

DIRECTIONS

FEATURES

WHERE'S CBSG?

THE GOOD WORD

CBSG IN THE NEWS

CUSTOMER SURVEY

Y2K'S BIGGER PICTURE

Where's CBSG?



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CBSG PARTNERS PREPARE FOR BIG EVENTS

PHILADELPHIA, PA, WILLIAMSTOWN, NJ – The partners of the **Competitive Business Strategy Group (CBSG)**, Suzanne Baldino Jones and Mark Heisler, have rarely been seen in public since their much celebrated Holiday Party at the posh Monte Carlo Living Room and Club.

Rumors and speculation continue to run rampant. In fact, it was reported that stock trading was halted for 30 minutes in early January when CNBC reported that CBSG was "...creating a new, innovative product that would revolutionize how corporations and businesses look at customers." CBSG had no comment about the report.

Jones and Heisler were seen huddled together after a Business Advisory Board meeting on December 15. One source close to the pair, who asked to remain anonymous, stated that the secrecy might have something to do with an interview they recently conducted with a leading national business publication. The magazine was interested in the **Continuous Customer Contract**, the customer-driven business model CBSG unveiled last summer.

After following this lead further, all inroads to the source were blocked. "I can't tell you how many inquiries I've received on behalf of my client," said Bill Cowen of Robert Michael Communications, CBSG's public relations counsel. "But... I *can* tell you that very exciting things are happening."

CBSG's **Continuous Customer Contract** is a business model that forges a *partnership between sales and the rest of the organization*. The Contract is not a traditional, "soft-skill" customer service program, nor is it another superficial information system-based customer loyalty initiative. It is a concerted, company-wide change effort that provides organizations with the necessary tools to make customers a core business.

The Competitive Business Strategy Group offers proven management consulting that provides competitive advantages to develop and grow businesses through an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach. In addition to customer retention and loyalty services, they specialize in strategic and business planning; user-driven information technology design and analysis; process improvement; and training design and facilitation.



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Readers' Note:

Thanks for allowing us some fun. But seriously, stay tuned for additional information as this mystery continues to unfold.

PEOPLE ARE TALKING...

THE GOOD WORD

"Competitive Business Strategy Group understands the process of change, but more importantly they understand the role of preparing people for it."

Tom Forst,
Corporate Vice-President
Lincoln Investment
Planning, Inc.,
retirement services

"Competitive Business Strategy Group does what needs to be done to get you where you want to go."

David Scheuring,
Director of Operations
RTE Asset Management, an
investment advisor

EDITOR NOTES

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Visit us at www.cbsg.com

CBSG II E U S

➡ The fourth quarter was quite a busy time for CBSG. In late October, Suzanne Baldino Jones and Mark Heisler presented a workshop on the **Continuous Customer Contract** for a group of small business owners. Sponsored by the **Delaware Valley Small Business Association**, the seminar was well received.

➡ **Success on a Case-By-Case Basis** – Speaking of the **Continuous Customer Contract**, CBSG conducted service training based on its principles for several organizations including **RTE Asset Management**. Jones and Heisler are also working with the president of **Robert Michael Communications**, Robert M. Colleluori,

Have you seen this picture before?

..... ➡
In November, CBSG conducted a postcard campaign that featured this adorable picture. We are interested whether you have seen this beautiful face on a CBSG postcard before today. Please visit our website, www.cbsg.com, and let us know. ◀

to develop a strategic business plan for the company.

➡ **On the Road with the Continuous Customer Contract** – Suzanne Baldino Jones, CBSG's President, has just announced that both she and Heisler plan to introduce their new product at several professional association meetings in the coming months. Jones noted that CBSG would attend the **National Tax-Shelter Annuity Association** and the **National Investment Service Company Association** national conferences.

➡ Look for information on CBSG's upcoming seminars and workshops in the next issue. ◀



*A child's love is unconditional.
If only keeping customers was so easy.*

Y2K's Bigger Picture

..... ➡
Y2K is garnering international attention from corporate boardrooms to "mom and pop" shops. Businesses are feverishly developing and implementing coding solutions before the clock strikes 01/01/00. Although necessary, most Y2K preparation is focused on internal information technologies issues. However, there is a much bigger picture.

Your company can spend millions of dollars finding, fixing and testing internal systems successfully, but what about the larger system? If one *key* supplier does not finish *its* Y2K preparation and is unable to deliver products or services, the companies it supplies will also potentially endure a disaster.

Thus, the success or failure of *your* associates will impact directly on *your* ability to produce *your* product or service.

Once you solve internal Y2K issues, you must:

➡ Identify all suppliers, partners and vendors that directly affect business operation

➡ Contact your partners to determine where they stand in upgrading their systems

➡ Create contingency operating plans with your partners to support each organization if there is a critical process failure (i.e. shared resources, staff, systems and communication procedures)

➡ Produce an internal disaster plan to function alone if you can't partner with other integral associates

➡ Talk to your customers and staff to communicate current status and what plans have been developed so they know the company is prepared for all possibilities

➡ Remember to build a feasible plan, not unfounded fear

Following these simple guidelines may help ease potential problems. Better yet, they will foster goodwill and position your company as professional, prepared and proactive. ◀

We Need Your Input!

CBSG is conducting field research on the type and scope of information companies maintain on current customers. Please take a few moments to complete our survey. Responses can be mailed to:

CBSG Customer Survey, P.O. Box 963, Williamstown, NJ 08094

or faxed to 609-875-5513. The survey can also be completed online at www.cbsg.com.
The results will be published in the next issue of *Directions*. Thank you for your assistance.

Please check the most appropriate box for each question:

1. Does your company classify sales figures by **new** customers and **existing** customers?
 Yes No Don't know
2. If you answered "Yes" to Question 1, what percentage of 1998 total annual sales can be attributed to existing customers? _____%
3. Does your company track customer defections?
 Yes No Don't know
4. If you answered "Yes" to Question 3, how often are customer defections reported?
 Annually Quarterly Monthly
5. Do you know your company's customer defection or retention rate for 1998?
 Yes No
6. Does your company measure the amount of lost sales or revenue attributed to customer defections?
 Yes No Don't know
7. Does your organization measure customer duration (the length of time a customer remains "active" with your company)?
 Yes No Don't know
8. If you answered "Yes" to Question 7, how long in years/months does a customer remain "active" with your business? Years/Months _____/_____
9. Does your business calculate customer acquisition costs?
 Yes No Don't know
10. If you answered "Yes" to Question 9, what percentage of sales represents your customer acquisition costs? _____%
11. Does your company calculate a breakeven point for new customers?
 Yes No Don't know
12. Does your business communicate to internal staff about customer statistics and data?
If so, to whom? Executives Managers and Supervisors All employees

Please complete the following demographic information:

Company Position: Executive Manager or Supervisor Staff position
Company Division: Sales Operations Technology Finance Administration

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how important are current customers to your business? _____

Thank you for completing our survey!

HIGHLIGHTS

DID YOU KNOW?

The average business:

→ Loses 10 to 30 percent of its customers each year

→ Loses 50 percent of its customer base in five years

→ Derives 65 percent of its total revenue from current customers

Source: American Management Association