

Outsourcing for a One-Person Department

White Paper

Intelligence Pathways

Business Intelligence & Competitive Insights

OUTSOURCING FOR A ONE-PERSON DEPARTMENT

Market intelligence, competitive intelligence, and market research departments in the current economic situation experience extensive hiring freezes and budget cuts. Among all negative consequences of these processes, the most significant one is having highly knowledgeable professionals take the roles of one-person departments supporting their entire organizations. Outsourcing services and their benefits for small and middle size businesses are well known, but the latest tendency is that back office analytics support has been highly needed by professionals who are a one-person team.

Usually, companies use outsourcing to transfer by contract their secondary activities to other companies. This is an effective business solution for four major, compelling reasons: expertise in the area that is the subject of outsourcing, economies of scale, faster time to market, and lower costs. Through the transfer of secondary functions to the contractor, a company could service clients better with similar or reduced resources, while being able to focus on their primary activities. The biggest advantage that MI, MR, and CI departments have found from outsourcing lately is that they can have an extended team to support them in the ongoing research efforts when they cannot afford to directly hire analysts and researchers within their organizations.

Companies with international exposure have marketing research, marketing intelligence, and/or competitive intelligence departments, but those oftentimes are understaffed. Within those functions, senior professionals have budgets but do not have enough funding to afford a direct hire and frequently companies have hiring freezes. That is why the MI, CI, MR departments suffer in the current economic situation. The outsourcing of projects and research activities is an investment in the steady growth and improvement of a companies' services. At the same time MR, MI, and CI departments are saving time and effort by relying on extended teams without having to hire and train professionals internally.

But not only multinationals have one-person departments, as this is often the case with Start Ups. Back office analytics services could be beneficial to small Start Up businesses that often consist of one person only. When launched, most such businesses do not have enough resources to hire employees or train current ones. At the same time, a brand new business will most certainly need a detailed market plan, a competitor overview, a company profile, a strategy planer. In order

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to create the deliverables, and simultaneously be able to concentrate on the core functions, Start Ups might have to hire an external company which is an expert in the respective field. The hired partner will be able to complete the tasks professionally and with the required expertise. That automatically allows the small business to have the same advantages as their competitors who can afford entire research departments and who have researchers in-house.

There are a number of core tasks which every business, regardless of the industry and size, needs in order to succeed. When we look at one-person departments' functions, such tasks could be better off assigned to an external company for both efficiency and accuracy reasons. Examples of such tasks are smaller scale projects such as newsletter designs, reports designs, charting, and also major assignments, such as market research and competitive intelligence projects. All of those services are equally important for the company's growth and most of them require specific knowledge so that they can be completed professionally.

Back office analytics support is the perfect solution for newly started businesses and for professionals who work within small departments in big multinationals. The latter are in need of a reliable partner in the fields of business strategy, research, marketing intelligence, and competitive intelligence. If a senior analyst is hired to perform the function of an entire research department, they would benefit by having a back office team externally. The supporting firm would give the research analyst more time to focus on supporting the strategic planning, and provide actionable recommendations. Suitable deliverables to be outsourced include benchmarking, two pagers, different types of competitor profiles and analyses to large-scale primary marketing research reports, charting, and population of those reports, to name a few.

> **"Having an ever changing competition, only the ones who delegate in a smart manner and focus on their core competences will gain competitive advantage."**

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Expanding the core team without having to make direct hires can be extremely beneficial with quick turnaround projects too. In the above described case, outsourcing allows for additional qualified professional help in order to solve the issue of dealing with excessive workload, without expanding the core team. By outsourcing the time consuming tasks and project management of CI, MR, MI projects, a company's team and internal professionals can focus on making actionable recommendations necessary for decision making and strategy.

Having to act as a one-person team, marketing professionals face constant challenges and have to wisely prioritize work assigments and manage their time. An outsourcing partner, however, could turn out to be an excellent investment of the department's budget, providing valuable assistance for processes, which might otherwise be underestimated.



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SUCCESSFUL USE OF OUTSOURCING SERVICES

The core process of hiring an outsource partner includes a few initial steps that would facilitate the dynamics of a continuous professional collaboration. When starting a new partnership, the hiring person presents the current state of the department and the needed outcome, and in return, the hired company develops a detailed strategic action proposal to be approved by both parties. The final plan represents the activities which the outsourcing partner will perform, and the expected results which the professional can track at any moment. Since the external outsourcing company would be an expert in their offered services, they would be able to work independently without the need of constant supervision. That would save time which the hiring party can use for other core tasks.

Some of the popular deliverables that the outsource provider can work on are one or two-page analyses, desk research assignments, competitor profiles, benchmarking, and website analytics. These types of analyses can help the hiring company ensure what their differentiators are compared to their competitors', focus on their strengths, and get a better understanding of the market landscape. Such tools provide the hiring partner with a quick snapshot of where their company stands and can speed up pinpointing areas that can be improved. Some of the listed deliverables can be purchased as templates, but for a professional support in a whole department, it will be more beneficial to rely on an outsource partner to populate the information and do the grunt work for them.

The support given by an external company provides the client with c-suite ready deliverables which the organization might not be able to set, as they either lack an expert team within the company to create such deliverables, or do not have the time to do the research internally.

