Consulting® FEBRUARY 2014

#### UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS OF THE PROFESSION



HQ: NEW YORK CITY
OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS:

SERVICE LINES: Operations, Strategy

**CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:** Entertainment, Communications, High Tech

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 12 2013: 18

2014: 25 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$4.9M 2013: \$7.4M

2014: \$10M (projected)

## **MERIDIAN ADVISORY GROUP**

In the rapidly changing, evolving and converging worlds of broadband, mobile and media industries, Meridian Advisory Group is a bit of a newcomer. Not the founders, or the 20 billable consultants who currently make up the firm—there's nothing all that 'new' about them; they all have more than 15 years of industry and consulting experience.

"In other words, what Accenture or another larger competitor can do with five or six people, Meridian Advisory Group can accomplish with two or three," says Shahid Khan, Managing Partner of the firm.

The firm itself was just founded in 2010, but didn't take long to establish itself and has been on a dramatic upward trajectory ever since. Meridian has been growing at 30 percent or more each year in terms of both revenue and resources, says Khan.

Meridian outpaced that rate when it posted better than 50 percent growth in 2013. Forecasts for 2014 are a little bit more modest at 35 percent, but still impressively aggressive, nonetheless.

Khan says the growth is not due to capturing one or two large clients or projects, but rather is sustained and balanced. And he also says the aggressive growth will continue over the next several years at that 30 percent to 35 percent rate. "Our goal, of course, is to beat those targets each year," Khan says. "In three years, could I see us as a \$25 to \$30 million firm? Absolutely."

In order to achieve that goal, Khan says, the New York-based firm will have to become "bi-coastal," by opening an office location in Silicon Valley to better serve clients on the West Coast. All of Meridian's clients, Kahn says, cover the ecosystem of the communications industry, including device companies, cable companies and content companies.

And all of the relationships Meridian enjoys with its clients are word-of-mouth. "We haven't done a lot of marketing and PR for the company, at all," he says. "All of our clients are either through previous relationships or referrals. We started with just a few clients and in 2013 we had 10 clients."

Khan says Meridian's track record

is one of "getting things done" with clients. "In other words, we actually work with our clients to help implement a strategy—how you launch new products, solutions and services, and we'll work with them through the entire process," Khan says. "That's something very different and clients don't see that from mainstream consulting companies."

A big part of that equation, he says, is the senior-level model at the firm, which is attractive to both Meridian's consultants and its clients," he says. "Clients benefit because they get exposure to experienced talent and consultants like it because nearly everyone in the firm gets exposure to C-level talent at the client companies, which are the people we are working with day in and day out."

Khan says the firm has been very fortunate to be able to attract and retain the best people. "So far, through referrals we've been able to hire the talent we want," Khan says. "At some point as we grow, to find people we'll have to get our name out there and tell our story, but so far, we haven't had to do that yet."

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 39 2013: 60

2014: 100 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$6.2M 2013: \$10.1M 2014: \$17.5M (projected)

#### **HQ: SEATTLE**

OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS: Chicago

SERVICE LINES: IT, Operations, Strategy

CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:

Health Care







Jon Melling Rachael Hale Marano

## **PIVOT POINT CONSULTING**

David Scott was a Healthcare IT director at Deloitte where he was implementing large-system solutions. In 2006 and 2007, he says he noticed a big turn in the size and scope of the projects he was working on. In 2008, he left Deloitte to launch Pivot Point Consulting.

"If you remember, that was a very difficult time to be launching any business, right at the height of the downturn, but I knew there was a big future in healthcare, and it was a just matter of finding a niche that would work," says Scott, Partner and cofounder of the firm.

Initially, Dave was going it alone. But in 2009, on an implementation project at a hospital in Pennsylvania, he met Rachel Halonen Marano, who was working on implementation from the client side. "We quickly realized that we both had similar visions, and we joined forces and, literally, spent eight months trying to figure of the solutions to the problems of running a healthcare consultancy," Scott says.

