

Background

Bill, the founder of W. Johnston Associates, is an affiliated partner of Fairfax Associates. Bill assists law firms on a variety of strategic, financial, organizational and leadership issues. For the past 20-plus years, Bill has served as a critical adviser to clients, which range from focused boutiques and regional firms to AmLaw 100 firms with national and international networks.

Prior to establishing W. Johnston Associates, Bill served for eight years as the Director of Strategic Planning at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP where his responsibilities included, among other things, working with firm leadership on strategy development and implementation, financial matters and competitive intelligence.

Earlier in his career, Bill was Vice President of Hildebrandt International, where he spent 12 years assisting law firms with strategy development and implementation, merger and achieving peak financial performance.

Over the years, Bill has written articles for The American Lawyer, New York Law Journal, Connecticut Law Tribune, Legal Management, and Law Firm Partnership & Benefits Report, among other publications. He also co-authored, with Lisa Smith, the ABA's book *Anatomy of a Law Firm Merger*.

Since 2005, Bill has been an adjunct professor at George Washington University, where he helped develop the University's Master of Professional Studies and Graduate Certificate in Law Firm Management program and where he continues to teach on law firm economics, structure and strategy implementation.



Areas of Expertise

Strategic and Implementation

- Works with firms to develop clear, insightful strategies that are not only meaningful and ambitious, but also actionable and responsive to changes in market dynamics
- Assists groups within firms, such as practice groups and industry teams, to develop appropriate strategies that align with and advance the firm's overall strategic objectives
- Helps guide strategy roll-out, implementation and plan modification to reflect current conditions and expectations

Merger & Acquisition

- Works with firms to identify potential merger partners and remains actively involved all the way through merger implementation
- Helps firms involved in merger discussions, but struggling with certain issues or simply unsure what to do next in the process
- Provides an objective approach and regularly advises on "go/no-go" decisions in order to avoid wasting time on unproductive discussions

Finance & Compensation

- Identifies financial issues, develops realistic benchmarks and forms concrete recommendations to maximize financial performance
- Assists firms with a broad range of financial matters, from budgeting and financial management to lateral hire structure and practice profitability
- Works with firms to create compensation systems and structures that are efficient, non-bureaucratic and support the firm's culture and strategic goals

Governance & Structure

- Works with clients to develop governance models that are aligned with each client's strategy and consistent with the client's operating policies and firm culture
- Assesses effectiveness and efficiency of existing structures; analyzes and strengthens administrative structure and function
- Performs infrastructure reviews and expense structure analyses
- Assists firms with leadership assessment, leader identification and client transition planning

Education

Certified Public Accountant
M.B.A., Stillman School, Seton Hall University
B.A., Dickinson College, in Economics