



**GUEST SPEAKER**  
Noel Carson

## Two beats one

**When it comes to marketing coordinators, firm shows the efficiencies of critical mass.**

**W**ith 65 employees, **Hickok Cole Architects** (Washington, DC) is considered small in comparison to its national peers. However, we are able to compete by putting out the same number of high quality, meticulously put together proposals at the same rate or even faster than our competitors. How are we able to do this? With a fully staffed marketing department. That is why two marketing coordinators are better than one. Two multifaceted marketing coordinators are best. Many firms employ one marketing coordinator to manage proposals, design collateral, respond to press, and handle all of the marketing for their firm. The winning marketing department structure at Hickok Cole Architects includes a director of marketing, two marketing coordinators, and a graphic designer— all managed under a strategic planning director (WinSpin CIC, Inc.) that guides the “big picture” of the department and the firm.

There are four distinct benefits to this approach:

**1) Cross training = Greater bang for the buck.** Traditional management usually creates silos where one person handles proposals and the other might support the balance of marketing needs. For six months, one coordinator can focus on being the right hand of the senior graphic designer and assist with collateral work, awards, presentations, and interviews, while the other coordinator could focus on being the right hand of the marketing director and assist with proposals, client maintenance and database management. Cross training truly begins when there is a total switch in job responsibilities. Switch the two and train each in the opposite tasks. Developing the strengths of both marketing coordinators produces two highly proficient employees who can manage all aspects of the department, especially while one is away during sick leave or vacation.

**2) Two for the price of one.** Once trained and up-to-speed, the two coordinators will be able to produce twice the amount of work as one senior level marketing professional. Justifying two non-billable marketing employees over one can be difficult, especially in a rough economic climate. Hiring two entry-level marketing coordinators can offer significant cost savings over hiring one senior level professional for nearly twice their wage— as long as there is a training process in place.

**3) Insurance policy.** Hiring two marketing coordinators offers a significant corporate insurance policy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that men and women hold an average of 14 jobs by the time they turn 40. After an employer invests years in developing and training an employee, hiring a new employee with little experience can be costly. Losing a marketing coordinator equates to loss of corporate knowledge, billable hours time in training, and loss of time to get a new employee up to speed.

**4) Employee retention.** Hiring two marketing coordinators over one will increase employee retention. Cross training will keep the marketing staff excited and engaged in their work, thus reducing the likelihood of burnout and boredom. Vacation time is also easier to schedule for each of the marketing coordinators, since one can easily pick up any work while the other is absent.

### Interesting sidebars

The two marketing coordinator model also has its difficulties. Pushback may come from the coordinators who wish to remain in their comfort zone. Surprisingly, the professional staff may also get attached to people in specific job functions. The professional staff may also feel that one coordinator is more talented than the other— the latter changes the instant a cross-training switch occurs. This process gives people the ability to shine as strengths and talents will show up differently when performing creative tasks vs. linear tasks.

In the case of Hickok Cole Architects, due to the highly successful ROIs that were constantly put in front of the principals and the entire firm, the marketing team was kept intact during the recent economic downturn. Great marketing teams that produce efficient, measurable results equates to keeping their jobs. By maintaining a fully staffed department, the firm can maintain the same caliber, quantity, and quality of marketing services over a sustained period of time. ▲▲

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