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Subject: September 2008 ISC Newsletter



September 2008 Newsletter

Issue 16

Greetings David,

I hope your Labor Day weekend was restful. The days after Labor Day signal "a back to work after the summer" respite. Procurement activity for a variety of business consumables

; Christmas ad specialties, dated products (calendars), and file storage solutions swing into high demand. Are you marketing to these seasonal 4th quarter sales opportunities? Your competitors are. Back to school was a July/ August event but you can still capture commercial business as K-12 swings into full gear.

With the beginning of fall and sending my daughter off to Purdue for her senior year, the [PSDA Print Solution Conference and Expo](#) cannot be far behind, October 23-25 in Baltimore, MD. The [Quantum Regional Conference](#) follows from October 27-29. You will not want to miss either if you are a professional in the forms and print channel or you want to capitalize on the available resources. [StructuredWeb](#) will be sponsoring an educational show floor session from 9:30-10:00 am on Saturday, October 25 entitled:

How to Generate Leads with High-Performance Email Marketing - Peter Brooks, Vice President of Business Development

Learn how your company can create successful, high impact email campaigns by designing pURLs with click inducing messages on an integrated platform that is accessible to your entire sales team. By developing a system where a customer's click-throughs are forwarded to the responsible sales person in real time, you create a sense of urgency and a well-defined follow through process that shortens your sales cycle.

Good selling,

Email: dave@integratedsupplyconsultants.com

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Just Say "No" To Fixed Price Contracts

It is common for large companies to ask for fixed product pricing for the duration of a contract. However, you should consider it as a point of negotiation. Take a look at these office products manufacturers' price increases in the first six months of 2008, some are going into effect September 1, 2008:

- Acco Brands: 5%
- Jaguar/ Boardwalk (plastic liners and jansan products): 5-17%
- Nukote: 3-12%
- Newell Rubbermaid: up to 22%
- Wausau Paper: 3-4%
- HP Paper Media: 5%
- HP Inkjet media: 5-6%
- HP Laser media: 5%



Raw materials (e.g. polyethylene) made from oil are the cited reasons for these very large price increases. This drives inflation. If you are caught on the short end of this stick, it will be dire and unsustainable.

In today's market, raw material costs will be volatile for the foreseeable future. This is not a secret but someone who asks for fixed prices over more than six months may not be informed. USSCo's [Paper Rap](#) has a very nice white paper discussion aimed at the end consumer. It discusses the causes for today's wide price fluctuations and can help your sales team sell to market conditions as opposed to price. This information will allow your sales team to have intelligent discussions with your customers to justify your pricing.

