



The Telecom Consultant Bulletin

Insights, Viewpoints & Facts
from Telecom's Influencer Community

Produced by [The Brookside Group](#)

July 2010

This Month's Theme: Consultants as a Channel to Market

Welcome!

I am pleased to announce that The Brookside Group is taking both a technology and generational leap to better inform our constituents about the important role, insight and influence independent telecom consultants have in this industry.



We have been tracking/researching the telecom consulting market since 1993 and have worked with consultants and vendors to help them build business development and support relationships to better serve their mutual clients. We provide vendors and service providers the resources, tools and counsel needed to leverage the role and influence of consultants as a highly effective channel-to-market, through what vendors and consultants commonly refer to as Consultant Liaison Programs (CLPs).

Independent telecom consultants are a well established, highly influential professional community that directly impact the buying decisions of their enterprise and SMB clients, collectively accounting for 20 - 25% of total business communications equipment and network services sales, annually.

Using this monthly e-Bulletin as a starting point, we will share our insights and market facts, and include the viewpoints of both consultants and vendors. Each bulletin will have an underlying theme, as noted above.

Then, who knows, we may even start blogging, tweeting and sending smoke signals.

Please keep in mind, we are not technologists - we leave that up to the consultants and our vendor clients. The principals and affiliates at Brookside are channel, marketing and business development professionals specializing in this unique telecom market niche.

We hope you both gain from our insights and anxiously await each monthly bulletin. Future intros from me will not be this long, I promise.

Feel free to email (msawka@brooksidegroup.com) or call (973-543-6765) me anytime with any questions or to discuss any of our insights.

Sincerely,

Mick Sawka
Founder
The Brookside Group

Consultants' Market Role: Knowledge, Objectivity & Influence

TELECOM CONSULTANTS: A "CHANNEL" LIKE NO OTHER - Why Vendors Must Have An Effective Consultant "Channel" Program

by Mick Sawka, The Brookside Group

The independent telecommunications consultant is a well-established and highly influential professional community within the industry's channel to market structure. Today, the telecom consultant can best be defined as:

"An independent, technology management consultant specializing in voice, communications, information technology, infrastructure and converged networks that integrate voice, data and multimedia applications."

These consultants are hired by their clients to help them:

- Assess, plan, design, and/or integrate communications networks;
- Recommend/choose the voice, data, and/or video network communications solutions best suited to their needs;
- Negotiate, procure, deploy, and manage the solutions.

A consideration triggers every sales process. Influence, of some kind, ultimately brings each to a close. Telecom consultants stimulate incremental considerations and ultimately influence their clients' buying decisions. More than 6,500 U.S.-based telecom-consulting firms directly influence an estimated 25% of annual B-to-B telecom sales - business communications/network equipment and network services.

Why does this influential community represent a channel opportunity for vendors?

[Read on](#)

Consultants' Market Fact: Did You Know . . .

On average, telecom consultants EACH recommend \$7.3M worth of communications/network equipment and service solutions, ANNUALLY, to their enterprise and SMB clients, with:

- **42% of consultants recommending more than \$5M annually**

- **18% of consultants recommending more than \$20M annually**

To our vendor readers: Do you know the most influential consultants in your served markets?

Source: *The Brookside Group's 2009 State of the Telecom Consulting Market Study* - Click [HERE](#) to download an executive summary of this study

Consultants' Market Views

Consultants as Channels?

by [Larry Lisser](#)

How should consultants fit into vendors channel plans? And what, if anything, can vendors do to make today's consultants better consultants tomorrow? Start by considering the consultant not as a reseller, not as a referral partner but as a channel of influence. After all, The Brookside Group reports that telecom consultants influence as much as 25 percent of telecom product and services purchases every year. Find me a channel that can do that.

Consultants are dispersed - they can't be managed centrally like other big channels. However, in order to pay dividends, they require just as much attention and nurturing.

Here are some basics to consider:

- **Qualify.** Reach out to the consultants who best map to your business world. It's quality, not necessarily quantity that counts here.
- **Talk to them.** Use easy to digest sound bites and consistent messages that instill confidence in them. Make your messages regular and relevant to their business, not just yours. They're neither buyers nor sellers. They're influencers.
- **Tools.** Build content that speaks to them and tools that position them as expert interfaces between their customers and you.
- **Make them shine.** Do what you can to give them and their customer the confidence it takes to leap forward. They have only themselves and their time to sell.
- **Help them grow.** Educate them on your market, technology, solutions and customers so they can bring more value to existing and new clients.
- **Stick with it.** Don't start and stop. As with any large channel, an effort must be sustainable to pay dividends.

The buyer has a breadth of choices; the vendor has a depth of customers and the consultant is busy working the wide spaces between, adding immeasurable value to the equation. Treating consultants as the channels they are can only help our industry continue its very fast forward motion.

About the Author: A business affiliate of The Brookside Group, [Larry Lisser](#) also works with providers of emerging voice and collaborative communications to help grow their business. Larry is based in the Bay Area, is an active blogger at www.voyces.com and www.nojitter.com, and is the co-founder of an innovative industry event called StartupCamp: Communications Edition.

Market News & Events

- **Brookside Featured in VoIP News** - Click [HERE](#) to read
- **Hosted IP Provider, Cypress Communications, Launches Consultant Program** - Click [HERE](#) to learn more
- **The UC Summit, 2010** - Click [HERE](#) to access vendor podcasts from this recent networking event that brought leading UC vendors, consultants and solution integrators together for 2 1/2 days

Questions, Comments, Suggestions?

Contact The Brookside Group

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