



THE REVENUE ACCELERATOR™

**High Impact Business
Growth Solutions**

4th Quarter, 2011

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Eric Wiedenmann
President/Founder

From The Editor

Welcome to the 23rd issue of The Revenue Accelerator™. This publication was established as a direct result of recommendations from a Market Development Group, Inc. (MDG) Client Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide practical revenue and profit generator tools for MDG clients, colleagues and friends. The MDG staff encourages our readers to give feedback on the articles included in this newsletter. We welcome any suggestions of articles or topics you would like to have included in future issues.

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2011 in Perspective

By: Eric W. Wiedenmann - President, Market Development Group, Inc.

MDG would like to thank all our clients for making 2011 a record year since our founding in 1997. Our clients have increased their sales and profits in 2011 due to their continued efforts of providing new products and services in a challenging market while making efforts to understand how their customers really perceive them as well as gathering market trend data to anticipate unmet customer demands.

We look forward to an opportunity to provide you with innovative business growth solutions in 2012 and beyond.

Set Yourself Up for Success in 2012

By: Eric W. Wiedenmann - President, Market Development Group, Inc.

One of the best phrases that stuck with me during the past 30 years was from a former employer who constantly said **"set yourself up for success."** I feel that this philosophy was one of the main reasons why his division was consistently one of the top performing divisions of a Fortune 500 company.

My question to you is what are you doing to set yourself up for success in 2012? I'd welcome your responses by e-mail at ericw@marketdevelopment.net or a phone call at 925-648-0680.

Everyone should have their "Success List" written and hard wired into their subconscious. Based on my personal research, here is what high performing companies have on their "Success List."

- Make sure that you understand who your ideal customer client segment really is.
- Make sure that you understand what your customers really need.
- Know what our customers really think about you.
- Know the answer to the question "Is our value proposition aligned with our customers' needs?"
- Have the right people in place to do the right things right (this is defined as effectiveness.)
- Have a consistent well-defined customer acquisition plan that includes at least four or five strategies.
- Have answers to the following questions:

a) Why should companies buy from us?

b) What sets us apart from the competition?

c) Why should I meet with you to talk about our value proposition?

- "Fire" your unproductive customers. They are sucking up your scarce resources and

- are holding you back from reaching your next level of success.
- Be sure that your team is fully engaged. Engaged employees translate into happy customers.

Have a happy and successful 2012!!!

Champagne Branding on a Beer Budget

By: Tim A. Schultz - President/Owner, Marcom Solutions

According to marketing communication experts, branding is not just something you need to consider. *It's everything.* It's the elevator speech that defines your company and product benefits. It's the glue that holds your marketing program together and the gasoline that drives and supports your sales engine.

Having said that, since 2008 and this last great recession, just about every company has had to tighten its marketing budget. Not to worry, there are still plenty of cost-effective initiatives you can implement to continue building your brand without breaking your budget. Plus, when the economy bounces back, you may realize that you can actually accomplish almost as much while spending less.

Change Your Advertising Strategy

While advertising remains the single most effective strategy to build brands, you may have to reconsider your advertising campaign options. For instance, even though you may have to forego your full-page four-color ad campaign, you still have options. Consider more targeted fractional page ads to maintain a strong frequency and reach equation. This accomplishes two things; it keeps your brand active while keeping the trade publications interested in supporting your efforts with cost-effective publicity. While every trade publication representative will tell you about the distinct line between editorial and advertising, I have never worked with a trade publication yet that does not do its best to support the companies that support it.

Work Your Publicity Advantage

Then work your publicity program to your best advantage. News releases are inexpensive. Literature releases are inexpensive. And by using a resource like *Business Wire*, you can be sure to canvass your entire online and print market. Then augment *Business Wire* with your own news release submittal program. Make certain your marketing communications expert has a targeted list of industry trades and maintains a personal relationship with targeted editors. A personal e-mail with an attached news release to an editor you know will go a long way towards getting your release published. Finally, to maximize your publicity efforts, be sure to produce a constant stream of case histories and product success stories that feature your company. While poorly written advertising fluff and advertorial will never get published, trade publications are always on the lookout for well-written articles that offer real reader value. And case histories that feature how a product solution solved a company's problem by increasing productivity while reducing costs are always welcome. The fact that it was your company and your product that provided the solution only

completes the story.

Change Your Trade Show Strategy

For industry trade shows, consider a smaller size booth. Never pull out of an industry trade show to save money. You can do irreparable damage to your brand, giving your competition all the ammunition it needs to question your absence and viability. Instead, reduce your static square footage, while making certain you incorporate plenty of dynamic activity. You'll find little difference in traffic or lead results.

Cost-Effective Direct Marketing

For effective brand building, direct marketing is always cost effective. If you have a strong sales proposition that resonates with your customers, a targeted mailing list, and understand that you need to take advantage of the power of three, which means at least three mailings to make any impact and get a response, direct mail marketing works. Plus, if you maintain a targeted e-mail list as well, you can augment your snail mail campaign with broadcast emails that are extremely cost-effective.