Marano joined full-time as a partner and co-founder in April 2011. "We

really wanted to have the type of full-service organization that had strong implementation abilities, but also a very strong advisory and leadership component that could service both sides of the equation for clients," Marano says. "One of the biggest advantages is that we were able to work both the payer and the provider side. A lot of competitors didn't, and still don't, have that ability. I think that sets us apart."

With a sound business strategy in place, the firm was off and running. Still, at that point, Pivot Point was exactly two people. They began setting the foundation for the firm. "The amount of time that Rachel and I put in to solving the problems was enormous," Scott says. "As a start-up, we tried to figure out how we were going to attract top talent, and identifying what was important to consultants, and all those things that would go into building a world-class consultancy."

The result, Marano says, is a firm that has all the creature comforts consultants would ever want, plus a benefits package that rivals, or even exceeds, the enterprise firms. As a result, Pivot Point, has a turnover rate of less than 3 percent. "People love

working here," Scott says. "We've been able to create a great culture."

The challenge will be to keep it as the firm grows. Pivot Point grew 70 percent last year. "In 2013, we were basically sold out," Scott says. "We started 2014 with over 4.5 million booked. Given all the things happening in healthcare, I don't see any reason to think we couldn't be a \$30 million firm by the end of 2016."

Scott says a big piece of that growth is Partner Jon Melling, who joined in November 2013 to focus on healthcare strategy.

Clearly, the regulatory work that comes with the Affordable Care Act will help drive the growth, Melling says. Specifically, IDC-10, which carries an October deadline. "We're making sure that everyone will be ready for October, but the truth of the matter is that much of the change with IDC-10 doesn't happen until 2015 and 2016," he says. "The same is also true with the next stages of Meaningful Use, which centers around both implementation and optimization of those systems. That's where the growth potential becomes reality."



#### **HQ: MINNEAPOLIS**

#### **OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS:**

New York, Chicago, Walnut Creek, Calif.

#### **SERVICE LINES:**

IT, Strategy

#### **CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:**

Healthcare, Manufacturing, Insurance, Financial Services

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 41 2013: 72

2014: 100 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$10M 2013: \$18M

2014: \$25M (projected)

#### TREXIN

In 2005, Dale Anderson, Robert Bloyd, Warren Golla, Marv Richardson and Jon Waddell joined forces to create Trexin, an IT and Strategy firm focused on the application of advanced and disruptive technologies.

"If there is anything that characterizes the five of us, and really the entire firm, it's a blend of business- minded technologists and technology-minded industry experts," says Golla. "We're all about the notion that there is a place for a company that can take leading edge technologies and apply it to a tough business problem and drive value—not technology for technology's sake but technology to solve business problems."

The firm's early years were driven by the vision of the founders. "We felt that if we could provide trust, experience and innovation, to clients we'd have a pretty strong company," Golla says. In fact, that's where the name "Trexin" comes from: trust, expertise and innovation. As the firm ramped up, it didn't take long for the five founders, who remain managing directors, to realize they needed to go bigger. "We simply matured to a point where we had to make the decision to establish an industry-led go to market approach," Golla says. "We hired practice leads for each of the major sectors and that's really paid off for us."

It's paid off to the tune of 80 percent growth in 2013 and another 40 percent growth forecasted for 2014.

"We believe we have everything in place to continue to grow," Golla says. "But we're also cautious because we see ourselves as a boutique firm. Can you take a boutique firm up to \$50 million? In time, yes." But Golla says that at the moment Trexin doesn't have specific growth plans that take the firm past that milestone marker.

A lot, of course, will depend on the markets Trexin serves—healthcare, manufacturing, financial services and insurance. Traditionally, the firm was focused on financial services and manufacturing, but it's recently made a lot of headway into the healthcare space—a big reason for the rapid rise in revenue.

"Disruptive change is something that we are well equipped to address with the expertise we have on the business side and combining it with our unique ability to innovate," he says. "In healthcare, the Affordable Care Act is disruptive and how technology will impact it in the future is just immense. We don't suspect that will end anytime soon."

