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Welcome back to a regular column of Capital Times, summarizing some of recent research findings and analyses about marketing operations management (MOM) and software applications such as marketing resource management (MRM), sales asset management (SAM), and digital asset management (DAM).

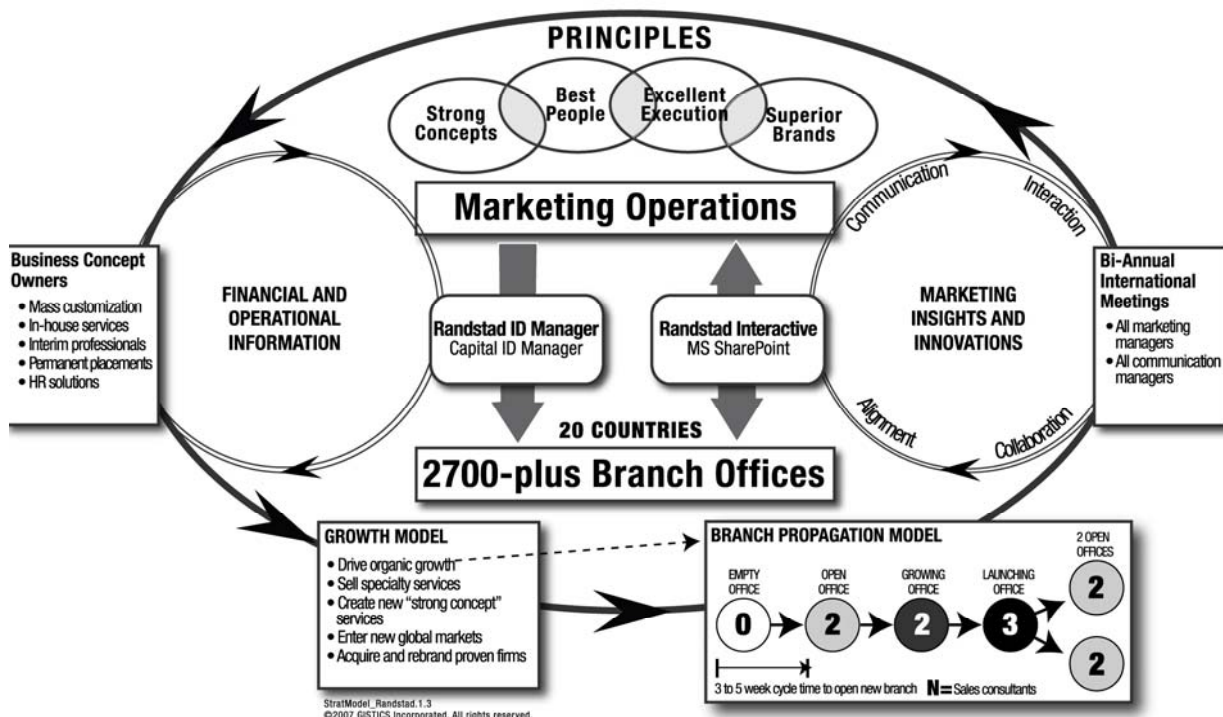
In a previous column we introduced the idea of Brand Franchise Prototyping, and explained that this entails progressive levels of workflow and process automation within a pan-regional marketing operation.

In this column, we will describe a successful example of Brand Franchise Prototyping, using our recent comprehensive study of Randstad Holding.

Let's start with short description of Randstad Holding. It constitutes a business services firm that provides flexible work, human resource services, and payroll services, operating in 20 countries across Europe, Asia, and North America. Through rapid and sustainable growth, Randstad now stands as the third largest temporary employment firms in the world, generating 8 billion Euros in 2006. Randstad executives attribute **50 percent of its 2006 revenue growth to an integrated marketing operations platform**, Randstad ID manager. Based on the industry leading Capital ID manager, Randstad ID manager enabled opening new brand offices with 11 times higher productivity through:

- o *Sourcing* of office fixtures and marketing resources.
- o *Propagating* systematic best practices for marketing and business development throughout its global network of retail service outlets.
- o *Systematizing* new service offerings for specialized niches and local growth opportunities.

The figure below depicts how Randstad ID Manager and Randstad Interactive now support their core business processes, emphasizing how Randstad successfully systematized the delivery of great business results throughout its global network of branch offices.



Four core principles and an integrated growth-model drive the marketing operations at Randstad Holding:

Strong Concepts represent completed and productized service offerings. This enables rapid propagation throughout its expanding global operations.

Best People describes not only the recruitment and selection of the best qualified and trained managers and front-line sales consultants; it also represents a commitment to continuous professional development and investment in training. To this end, Randstad conducts bi-annual international meetings—a brilliant and effective method for stimulating peer-to-peer coaching and the rapid introduction new marketing tools and techniques, and socialization of best practices.

Excellent Execution represents the creation of systems and automation of core processes around Strong Concepts and Best People, ensuring that front-line staff master the details of great service delivery and business results to clients. To this end, the firm uses two technical systems, Randstad ID Manager and Randstad Interactive, to open new branch offices in three to five weeks (down from the three months it took before automating the procurement and provisioning of furniture, carpets, posters, computers, direct mail templates, stationery, and leave-behind gift items).

Randstad Interactive (made by SharePoint specialist slagman.com) uses the SharePoint 3.0 collaboration server from Microsoft, hosting forum discussions, blogs, wikis, and other forms of interactions that start or lead up to the bi-annual international meetings. Key point: the communication, interaction, and collaboration among peer practitioners of a marketing operations stands out as one of the most effective, efficient, and fun ways of producing organization alignment with strategic objectives, new techniques and best practices. Both Randstad ID Manager and Randstad Interactive share the same technical infrastructure of .NET, making tight integration of the various Web services easy, inexpensive, and straight forward. Neat!

Superior Brands result from Strong Concepts, Best People, and Excellent Execution, creating familiarity and broad-based support within those communities served by Randstad. Strong Brands not only reduce the cost of sales, they motivate sales consultants to maintain high levels of enthusiasm and follow-through on the details—absolute essentials for delivery of personalized services.

Randstad Holding's growth model provides a great example of how this all comes together. Randstad drives "organic growth" within markets where they have established beachhead operations. The lower right side of the figure depicts a **Branch Propagation Model**, calling attention to a critical successful factor for rapid *and* profitable growth of service operations: one successful branch offices spawns a copy of itself. This accomplishes four things: First, it ensures that hard earned knowledge of local markets stay local. Second, a three to five week cycle time to open a new branch enables the firm to rapidly expand in hot markets. Third, each new office can start operating at more or less full speed within a day or two of opening—the benefit of Strong Concepts, Best People, Excellent Execution, and Superior Brands. Finally, if someone in a new office encounters a problem or needs extra help—she simply makes a local call to her colleagues in her previous branch and gets help without hassle or questions. Brilliant, human engineering!