Make Sure Your Website Works For You

Every company has a website. Unfortunately, most companies do not get anywhere near the benefits from their site that they should. For not a lot of money, you can dramatically increase traffic and continue to build your brand. For instance, are you taking advantage of free Google Keyword Research and Keyword Analytics to optimize your site content and attract search engines? Are you blogging? And are you taking full advantage of free article repositories on the web such as ezinearticles.com to get your news release information circulating through the web while attracting customers and search engine searches to your website? And most important, are you regularly updating your website? Remember, the worst thing you can do to a website is to not update its content on a regular basis. Several times a month spiders from each search engine circulate throughout the web and check for new activity. Dormant websites are considered irrelevant, and once considered irrelevant, your organic search engine ranking drops in a hurry.

Social Media Marketing

Are you involved in social media? Social media marketing may be the most cost-effective method available today for building brands and engaging customers. Recent studies have determined that social media networking has already surpassed e-mail as the preferable method to communicate online.

So how important is social media? Recent studies show that *Facebook* now has 750 million users worldwide. It's why every company should have a *Facebook* page to regularly engage customers. Even better, it could not be more cost-effective. All you need is a dedicated administrator who is a social media expert to maintain your page. Then, linked to your website, you can engage customers with all sorts of value-added information and sales opportunities. You can even use *Facebook* to post blogs, movies and new product literature. Most important, you can use *Facebook* to develop an important dialogue with your customer, which continues to build your brand.

Other cost-effective social media opportunities for building brands include *LinkedIn*,

providing a free and excellent opportunity to make business-to-business contacts and to link your company with industry-related groups. *Twitter* offers companies 140 characters per "tweet" to talk to followers, an important and free medium to reach smart phone users. *YouTube* gives you a free opportunity to post movies with links to your website. When you see one of your movies go "viral," you'll understand the power of social media and *YouTube*.

Don't Forget The Research

And finally, are you periodically doing your homework first, which means are you earmarking a certain amount of money every year for research? For the relatively small amount of money that you invest in benchmark studies and customer satisfaction surveys, you will find that your research will more than pay for itself in building brands, for the short-term and long term.

Tim A. Schultz is President and Owner of Marcom Solutions, a full-service marketing communications agency supporting business-to-business and business-to-consumer clients. He can be reached at MarcomTim@yahoo.com or by phone at (216) 314-2227.

The Art of Collaborative Selling

By: Michael Levin - President & CEO, Custom Solutions, Inc.

Over the past 30 years, I've personally been fortunate to have learned a wide variety of selling methodologies and techniques taught by some great instructors. What I found, taking the best from each plus my personal experience, was a collaborative approach that I have found to be highly effective. It has helped both me with my own companies and my clients dramatically improve their sales results.

The short title of this methodology is Collaborative Selling. It moves the needle beyond Consultative approaches because their focus, while on the right track, deals primarily with your customer's needs. Collaborative Selling addresses both your client's needs as well as your own.

The longer title I've given to my process is "Sitting on the Same Side of the Desk as Your Customer". This philosophy is both literal and figurative. The intent behind the philosophy is to determine if the two parties can develop a mutually beneficial business relationship.

Collaborative selling is about both sides getting what they need. Sitting on the Same Side of the Desk is about working alongside your customer. The literal piece is ideally you aren't sitting directly across a table from your customer. You're sitting beside them developing a plan that works for both of you. When I go into a meeting, I try and ensure that my team and I aren't on one side of the table and the customers are on the other. We split up to ensure that we are a blended group (us and our potential customer) working together for a common goal.

The figurative part is if you can't literally sit beside them, they should feel as though you

are. It's also a mindset. It's what you need to feel and what you need to make them feel.

By doing so, it allows for an open, honest conversation about what both parties need. It's not about presenting to someone and trying to sell them something. It's about determining if there is a fit between both companies.

Quite frankly, I can't remember the last time I brought a power point on a sales presentation. I want to have a conversation with customers, not present to them. The one thing I always come in with is a list of questions. My goal is to learn as much as I possibly can about them. The more I know, the easier it is for me to help develop a solution that works for both parties.

I prefer a candid conversation versus a sales pitch or what feels like hard core negotiation. I have found that if I take an interest, ask questions, show I'm interested in a solution that's good for both parties, the customer will be much more open and honest with me.

By having my questions in writing it does two things. Both are critical to sales success. The first is it helps you be an active listener. You don't need to think about what you're going to ask next. It's already on paper. You can take notes and ensure you fully hear them. The other is it helps you be the "Tour Guide". This is extremely important. What you don't want is a battle for control with your customer. You want to be able to guide your sales call and keep it down the right path. If your customer diverts, you want to let them as you may gain valuable information. Because you have your list of questions, you know you can get back on the tour once your customer has gone down their path.

This methodology, enveloped more deeply in a 7 Step Selling Process and 4 Step Objection Resolution Process, has produced tremendous results. For one of my own companies, in the automotive industry, we had used a more traditional approach. It was the right approach when we first started. When the automotive industry hit incredibly hard times, we needed to change.

