



"The Sales Generator programme has transformed the nature and value of our marketing activity. We now have a proven process delivering the quantity and quality of leads we need to hit our growth targets with a high return on investment." Neil Humphries, Managing Director, Francis Catering Equipment Ltd.



Development and implementation of a multi-touch sales and marketing program for Francis Catering Equipment Ltd

Benefits:

- Generated an additional £3.6 million sales and £888k of live quotes
- Total costs – including all management time, promotional materials, consultancy fees and full project management – only £52k
- 18% of the "suspects" were converted into quality, on-profile customers, versus a target of 5%

Background:

Francis Catering design, manufacture, install and maintain commercial kitchens for a wide variety of customers including pubs, hotels, restaurants, schools and garden centres. In 2013 the business was well-established, successful and ambitious to grow as the economy emerged from recession.

Using our own experience, backed up by expert sales research, we set out to create a multi-touch sales and marketing program for Francis Catering. The objectives for the program were to generate £1M of new business sales per annum over a 5 year period.

Marketplace and business challenges:

- Long buying cycles – it can take 12 to 18 months to convert a prospect to a customer
- The best prospects can be very valuable customers but need to be carefully selected to minimise wasting time and money
- Sales resources at Francis Catering tended to be drawn to short term opportunities and to managing existing customers

- Marketing at Francis Catering was historically used to support the sales team rather than to find and nurture prospects

Program Design:

We created a 12 touch, 18 month Sales Generator program, meaning each touch would be around 6-7 weeks apart. This gives the right balance of regular presence without becoming a pest. Our job was to achieve a contact frequency that would 'get us on the suspect's radar and keep us on their radar'.

The program was designed to be engaging, to build awareness and credibility for Francis Catering and enable recipients to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to speak to them directly or not.

We ensured that there was full integration of the marketing and sales activities, so that as the suspects moved through the program their interaction with the sales team increased.



"Initially, I was sceptical about the Sales Generator programme and whether a different approach to marketing would help me make more sales, but it really has made a difference. I can spend more of my time working on good quality prospects who want to talk to me about our products and services."
Roy Organ, Sales Director, Francis Catering Equipment Ltd.



Features:

- Mix of communication channels – email, web, post and phone
- Mix of messages – the suspect's industry, the catering industry as a whole, and some information about Francis Catering (but without a heavy sell)
- Measurement – we wanted to be able to track the degree to which the recipients were engaged by each touch

Suspect Qualification and Management

We set 6 qualification criteria to be a 'Suspect' which included their buying potential, geographic fit and decision making authority. We calculated that 180 suspects would generate 40 qualified prospects which in turn would be converted to 10 customers, delivering the £1M of new business per annum. To generate a smooth flow of prospects to the sales team we start a new batch of 45 suspects every quarter.

Implementation and Project Management

In order for the Sales Generator to be as successful as possible, we needed excellent project management and the capability to track our results. To maintain enthusiasm for and control of an 18 month program through the inevitable peaks and troughs of business performance and activities, compounded by the introduction of a new batch of suspects every 3 months, would require robust project management. By the end of the first 18 months, we had 6 groups of 45 suspects each at different stages of the program.

Following the recommendation of a specialist project management consultant we chose a suitable project management tool for the program. This allowed us an overall 'helicopter' view of the project and an easy way to create, approve and implement each individual touch. We initially created a tracking system to record the results of the program and measure the number and value of responses received. From early 2015 we have been using the SharpSpring Marketing Automation system to send emails to suspects and track their responses through CRM and lead scoring

Conclusion:

The results from the Sales Generator exceeded our targets. Francis Catering were extremely pleased with the success of the program. The majority of the sales occurred during the last six months of the program. This is not a process that can be rushed, or used in part, but rather a carefully controlled programme that consistently delivers excellent results to help a business thrive.

