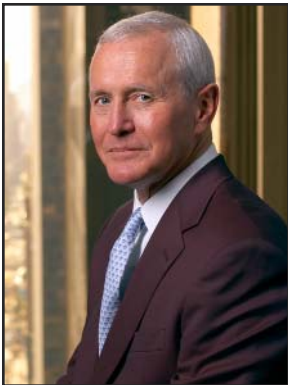


When Being Republican Isn't Enough

By Jeffrey H. Birnbaum



Peter T. Metzger
Vice Chairman, CTPartners

Susan Molinari is a Republican aristocrat. She succeeded her father, Guy V. Molinari (R-N.Y.), as a House member; she is married to former congressman Bill Paxon (R-N.Y.), and she delivered the keynote speech to the Republican National Convention in 1996.

But that's not enough anymore, now that the Democrats are in charge on Capitol Hill. The lobbying firm she heads, the Washington Group, last week retained the executive search firm CTPartners to look for a senior Democrat, probably a former member of Congress, to head the firm along with Molinari.

"They've concluded they want to be more bipartisan. They want a counterweight to her [Molinari]," said Peter T. Metzger, vice chairman of CTPartners. Specifically, he said, they want "a proven former member who's shown some business acumen -- someone who can be a revenue contributor."

This is the firm's second major stab at bipartisanship this year. In April, it noted that it had hired more Democrats, promoted a Democrat already on the payroll and created a joint venture with a firm that had a Democratic principal. Its Web site advertises that "bipartisanship is the order of the day."

Molinari says she is eager to go further and find a new partner. "I'm looking forward to sharing the reins," she said. Given the political situation in Washington, she added, "it makes sense" that the person should be a Democrat.

The search will probably go quickly, Metzger said: "We know the people we want to talk to." But who that is, he's not saying.