

# EXPERT INSIGHT™

PROGRESSIVE IDEAS FROM LEADING BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

As Published in  
**EXPERT INSIGHT™**  
in the March 15, 2000  
issue of Inc. Magazine.

**Inc.**  
®  
**THE MAGAZINE FOR  
GROWING COMPANIES**

As an established leader in the consulting community, DeMars & Associates, Ltd. was invited to participate in Expert Insight, a nationwide educational series for managers of growing companies. *Can ADR Resolve Your Business Problems?* is the first of three insertions appearing in Inc. Magazine throughout the year.

For more information on this topic, contact DeMars & Associates, Ltd.

262-549-6700

[www.demarsassociates.com](http://www.demarsassociates.com)

## Can ADR Resolve Your Business Problems?

Disputes? Disagreements? Angry Customers or Employees? ADR may be the answer.

Not long ago, aspirin was considered a medical cure all. Today, you may hear savvy business management consulting firms affirm that ADR can be an effective cure for prevalent business ailments. Some CEOs, like General Electric's Jack Welch, have declared that ADR needs to be an integral part of solving corporate problems, internal and external. So, "What is ADR, and how does it fit into the world of rapidly growing companies?"

The Answer: ADR is Alternative Dispute Resolution, a means of resolving differences without using the legal system, which usually proves to be quicker and less expensive. Since alternative dispute resolution focuses on solutions, rather than on prolonging antagonistic legal maneuvering, relationships are better able to weather the struggle. In short, ADR could be an effective answer to resolving disagreements in your business. ADR professionals have developed guidelines for virtually every dispute, including business to business contract interpretation differences, consumer to business warranty disputes, workplace disagreements between peers, subordinates and supervisors, and also between departments or divisions with 'internal customer' issues.

The practice of ADR includes a variety of approaches:

**Negotiation:** Usually the first step in attempting to settle differences. The parties involved

often take responsibility for managing the process. Negotiation is highly successful, particularly in situations where the parties believe the power level is equal. For example, kids on the playground will "talk it out" and resolve a problem.

**Mediation:** This process needs a facilitator to assist the disputing parties to define a mutually



DeMars  
& Associates, Ltd.

DeMars & Associates, Ltd. provides consulting, administration, training and research services to Fortune 100 companies, national associations, government agencies, and international organizations. DMA combines extensive experience in alternative dispute resolution, training and customer service to formulate cost effective programs that uniquely serve each client's needs.

**Waukesha, WI 262-549-6700**  
**[www.demarsassociates.com](http://www.demarsassociates.com)**

agreeable solution. Mediation is a rapidly growing field with trained professionals. It is especially effective when the parties have an interest in maintaining the relationship. When kids at play can't settle a dispute, a friend may act as the peacemaker to defuse adversarial claims.

**Arbitration:** When efforts to reach resolution fail, the parties may decide to ask a disinterested third party to settle the dispute. This works well in situations where the positions of the parties are entrenched, or where they no longer care to maintain the relationship. Kids will work for a while to find a solution, then appeal to a parent or teacher to arbitrate the dispute.

In summary, the systematic application of ADR techniques offers practical and cost-effective options for resolving business problems.