Meanwhile, data and analytics are having profound impacts on the manufacturing and financial services industries, too. "The combination of our own maturation, the hiring of really good leadership and the disruption in our key markets has led to our growth," Golla says. "It also comes down to our people. When we compete with larger firms, clients often say they like our culture and work style. We are a very customercentric firm; we're flexible. We like to work with clients; we're not big enough to tell them what to do and that is well received."

And the expert model had other advantages. "Our consultants are recognized as experts in their field, and they'll be highly sought after by clients and find that very attractive," he says. "We really owe our success to our people. Today, I'm just the spokesperson for their hard work."

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 118 2013: 130

2014: 160 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$22.1M 2013: \$28M

2014: \$36M (projected)

#### **HQ: MINNEAPOLIS**

OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS: Milwaukee, Chicago

SERVICE LINES:

IT, Strategy, Operations

CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED: Manufacturing, State Government, Healthcare, Utilities



#### Keith Korsi

#### Michael Vini

#### TRISSENTIAL

Trissential has grown from a twoperson company launched in 2003 to a 140-person consulting firm that's created and established a unique market position—the sweet spot between the Big 4 and enterprise firms and the pure staffing firms.

The two people, principals and cofounders Keith Korsi and Michael Vinje, say the idea behind the company was to do consulting better. "That was the founding premise," Korsi says. "You have the IBMs and the Deloittes at one end and then you have staff augmentations firms at the other, and we thought there was a sweet spot in the middle."

Turns out there was, and Trissential settled right in. "We became a cost effective alternative to the big boys, and we brought more value then the staff augmentation shops," says Vinje. "We became a no brainer—the only firm clients would need to work with."

Many of those clients are listed on Trissential's Web site and include Lands' End, Xcel Energy, Oshkosh, MoneyGram, Land O'Lakes, General Mills, US Foods, WellPoint and the State of Minnesota.

With a roster of clients like these, and a unique market approach, it didn't take long for Trissential to begin chalking up 25 to 30 percent growth the last several years.

Korsi and Vinje have mapped out what they call their 2020 vision to be a \$100 million firm over the next six years. "That's very realistic and right now there's momentum like we've never had," says Vinje. "It'll take more locations, more capabilities and more verticals to get there."

To that end, he says healthcare is a huge opportunity, as is public sector and manufacturing. Also, Trissential is looking at additional markets in both Atlanta and a still-to-be-determined location in Texas.

Korsi and Vinje came from a firm that was small and grew to about \$25 million and hit the wall. It struggled through its maturation.

"We wanted to try to create a firm that would bust through that threshold and frankly, we started running into some of the same problems," Vinje says. "We invested more in our internal systems and processes, our operations, our recruiting, our HR capabilities." In fact, some of the same things that we've been helping clients with are some of the same things we've had to do ourselves."

Korsi says part of that plan of scaling for growth was a keen eye on creating the kind of culture for its essentialists—what Trissential calls its consultants—to succeed. "We really wanted to put the essentialists first so that's been part of our mantra from early on," Korsi says. "We've all seen too many consulting firms get that wrong. We were going to take care of our essentialists first."

Vinje says the firm's model has allowed the firm to attract and retain top talent. "People like working here. Most of our hires are through referrals. Look at our numbers and look at our retention rates," he says.

In every market, Korsi says he has been able to attract very senior level consultants who are looking for something different.

"We believe those folks will continue to be attracted to us in other cities," he says. "It's a simple mantra we live by: 'Take care of the client, take care of the essentialists and the company runs itself.'"



#### **HQ: NEW YORK**

#### OTHER OFFICE LOCATIONS:

Boston, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Makati City, Philippines

#### SERVICE LINES:

Information Technology

#### CLIENT INDUSTRIES SERVED:

Healthcare, State Government, Utilities, Retail, Manufacturing

#### **Billable Consultants**

2012: 200

2013: 225

2014: 250 (projected)

#### Revenue

2012: \$37M

2013: \$50M

2014: \$60M (projected)

#### **ZANETT**

Founded in 1999, Zanett has evolved from a startup into a \$50 million technology services industry firm. What's driven that rapid rise for the New York-based IT firm? It's pretty simple-healthcare. In just the past three years, Zanett has gone from about \$4 million in healthcare services to more than \$30 million in 2013.

