

PR that shows expertise – and gets new clients

Case Study: Red Door Interactive

Background

Headquartered in San Diego, Red Door Interactive Inc. manages clients' online presence by analyzing their unique challenges, advising them on Internet-based solutions and implementing strategies to help them along their path toward e-business. Customers come from a wide range of industries and include Intuit, Nanogen and Cricket Communications.

The five-year old company is very well known for its entrepreneurial culture and can-do attitude. However, there had been few examples of how they provide value to their clients ever written by industry trade and business media. Such validation can considerably close sales cycles as well as elevate a firm's brand value.

"We want to be known as a strategic partner for our clients, and that means proving that you've done it for others," said Reid Carr, president of Red Door Interactive. "We knew one of the best ways to tell prospects of our capability was through PR, and put Stalwart Communications to the test."

Solution

"While getting the principals ink in key trade press is important, we wanted to get clients to sing the firm's praises, because it carries greater weight – particularly when the goal is to gain more customers," said David Oates, APR, principal of Stalwart Communications. "Fortunately, Red Door has a bunch of very satisfied customers!"

One such company is Turning Technologies, makers of audience response systems for a wide range of markets, including different markets—including corporate, kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education segments. Red Door turned their Web site into an interactive center, complete with "Melissa," a live person who acts as a virtual tour guide by leading people through the site to quickly attain information that was relevant to them.

Stalwart saw an opportunity to use this as a great example of Red Door's strategic value, and successfully made contact with key editors of various advertising and marketing publications. A write up in BtoB Magazine's Web and E-newsletter outlets soon followed.

Results

The most compelling part of this PR success was in what it brought Red Door – a new client in the form of one – if not the largest – travel services firm in the United States. The company’s marketing folks read the article, called Red Door soon afterwards and signed a services agreement within two weeks.

"We definitely have a partner in Stalwart Communications," said Carr. The firm knows our business and brings with him the creative story angles that fit extremely well with our strategic objectives. It makes it easier for us to attract new customers as well as employees because we look in-demand. Good players want to play for a winning team and effective PR does that for us."

Moreover, with Stalwart Communications’ Pay-on-Performance model, Red Door pays only when the agency can deliver such results. The "R-word" (Retainer) is not in Stalwart Communications' vocabulary. The agency does not track hours, but rather the success of actually producing results, such as securing positive press coverage and acquiring qualified customer, partner and/or investor leads. Fees are aligned accordingly.

The general benefits of such an agency-client relationship include:

- Performance metrics/expectations are outlined and agreed upon in full between the agency and the client before an agreement is executed, since it will determine how and for what an agency gets paid.
- The business risk is shared between both parties. The agency doesn't make its money unless it can produce.
- The ROI is embedded in the fee structure.
- Client satisfaction and understanding increases.
- Client retention increases.
- Client turnover/churn decreases.
- Client referral rate increases.

"In business, efforts are categorized in one of three ways: a revenue generator, a cost center or a cost saver," said Oates. "Stalwart Communications proves itself time and time again to add positive value to a company’s bottom line under our Pay-on-Performance model. We feel all marketing and PR firms should do the same."

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