

E-Content, Subscriptions and Knowledge Resource Management Services

Business Services
Software License Management

cSubs
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Julie Sue Auslander
President

BIO: While we live in a society where titles often dictate our persona, cSubs president Julie Sue Auslander chooses to step away from that traditional title, and instead prefers to be known as Chief Cultural Officer. This title creates a picture of a dynamic professional who committed herself to a process of insight and discovery -- a process that shaped her role as a leader of a successful woman-owned business and, in effect, caretaker of an 18 person corporation.

About cSubs:

cSubs is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) company providing e-content, subscriptions, and knowledge resource

management services.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Ms. Auslander, what is the vision and concept for cSubs?

Ms. Auslander: cSubs was started in order to help people manage their subscriptions, databases, site licenses, and econtent. We have grown over the last 30 years to serve Fortune 500 companies. Our mission is to nurture the individual while serving our client's needs.

CEOCFO: What are some of the challenges in managing databases that people might not realize?

Ms. Auslander: We are a web-based company that provides an easy, one source management tool for all of the content that large corporations and institutions use for their knowledge needs and requirements. With that, we manage over 50,000 different publisher relationships and over 250 client relationships, and that keeps us busy.

CEOCFO: What do you understand about the process, after so many years, that other companies in your space might not?

Ms. Auslander: I think there are some fundamentals that it does not matter what space you are in. The most fundamental thing that people miss is that companies do not buy anything; people buy. You need to address your messaging and know that you are talking to people and develop relationships that matter over the years.

CEOCFO: Are there particular types of companies that you work with more than others?

Ms. Auslander: The need for knowledge materials such as site licenses, databases, ejournals, magazines, newspapers and directories are not industry specific. While there are industry-specific titles, the need is across all sectors. We work in all verticals providing a tool to manage the purchasing and use of these materials.

CEOCFO: Do most organizations realize the need to manage all of the content, or are there still many companies that do not quite get it yet?

Ms. Auslander: We are a very niche business. While there are some companies that realize the need, in most companies there is a learning process involved. Once they realize the amount spent in this category, they realize that they need to manage it. In a large company, this is a multi-million dollar spend ranging from a couple million to over 100 million dollars. When you are talking about that kind of spend with no control, no oversight, and no ability to eliminate waste, the need becomes quite evident.

CEOCFO: How do you reach potential customers?

Ms. Auslander: Networking. We are a very fortunate because we have a 99% client retention rate over 30 years in business. We have an 85% key employee retention rate over 30 years in business. Our largest source for receiving new clients is referrals from existing clients. As our client contacts change jobs & companies and grow within their own professional careers, they take us with them. In addition to that, we do networking. We go to specific trade shows to meet new clients.

CEOCFO: What is it about your corporate culture that accounts for people sticking around?

Ms. Auslander: It is very important to us that we meet the needs and the growth of our individual employees. We are an employee-centric company. We do that by being leading edge and enabling our employees to telecommute and enabling our employees to have flextime in order to deal with family situations, and empowering and rewarding them to make decisions that move the needle for both our clients and our company.

CEOCFO: What might be a decision that an employee could make?

Ms. Auslander: Let us say that an employee is engaged in a discussion with a client, and the client says that they are having a particular problem, or the employee sees that the way they are managing the information within their company could better be done in a different way. That employee is empowered to come up with and implement a solution to meet those needs on the spot. None of our employees ever says they cannot do this, they do not do this, they will not do this, or they need to ask their supervisor. Even with minor things, it is so frustrating in a customer service experience where you ask an employee and they say that they do not do that or that they have to ask their supervisor and their supervisor is not there. We have taken that all out of the loop, because in general, the things that somebody is asking for are reasonable. It is not only good for that client, but it is good for other clients as well. Most of our major innovations have come from those kinds of interactions, which makes us leading edge.

CEOCFO: Would you give us a concrete example of something you have changed about the product based on a customer request or a customer idea?

Ms. Auslander: We have now moved. As I mentioned, we have been in business for 30 years. We moved from the print world to the electronic world. How we shaped that move has come from our clients' needs and input. You probably have many different websites

that you go to and they all have passwords. Can you remember your password? No, and neither can other people. In most cases, these corporations are paying thousands of dollars for that employee to have access to a particular website or particular content, and they cannot remember their password and log in information. What we developed was a single-source product so that they log in to us through their corporate site and the passwords are all indebted behind that, so they do not need to remember it. The problem was that companies were paying for clients to have content and the people within the companies could not remember their password, and they stopped using the content. It was a waste because the information was not being used.

CEOCFO: There are many challenges going from print to electronic and very

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few companies are able to make that change. How were you able to do it successfully?

Ms. Auslander: It is not that people are unable; it is that people are unwilling. At the end of the day, either you can be the head of the horse or you can be the tail of the horse. I prefer to be the head of the horse. Just as any major changes have happened over history, whether it be going from horse to car, handmade to industrial, or paper to computer, people cannot say that they are not going to do something because then they become the tail of the horse. Cannot and will not are not options. It is “how can I make this happen?”

CEOCFO: Are there add-ons or tweaks you would like to add to your offering?

Ms. Auslander: What we are working on now is solving the problem of subscription management and database liability. As I mentioned to you before, people are the faces in

corporations. It is not just the building and the chairs. In the consumer marketplace, sharing of content is not only allowed, it is encouraged. You see something and you send it to your friend. In paid content, this constitutes copyright violations. People are bringing those consumer behaviors into the corporate marketplace and corporations are being sued because you are not allowed to share content that you have not paid for sharing rights. We have a new product that will be rolled out by the end of fourth quarter this year. What we are doing is providing the information and offering each user what their sharing rights are and if they need sharing rates that are not outlined, what to do with us to get it so that they are not in violation of the user agreement for the content that their corporation has purchased.

CEOCFO: Do people take advantage of the full range of your offering?

Ms. Auslander: We are a customized solution. Depending on the needs and the nature of a particular organization, we customize the offering to what they need. It is a very high-touch, very individual offering. Each large organization needs their reporting done in different ways, and needs their approval routing customized. Who can approve an order is done in different ways in each corporation, and we provide customized solutions for each organization's needs.

CEOCFO: Do you work strictly with US companies?

Ms. Auslander: No, we are a global company. Our large corporate clients are multinational companies with locations around the world. We service their U.S. subscription needs throughout the world.

CEOCFO: How is business these days?

Ms. Auslander: Like everybody else. We are working twice as hard and making half as much, and I do not think that makes us different from anybody else. Because we are an Internet product, the consumer model is that everything is free. You go on to LinkedIn, Facebook, and all different sites that you are use to being free. People take those same expectations

and want them in every experience that they have. It is just not possible because we do not and cannot do advertising to offset our costs. It is a constant negotiation of price.

CEOCFO: Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to cSubs?

Ms. Auslander: What makes us an exceptional company is firstly our staying power. To be a successful multi-million dollar company over 30 years in business is a story onto itself. We were a kitchen table start, and it is a great American dream to start a business on your kitchen table and grow it in order to provide to the needs

of your family and the employees' families that you have as well as serving a need in the marketplace. We are constantly innovating and poised for continuous growth.



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