

How does Lowe Martin do that?

Pope: "We offer value added high tech like image editing, video storage and direct image (DI) printing. Our strategy is to find the cities that lack this specialty and fill the niche."

How do you find specialties that are lacking in an area?

Pope: "Your first focus should be on the print buyers who buy your specialty. If we find a center that isn't being serviced by big high tech printers, like Donnelly, and it has a base of customers that need our service then we will get in."

How do you get in?

Griffin: "Buying out a company is one way, or form a partnership. The way communications are it is easy to work between plants and build economies. Working from disk, the computer, the fax, the modem all make this possible."

What sort of partner would you seek?

Griffin: "You must find a partner that needs what you have. One has money, but no ideas. The other has ideas, but no money. You must offer something of value. For example, Lowe Martin offers high tech front end, DI and many other benefits."

How would you initiate the joint venture?

Griffin: "Effective desire for expansion is a prerequisite. Once you have that, you must find your target clients and examine their literature, do feasibility studies, investigate the competition. Talk to suppliers and see who has bought new innovative equipment in the area. Then you must answer some questions: can you get the markups you want? The ROI you want?"

What is your target market?

Pope: "Lowe Martin looks for high tech companies. Scientists and engineers have printed journals that need constant re-manipulation which utilizes our image editing and DI abilities. In addition, there are similar cultures: high tech engineers like high tech printers."

What are ways to establish contacts in the United States?

Griffin: "A company looking to expand must network. Networking with local U.S. company executives is a good place to start. Lowe Martin knows the president of Xerox, U.S.A. because he used to be in Ottawa. We reestablished those ties when he was promoted and our di-cut tab business went from Xerox, Canada to Xerox, United States."

What will be the long term impact of NAFTA and the FTA?

Griffin: "We lost that Xerox business I just mentioned to Mexico because it is low tech. Printers in Mexico have lower labor costs and low tech printing companies will continue to take advantage of this. Without trade barriers, you must be able to compete with high tech and if you can't compete on high tech then you must compete on service and quality."