"In 2014, I think we'll see healthcare continuing to grow at a faster pace than the other industries we're active in, says Vince Vickers, Senior Vice President of Zanett. "There's just been such a flurry of activity in that area. There were so many burning platforms in terms of regulation and a lot of that money had to be spent, and it was in the areas where we specialize."

Currently, healthcare accounts for about 60 to 65 percent of Zanett's overall revenue. "This year, for sure, we'll still be riding that wave," he says. But in 2015, a lot of those regulatory deadlines will start to be completed. So next year and beyond, Vickers says he

expects healthcare will level out and the other industries start to play a bigger role.

"I don't think companies can continue to spend in IT at the levels they have the last few years," he says. Still, there are many opportunities and healthcare will continue to push the firm forward. The biggest? Business intelligence and analytics.

"Traditionally, healthcare has not been a big user of predictive analytics," Vickers says. "That's a huge opportunity for us, probably our biggest one."

And while healthcare is the biggest success story at Zanett, Vickers is quick to point out that it's not the only one. "We also have a really good public sector practice—state and local government specifically—and utilities story to tell," he says.

"Those are the areas where we've been knocking the cover off the ball so we decided to expand our services and it's paying off."

So much so that the firm had to shift from a regional approach to a more national market focus. "At our size now, we can't really afford to be able to keep people in their local market any longer, which sort of takes away one of the big recruiting advantages we've always enjoyed," he says. "That's one of those pain points of growing."

And there are others. If the firm continues to grow at a 20 percent rate, Vickers knows that it won't be too long before the firm is in an entirely different league.

"When you reach the \$50 million mark, you have to start thinking more carefully about your growth," he says. "For instance, a \$100 million company is very different from a \$50 million company. So, we have to ask ourselves if we can continue to be the best consulting firm in the industries we're in and the best firm for our own people at that larger size."

The 20 percent number continues to be the goal, Vickers says, but Zanett will also continue to revisit that goal to make sure the growth isn't negatively impacting the quality of the firm.

"Our goal is not to take over the world here," he says. "Our goal is to continue to grow and continue to be the best firm we can be."



When it comes to our Seven Small Jewels award, suffice to say that we get many, many nominations for just seven spots. So, it stands to reason that several stood out in the eyes of our editorial committee. For one reason or another, these seven firms didn't quite make the final cut this year, but they certainly stood out enough to be recognized as our Seven to Watch in 2014 and beyond.

#### » CAIMAN CONSULTING

This Redmond, Wash.-based multi-service high-tech and retail firm, with an additional office in San Jose, Calif., grew revenue 25 percent last year and is forecasting more than 20 percent growth this year. One of the most attractive and colorful feathers in this perennial Best Small Firm to Work For's cap is finding more than \$1 billion in new revenue for one of its clients.

# » LYONS CONSULTING GROUP

This Chicago-based IT firm is exclusively focused on retail, not exactly the highest growth market of late. But don't tell that to the Lyons Consulting Group, which grew revenue to 25 percent in 2013 and is forecasting another 25 percent in 2014. And, Lyons Consulting Group only increased headcount by about 7 percent last year.

# » MULTICARE CONSULTING SERVICES

MultiCare Consulting Services grew revenue by 30 percent last year and is forecasting another 20 percent growth by the end of this year. This IT and Operations healthcare firm, which is based in Chicago and has additional offices in Denver and Tacoma, Wash., has found a niche in the healthcare industry by providing both technical and operational expertise.

#### » NAVIGATE

This multi-service, multi-industry consulting firm based in Wayne, Pa., grew revenue some 42 percent in 2013 and is forecasting another 65 percent growth in 2014. However, it only expects to add about 20 more staff. Safe to say, if Navigate achieves these lofty 2014 goals, it'll find itself as one of our 2015 Seven Small Jewels.