The deliverables can include information that will:

- Familiarize your C-level executives with the state of the market
- Compare the value proposition of your company and your competitors
- Acknowledge advantages, disadvantages, and gap analysis of your organization vs. competition
- Note what makes you better than your competition

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In other words, the preparation of these tools will provide the company with a monitoring system. These reports have to be tailor-made in order to meet the clients' criteria. The MI, MR, CI outsourcing experts will work with their clients to determine what drivers, metrics, results, or key figures are needed to keep track of their competition over time. On the basis of the above mentioned, competitive company snapshots can be developed to provide the hiring partner with the most important information about companies of interest at a glance. Using such deliverables and keeping them up-to-date empowers the client company, since the back office analytics team can develop them independently.



* Our professional team can facilitate your work and provide you with the necessary experticise to execute a variety of time-consuming tasks.

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KEY ADVANTAGES OF OUTSOURCING

The below listed are some key advantages of outsourcing activities that small and one-person departments can benefit from:

1. Ability to delegate tasks that add to the knowledge base and specific expertise.

2. Access to experts who are able to execute their tasks professionally and independently.

3. Ongoing support by dedicated teams which through time require less and less supervision because of increased familiarity with your requirements and needs.

Nowadays, one-person departments within companies and larger MR, MI, CI departments as well transfer certain time-consuming activities to outsourcing partners. Having an ever changing competition, only the ones who delegate in a smart manner and focus on their core competences will gain competitive advantage.

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Key Advantages

- Dedicated teams available to support your projects
- No need to hire talent directly
- Opportunity to work on more research projects

The decision one-person teams make in their choice of an outsourcing partner is always based on their specific needs and criteria. The required expertise and budget restraints are often main issues to be taken into consideration.

Recently, a lot of companies started outsourcing their activities to Eastern Europe. Countries in the region, especially Bulgaria which is a top European destination for outsourcing, due to cheaper labor costs, and at the same time outstanding performance capabilities, have become very appealing to Western companies.

Intelligence Pathways has experience in back office analytics services and offers expertise in four different major areas - competitive intelligence, business intelligence, market research, and strategy.

Our back office services can support companies as they enable resolution to typical issues that challenge large, mid-size, and small companies alike. Now you can grow your team without employing direct hires. Fully dedicated resources can work for you on an on-going basis or per project basis, while you avoid the added costs of employment and build on the required knowledge base to help you compete.

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Consulting

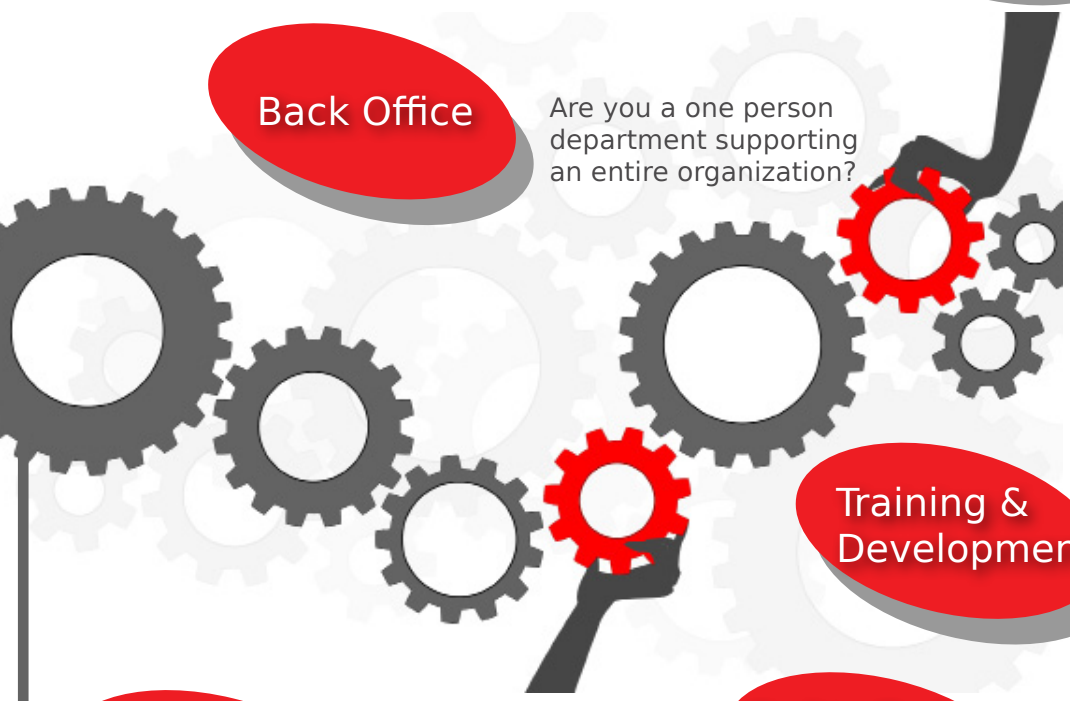
Are you in need of insights and early warning consulting in the areas of competitive intelligence, marketing research, and business intelligence consulting programs for customer programs, M&A, R&D?

Intelligence Tool Kits

Do you need to build sophisticated decision support tools to service your internal executive and decision-making customers?

Back Office

Are you a one person department supporting an entire organization?



Training & Development

Do you want to increase shareholder value by maintaining a staff of well versed and trained competitive and business intelligence experts to support accurate assumptions about the market and provide best practice

End to End [E2E] Processes

Are you equipped to support intelligence based decisions with full scale workflow, dataflow, people processes and planning

Organizational Build

Are you ready to build a comprehensive market research, competitive and market intelligence organization or strategy function?

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