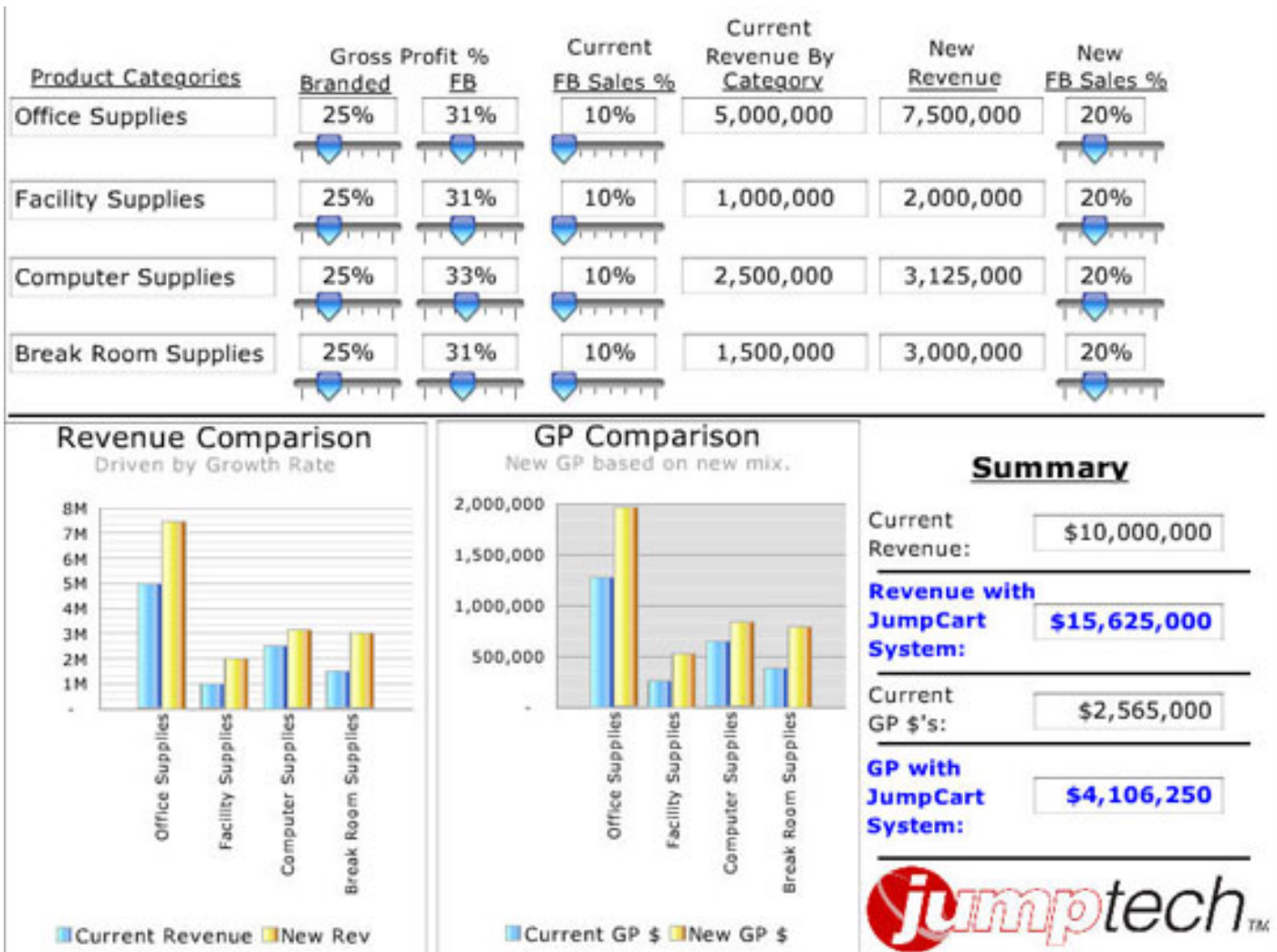
Big box contract/ commercial divisions have learned how to play this game. They will say "yes" today, telling the customer what they want to hear, but quickly renege within months once the contract is landed, raising prices on a fixed price contract. They will cite (all legitimate) reasons like inflation, manufacturer price increases, etc. Didn't they know that before hand? Isn't this unethical? Yes it is. Once the contract has been awarded, the customer is at the mercy of the vendor. I know many mid-mangers for the big box stores who have to deal with this "contract negotiation". Changing procurement vendors is not an easy task and can be quite disruptive to a large business.

A better way to handle the request of "no price increases" during the contract RFP (Request for

Proposal) stage is to educate the consumer with industry intelligence (manufacturer letters and website research are readily available). If the end user is adamant, negotiate a 3-6 month hold, which could mirror what a wholesaler partner could support. And/or, have the price held on a small subset of products. Find out what products are on the list and see what prices have already gone into effect and what they will be projected in the next 6-12 months. Be sure to be working from the most updated price files when setting contract prices. Lastly, rebates could be provided in lieu of holding prices. These discounts can be tied back to set terms helping with your cash flow.

Compare Actual to Potential: Are Your Customers Adding Up?

Have you ever asked the question, "How much sales can this account really generate?" Or, "What is an account really worth?" ISC has two excellent [profitability calculators](#) that you can access to help you find answers to these questions. With office products, if you use an average figure of \$1500 per white collar employee on an annual basis, you will get a good potential sales number goal to shoot for. This only takes into account basic office product and IT product categories. As the calculators show, once you add other business product category like facility and break room supplies and office furniture, the sales dollar potential can easily double. The sales potential for all of these combined categories will be greater than commercial print business. By always measuring your goals and looking at what you are not getting, you can realize significant sales increases in your major accounts for years to come.





Add Google Measurement Tools To Your Website

Want to know who visits your website and what they are looking at? These are good questions and ones that can improve your website hit rate and visits and placement with the search engines. [Google WebMaster Central](#) has a whole host of website diagnostics for free. If your current website

provider does not have a diagnostic package use Google Webmaster Central. Google WebMaster shows you how to generate a sitemap to submit to Google so that factors like crawl info, robot validation, top queries and indexing can be constantly evaluated and presented in accessible reports. These metrics are important to having a better functioning website and one that brings you more sales dollars.

ISC Retained By QPower

Great news...ISC has been retained for the benefits of its QPower Members. QPower is a buying and marketing group created exclusively for Quantum software users. Some vendors include Norwood, United Stationers, Prime Time Sporting Goods and Kids and Classrooms. ISC will provide consultative services and act as an outsourced business development manager for Members. For more information contact Tim Emmitt at 866-365-7797 or temmitt@Q-Power.net

ATTENTION QPower Members!

\$795/mo. Weekly Email Campaign Management Offer!

To celebrate ISC and QPower's new partnership, ISC is able to offer a significantly reduced Monthly rate to manage your customized email campaigns through StructuredWeb! Call Dave @ 614-747-1860 or [click here](#) to arrange a call back.

Offer good through October 31, 2008. Limited to 90-day campaigns.

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