#### » PRIME 8 CONSULTING

It's not enough that Prime 8 Consulting enjoys near perfect retention rates and finds itself on several "Best Places to Work" rankings, the Kirkland, Wash.-based firm, with additional offices in Los Angeles and Australia, also boasts revenue of 30 percent in 2013. And the multi-service healthcare and retail firm says it will be more of the same in 2014.

# » SWC TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS, INC.

Oak Brook, III.-based SWC Technology
Partners, Inc., focused on IT across several
market sectors, has garnered plenty of
attention in the Chicago market by winning
several awards for its corporate culture
including Crain's Chicago Business' Top 20
'Best Places to Work' and Chicago's 101
Best and Brightest Companies to Work For.
And the firm's forecasting 25 percent revenue
growth for 2014 to boot.

#### » SYSTEMS EVOLUTION, INC.

Cincinnati-based Systems Evolution, Inc. is no stranger to Consulting magazine accolades. The 20-year-old IT, Operations and Strategy firm has been one of our Best Small Firms to Work For three years running. This year, SEI cranked out impressive 18 percent revenue growth, and plans more of the same for 2014. And a local delivery model allows SEI to maintain its exceptional culture while continually growing the business.

Consulting® FEBRUARY 2014



#### STAY CONNECTED

Consultants traveling to a Loews Hotel will be able to connect to the Internet in their room for free. That's because Loews began offering free wireless Internet access in all 18 of its North American hotels last month. The free, in-room service is available to all guests, regardless of loyalty program status.

## **Marriott Goes Big in NYC**

Chain opens tallest hotel in North America—and two brands with Courtyard, Residence Inn

arriott International, Inc. and G Holdings opened what they're calling an "iconic addition" to the New York skyline, a combined 378-room Courtyard hotel and 261-suite Residence Inn hotel in midtown Manhattan. The \$320 million, 68-story property is the tallest single-use hotel in North America is located at 1717 Broadway, just a few blocks from Central Park and Times Square.



"This opening is a prime example of an ideal dual-branded hotel, and this will surely be both brands' crown jewel," says Janis Milham, Senior Vice President of Modern Essentials and Extended Stay for Marriott International. "The new hotels' contemporary designs and stunning views will surely make the property a great ambassador for the city."

The hotels offer valet parking and some 6,000 square feet of meeting space, a fitness center located on the 35th floor with floor-to-ceiling windows and an outdoor sundeck for stretching, relaxing or seasonal use. Some guest rooms also feature floor-to-ceiling windows offering spectacular views of Central Park, Times Square and the Hudson River.

"In addition to fabulous views, a stellar New

York City location and amenities, our 21st century telecommunications, with free international phone calls, digital systems and hi-tech wiring, set these hotels far above the standard that business travelers expect," says Harry Gross, President & CEO of G Holdings. "These new hotels, the Residence Inn Central Park and Courtyard by Marriott Central Park, are the most innovative hotels we've built to date."

The new property includes complimentary Wi-Fi throughout and each guestroom delivers 1.25 gigabytes of bandwidth with horizontal and vertical fiber optical cable network that allows for fast, extensive use on multiple devices at one time. In addition, Smart TVs offer 60 HD channels.

Housed on floors six to 33, the Courtyard hotel guest rooms feature modern design with a contemporary feel. The room design offers hybrid zones for working, sleeping and relaxing.

"The Bistro," Courtyard's food and beverage offering, serves up casual, flexible seating; easy access to food and higher quality, healthier menu options for breakfast; and light evening fare. Local beer and wine will be featured.

Courtyard's touch-screen concierge—GoBoard 4.0—provides local information, maps, weather and headline news on a 55-inch, LCD screen. Guests also can obtain immediate access to detailed flight information for local airports, popular entertainment and local event information, as well as walking directions.

Meanwhile, the Residence Inn hotel is located on floors 37 to 65 and offers studio suites designed for stays of five nights or more. Each suite has a fully functional kitchen with a coffeemaker, microwave oven and custom appliances.