By shifting to this process, our sales were up by over 40%. It increased our business valuation by 67% in one year! We sold our business for 67% more than our best offer we received a year earlier. This was despite an industry downturn of over 25%. We learned how we could best serve our customers, adjusted our niche and offerings and became indispensable to our customers while improving our bottom line.

Another client I've worked with for the past 3 years had seen their business drop to a point of being at risk. They were a 20 year old company with a non-essential product in essential times. By changing their processes, they've more than doubled their business in the last two years.

The nice thing I've found by taking a collaborative approach is it doesn't really like selling. It works well for veterans as well as those just being a sales career. I much prefer an open honest dialogue around developing a program that's good for both parties versus a more traditional sales approach. I think you'll find your customer will like it better too.

Michael Levin and his company, Custom Solutions Inc., (www.customsolutionsconsulting.com) provide high impact consulting services in the areas of Sales, Presentation Skills and Leadership Development. He works with a wide variety of clients from entrepreneurs to Fortune 50 companies. He has helped companies dramatically improve their results through his proven, personally developed sales techniques and leadership methodologies. Michael can be reach at mlevin@customsolutionsconsulting.com or (925) 525-1521.

ABOUT MARKET DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC.

Market Development Group Inc. (MDG) is a professional organization specializing in value added, quick turnaround and fast payback of sales, marketing and product management solutions for entrepreneurial, mid-sized and Fortune 500 companies. MDG has over 50 clients nationwide.

MDG Provides the Following Benefits to Its Clients

Revenue/profit growth by finding and developing new sources of revenue

- Sales and marketing programs implemented timely and cost-effectively
- Gathers and provides critical market research to help clients make better informed strategic decisions
- Increased competitive advantage through "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

MDG Difference/Why You Should Work with MDG

What Our Clients Say About MDG

MDG was a significant factor in taking a business unit from six figures to middle seven figures. MDG has some "quick and dirty" ways of getting a lot of information without spending a lot of money and time.
Ron Prescott - President, RJP Inc.

MDG is dependable, thorough, meets deliverables, and keeps you informed.

John Pendergrass - COO, TRW-Lucas NovaSensor

MDG is a very focused, cost-effective way to generate marketing information and strategic data.

Dave Marshburn - Sr. Director, Seagate Technologies

MDG provided me with a marketing plan that I could use to develop a larger client base. MDG can zero in on what the objective is, reduce some of the minutia you're going through, and put together a marketing program that really works

MDG provides a unique blend of customized, practical, objective, timely and cost effective business development, market research/market intelligence and "road maps" to successful program implementation services. MDG's mission is to deliver a fast R.O.I. to all clients. As an objective independent service provider, MDG is able to craft creative solutions for our clients. MDG is the originator of "The Rapid Response High Impact Sales Plan™."

for you.

Darren Merritt - VP, Boardwalk Investments

MDG is proactive, has excellent follow-through, and exceeds service expectations.

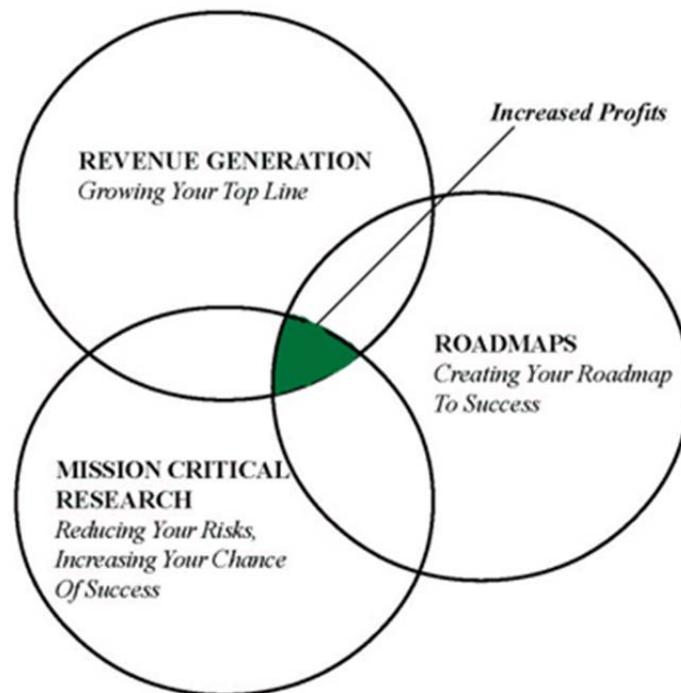
Todd Schuelke - Vice President, Eclipse Group, Inc.

MDG's willingness to take the extra step, spend the extra hours and pull the team together was a big ingredient to our current success.

Albert R. Steele - President, CBC Industries

Increasing Sales and Profits Quickly and Cost Effectively

This Is How MDG Helps Its Clients





Revenue Generation:

- Increasing Closure Rate
- Finding Untapped Markets
- Time/Territory Management
- Developing New Channels
- Business Development



Research:

- Helping Companies Make the Right Mission Critical Decisions
- Customized Market Research
- Competitive Intelligence
- Opportunity Identification
- Customer Surveys
- Finding Acquisition Candidates



Roadmaps:

- Strategic Marketing Plans
- Rapid Response High Impact Sales Plans

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