

January 2010 Vol. 8, No. 1

## Upcoming Event

**Boston, MA  
JULY 14-16**

Plan now to attend the SMPS  
National Convention:

**Build Business:  
"Reinvent. Retool.  
Rebound"**

Be sure to attend Dennis  
Schrag's session on Thursday  
afternoon:

**"What You Don't  
Know Can Hurt: Firm  
Image Studies/Client  
Satisfaction Processes"**



## The birds and the bears

by Dennis Schrag

There were two birdwatchers. They liked one another as people. But that was it. Each was seeking to be the first to record the same obscure aves. Each felt he had superior skills and abilities when it came to their vocation.

The two birdwatchers were off hiking in the Montana wilderness. They were excited about seeing so many unique birds. Each ridiculed the other, good naturedly, when they recorded a win. One would gloat as he showed a photo of the rare bird.

While walking up a trail, they encountered a furious female bear. That incensed bear began

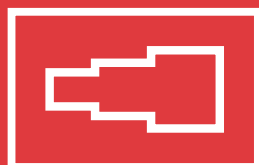
chasing them. The two naturalists figured the livid bear was probably attacking them in revenge for other hikers who had spoiled her topography. The ornithologists weren't waiting around to find out. The two began running as fast as they possibly could. The infuriated heavy, flat-footed carnivore was a distance behind them but coming on strong. She had big white teeth. She was showing them. **BIG** teeth.

All of a sudden, one naturalist stopped dead (so to speak) in his tracks. He sat down. He quickly rummaged through his backpack. He retrieved his running shoes and put them on. As he laced up his running shoes, the other birdwatcher couldn't believe his eyes.

The Longview Group, LLC  
3 Longview Knoll  
Iowa City, IA 52240

Tel: 319.351.6510  
Free: 866.351.6510  
Fax: 319.351.6520  
info@longview-group.com

www.longview-group.com



INSIGHTS...IN SIGHT

“Are you crazy? You can’t outrun that grizzly by changing shoes!”  
As the Nike-shod camper jumped to his feet and resumed running, he shouted back, “I don’t have to outrun the bear. I just have to outrun you!”

We are in the middle of a bearish situation. It’s not looking good. The future looks a lot like the recent past. A few weeks ago at the Society for Marketing Professional Services Think Tank conference in New York, participants openly used the words “business survival.” Commodity service providers pondered how they could survive with far fewer opportunities. They wondered aloud if they could outrun their competitors. They confessed that their contenders were both much larger organizations and much smaller ones.

The big white teeth of the economy are still too visible. To survive (and maybe even prosper), organizations have to be better, faster and smarter. For those who believe “doing good professional work gets business,” be prepared to be devoured. The business is out there. The only question is who is going to win it and survive the race? Will it be you or the other guys?

What is the condition of your running shoes? More firms are stopping right now and re-investing scarce resources. They are re-training their doer-sellers and business developers. They are returning to tried and tested skills for winning trust-based work.



Does each seller know how to:

- Connect with clients and prospects as people?
- Do they make frequent organized contacts?
- Develop a focused list of high-potential past clients and prospects?
- Have a win strategy for each?

How do you develop a win strategy for each client and prospect?

Return to the basics of your business:

- Learn how to ask probing, diagnostic, questions.  
Then ask them
- Ask those same probing questions of many people in the client/prospect organization.
- Listen and record the responses.
- Process the responses. The answers hold the key to winning work.
- Know what your firm does well and what you do poorly. How do you get this cruel data accurately? Engage a third party to conduct a reputation study. Be prepared for the results. You may find out you are not as great in customer service as you thought.
- Focus your energy on what you can do successfully. You have neither the time nor the resources to repair your running shoes now.
- Say thank you to your past clients. Say thank you again. And again. Ask them for help in finding leads.
- Seek ways to make your clients more efficient/effective. In tough markets, everyone is seeking better, smarter, faster ways. There are a lot of white teeth bears out there.
- Revisit your organization’s strategic plan.

**Holy crap, those teeth are big.**

Have a much better 2010.

## WHAT IS THE LONGVIEW GROUP, LLC?

Seeking more efficiency and effectiveness in your professional service business? The Longview Group, LLC provides you INSIGHTS through training, on-the-job coaching, expert counsel, and extra-hands services.



INSIGHTS...IN SIGHT

A publication of

The  
Longview  
Group, LLC