And for those management consultants who need to stay on site and work through the weekend, Residence Inn also offers casual nighttime receptions with cocktails and light fare.

Bloomberg BNA



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#### **Mind Your Tribe**

How to keep culture alive in a growing business

BY MIKE PONGON

In his book "Tribes," Seth Godin makes a compelling case that we are all tribal members—that being tribal is part of being human. Godin notes only two things are necessary for a tribe to form: shared interest and a way to communicate. By this definition, every business is a tribe.

But not every tribe has a healthy culture. Tribal leaders must nurture their cultures in order to increase not only the size of the tribe, but its effectiveness in reaching the goals that its members are passionate about.

Here are seven ways that leaders can strengthen their tribes and create cultures that grow stronger as their companies expand and evolve:



# BE HIGHLY SELECTIVE ABOUT WHO IS ADMITTED INTO THE TRIBE.

You want to hire people who will reinforce and extend the culture you have. Finding them takes time and intention. Your recruiting team needs strong processes and programs in place to ensure a cultural fit. Make cultural questions part of your interview process, and give them weight.

Clearly define cultural measurements and use them to hire for the best fit. And allow culture to be the reason not to hire someone who might have all the right skills and expertise. When you get this right, building a strong culture becomes a lot easier.

#### **2** EXEMPLIFY WHAT YOUR TRIBE STANDS FOR.

As CEO, I meet with each new employee who comes in our door. Yes, it takes time. And no, it's not always on their first day. But the best way to exemplify the culture is to have it start with me. One of our cultural tenets is to take a genuine interest in people—not just

for what they can do for us, but because we care about them intrinsically as people. My goal is to show each associate that I care about them, and I expect them to do the same with the people they encounter.

#### 13 TELL STORIES THAT KEEP THE TRIBE STRONG.

It takes more than a list of bullet points to build culture. Stories reinforce tribal unity—that intangible sense of community that's so valuable in growing your business.

We keep stories at the forefront of our daily communications—stories of successful client interactions, of growing pains that we learned from, of a rockin' good company getaway that resulted in some masterful karaoke.

Give your company's stories the spotlight. Let them permeate meetings and informal gatherings. And accord proper respect to "tribal elders" who pass along the cultural legend from the early days. They are pure gold.

#### **ConsultantsOnConsulting**

# 4 BRING TRIBAL CULTURE TO LIFE THROUGH TRADITIONS.

Define your traditions and celebrate them often. In each of the seven cities in which Point B has an office, we have a cultural leader who is charged with ensuring that our traditions don't fall by the wayside.

It's critical to be deliberate in building traditions that celebrate your culture in ways that are visible and engaging.

For us, that means both the big stuff—such as annual associate getaways and quarterly practice meetings with a major fun component included—and the small stuff, such as having one-on-one coffees, recognizing a great contribution to a client on internal social media channels like Yammer, and taking care of one another during tough personal times.

# PROMOTE LEADERS WHO VALUE THE TRIBE— AND WHOM THE TRIBE VALUES.

Building a strong tribe is everyone's business. Promoting leaders who don't believe in what the tribe stands for would be suicidal. By the same token, the tribe must be proud and supportive of the leaders it produces. As a leader, I look for every one of our employees to not just sustain our culture, but to actively promote it.

This expectation leads to a hand-to-hand exchange of cultural values among leaders and all employees in the organization.

# (6) INSPIRE FIERCE LOYALTY AND OWNERSHIP OF THE TRIBE.

Making culture the foundation of your business can inspire employees to think like owners. Consider how lucky your customers and clients are to be served

We keep stories at the forefront of our daily communications— stories of successful client interactions, of growing pains, of a rockin' good company getaway. Give your company's stories the spotlight. And accord proper respect to "tribal elders" who pass along the cultural legend from the early days. They are pure gold.

by people who have the mindset of an owner.

