

PR that shortens sales cycles

Case Study: Sentek Consulting.

Background

Sentek Consulting spearheads and supports government and commercial IT programs. From IT security acquisition, program management and consulting services to military command and control system engineering, the 25-person company has the talent and dedication to see a project through and solve the most complex strategic technical issues on time and within budget.

Sentek Consulting's management team includes retired senior military and government personnel, each with decades of experience in areas such as IT architecture, Command and Control systems, Anti-terrorism, Special Operations, Military infrastructure and other key areas. Its cadre of professionals has developed a reputation for providing unique and invaluable expertise to assist its clients in meeting their requirements, expanding their programs and accomplishing their missions.

Being a small company has its distinct advantages, but one noted issue for the firm early on was in staying in the forefront of the minds of primary defense contractors. Many times, Sentek was overlooked as just another small business firm that can help the larger conglomerates meet the requirements of many federal contracts to sub out some of its work to such firms. So while its management team had a large Rolodex of key partners and prospects, getting them to return a phone call was sometimes a daunting task.

Solution

"Sentek may be a small company by many standards, but not when it comes to their talent and ability to exceed their customers' expectations," said David Oates, APR, principal of Stalwart Communications. "So we set out to make sure key folks in town and around the country knew Sentek for what it truly is – the firm of choice for government and commercial IT programs."

Stalwart Communications set out to target key business publications in San Diego as well as national defense trade and entrepreneurial media outlets. In less than six months, the agency secured no less than 10 key placements in such publications as *Business Week*, *Washington Technology*, *National Defense Magazine*, *Defense Systems Magazine*, and *the Los Angeles Times*.

"We were able to quickly and clearly explain to top defense and business editors how Sentek was a small company with big talent, and weaved this in a wide range of stories ranging from entrepreneurial-issues to defense policy issues," said Oates. "The litmus test was did each placement showcase the company's intellectual property and/or business acumen to current as well as potential prospects and partners. If it did, we went after it."

Results

These articles placed Sentek in the right light, and generated follow up phone calls from key partners and prospects that had been considered dead or dying leads. Sales cycles shortened considerably and opportunities began to appear where not likely before.

“The increased interest we’ve received from prospective clients for our services was a direct result of the positive publicity Stalwart Communications secured for us,” said Eric Basu, president and CEO of Sentek Consulting. “The firm also won my trust and confidence early with their Pay-on-Performance model. We’ve definitely found a valued partner to grow our business!”

Stalwart Communications’ Pay-on-Performance model aligns the agency’s revenues to actually delivering marketing and PR results for a client. 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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