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Most people, busy executives especially, dislike circular letters. The Romans chose Mercury as the god of commerce as well as for thieves and orators, and there is an element of the same thinking when looking at an unsolicited circular letter landing on one's desk.

Indeed, the wider the circulation it appears to have, the less is it valued. Alternatively, a note with limited circulation has cachet, and being on its list might even be worth fighting for, even if one does not actually read every such communication attentively. The point is that information is power, and good information can be nuclear.

Good information, however, is not necessarily restricted to limited circulation memos. At Chesham we are aware that if we are to be taken seriously we have to avoid the junk mail approach in our unsolicited letters. We have to provide good information in a useful way. But we also want to talk to our very wide customer base. So although we try to spread our message widely, we are conscious that we need to target our approach sufficiently to make sense to specific business groups.

Fortunately, we have quite a simple proposition to put before our putative clients. Chesham is in the business of finding buyers for companies actually wanting to be sold. Our letters are therefore not marketing mail shots. They are invitations to do real business. We hope that the companies to whom we write will have been targeted to respond to specific opportunities, or will be looking for help in finding an appropriate buyer.

Our efforts will inevitably go awry at times. For companies with whom we have not already dealt, we obtain names and addresses from publicly available sources, and if these are incorrect, there is very little that we can do about that. Nonetheless, a great deal of thought and care goes into our letters. So, if you receive a communication from Chesham you can be confident that we are following up either our own research, or a conversation with a buyer/seller actively seeking to do a deal.

At present we have about 45 active situations where we are seeking buyers or where buyers have asked us to find vendors in specific fields. Our long experience of mergers and acquisitions - we are one of the oldest brokers in the business, having been established in 1962 - means that we are often able to help with practical suggestions, even though we are not advisers. The credit crunch has obviously led to finance becoming an issue, and valuations are now much more rigorously analysed. It is often useful, therefore, to have an independent party with whom to discuss and clarify these issues before they become problems in a negotiation.

This is one of the 'off balance sheet' advantages of dealing with an experienced group like Chesham. Our letter may therefore highlight the possibilities of doing a deal. To conclude it successfully will need expertise and experience. So keep that letter you receive from us, and call us for a talk about your requirements.

You could be pleasantly surprised at how much added value a conversation with us could bring.