I work with my teams on a daily basis to keep culture at the forefront of our firm, and I attribute our ownership culture to our business gains—including adding nearly 150 people since the Great Recession and experiencing over 40 percent revenue growth in that same period.

#### PAY IT FORWARD.

Great cultures are not scal-

able if they rely on a small group of people to stoke the fires. However, great cultures can scale infinitely if each new member of the tribe feels accountable for building the culture up for the next generation.

At Point B, we like to say that each of us needs to be a "net investor" in the culture. Sure, there will be times when you need the culture to support you, or you simply need to fall into its safety net during a work or personal crisis.

However, most of the time you should be making investments in building the culture up so that it's strong and healthy when you need it.

#### CONCLUSION

Great tribal cultures don't happen by chance. They take time and attention to flourish. In return, a healthy tribe will instill unity, resilience and momentum in your company—some of the most powerful assets you can have as your business grows.

Mike Pongon is Chief Executive Officer of Point B. Over the past decade and a half, Pongon has served clients in a number of industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, retail, government and high-tech to improve performance, increase margins, and become more competitive. His roles have included programmer, business analyst, project leader, program manager and interim executive in a range of environments from Fortune 500 companies to three-person startups.



Each issue, Kennedy **Consulting Research** & Advisory (KCRA) offers a take on the current state of the consulting profession

# JP Morgan and The Whale: A Parable

BY MATT LYONS

After a tumultuous period of banking hy- everything. This is why other aspects per-regulation after 2008, no one would of the control environment are so vital. have suspected in 2012 that JP Morgan, It starts on the front line—in this case, the world's largest bank, had ineffective Bruno's desktop. If he had a birds' eye controls in place that left the company view of financial risk at JP Morgan—and flat-footed when its "rogue" trader, Bruno Iksil (known affectionately as "The bet was going to do to it—he might have London Whale"), had taken untenable, long-term positions on a security class near and dear to everyone's hearts these days—Credit Default Swaps.

There are many questions worth asking about The London Whale: How on earth does a rogue trader take a \$2 billion position on Credit Default Swaps without triggering some sort of internal controls red flag?

How do two hedge fund managers 5,000 miles away in New York start placing bets against Bruno's bad bet before JP Morgan recognizes its rogue employee's behavior? Third, perhaps most important, what is "broken" within JP Morgan's control environment that didn't alert upper management to such an egregiously bad decision?

Questions are good; but we imagine business leaders favor solutions. Those solutions are table stakes for consulting firms. Here are some things consultants have learned from JP Morgan and the Whale:

Controls are only one part of the overall control environment at a company. Take JP Morgan. With a matrixed organization comprising over 100,000 employees spanning the globe, JP Morgan's control environment encompasses approximately 400 local regulatory agencies with which to comply. Is it reasonable to assume something can fall through the cracks? Absolutely! No matter how well designed or implemented, controls can't catch

some sort of inkling what his \$2 billion thought twice before making the trades. Another thing that might have helped was extensive financial risk training for employees like Bruno, to help them understand the larger implications of their individual trading decisions.

- Tone at the top matters more than ever. In the communication business, the rule is "tell them what you want to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them." Repetition might seem the wrong way to go, but the tone at the top—that we don't do these kinds of things as a company cannot be overcommunicated. We are not privy to the communication habits of JP Morgan's CEO, Jamie Dimon; they were surely succinct and on the mark. But more reminders and repetition may have helped.
- We can take some solace in the limited impact of the London Whale event. \$2 billion is a lot of money to lose. And the \$1 billion fine JP Morgan received as a result is also nothing to sneeze at. Nonetheless, this unfortunate event didn't lead to mass panic or JP Morgan's implosion. So, in all sincerity, kudos to the consultants and front-line employees for designing systems that catch most of this activity.

So, when said whale swallows bad debt, then pukes it back up all over his employer, what can be learned? A lot, it turns out. And consultants are at the forefront of that learning.

Matt Lyons is Research Analyst for Kennedy Consulting Research & Advisory. For more information, visit www.kennedyinfo. com/consulting.

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