

FEWER PROPOSALS. MORE WINS.



A well-regarded construction services firm found itself working harder for less. Getting selected as a finalist for projects wasn't the issue. The issue was winning those contracts. Project performance was outstanding, so they expected a marketing tune-up and tweaks would have them quickly back on track.

The solution wasn't quite so simple, but produced far greater benefits than they had imagined possible.

Much had changed in recent years. An economic downturn brought a more competitive market with additional competitors eyeing the firm's niche. The firm was highly regarded, yet poorly differentiated because it defined itself by the specialized markets it served and the quality of its performance rather than the specific value it generated.

As with many professionals, the reality that competence and experience gets one considered, but not selected, came as a hard lesson. When several firms are capable, the actual selection decision moves to other factors.

Leveraging Their Strengths

In depth interviews of clients and partners revealed a genuine appreciation and respect for the way the firm handled high-impact projects. These are projects where not getting details perfect the first time, or even small delays have unusually large impacts on the client. These projects tend to be technically demanding, so the unexpected can be expected.

Excellence in these situations flowed from the firm's culture of over-managing projects and principal involvement. The strong individual relationships that resulted had a side-effect because some clients would only work with specific staff. Availability of specific staff became the limiting factor rather than the firm's actual capabilities.

Generating powerful recommendations from existing customers and partners represented another opportunity. The deep relationships with individuals at the firm tended to limit knowledge of the firm's broader capabilities. The firm was missing out on potential references and referrals essential for gaining new clients.

A comprehensive Strategic Marketing Plan reshaped the firm's thinking to center on owner-perceived value rather than task-specific positioning. The revamped positioning demonstrated why their firm was a better choice than similar firms for the projects the firm most wanted to win.

Fewer proposals. More wins.

With strong positioning focused on how they created incremental value, the leadership team felt prepared to enter the additional markets and segments needed to reach growth objectives. Their strategic marketing plan not only helped them win more of the projects they most wanted, it guided them away from resource-sapping proposals they were unlikely to win. With their new focus, they found they could submit fewer proposals while winning more business.

Extended Gains

The Strategic Marketing 3.0® framework extended the gains across the entire organization, infusing a commitment of value-creation far beyond marketing and business development. With detailed—and prioritized—guidance, the corporate website, collateral, events and campaigns, social media, proposal generation and recruiting all began to operate in tight alignment. Recognizing an opportunity to transform their firm, the leadership committed to send all new management employees—including those working primarily on job sites—to a half day of marketing training.

With an uncertain economy, the firm's stockholders committed to breaking with the boom or bust construction mentality. They began seeing themselves as the strongest player in their segments with a focused strategy that allowed them to benefit disproportionately.

Advance from Good to Great

Deep customer insights—why your customers select your firm—form the foundation of positioning that is accurate, credible, and compelling. The Strategic Marketing 3.0® process uncovers and applies deep customer insights so marketing supports the business in multiple ways while consuming fewer resources in a proven and scalable manner.

Not every firm will be great, but any firm can be. It's your choice.

About Bruce La Fetra

Bruce La Fetra helps expertise-based and professional firms capture more market opportunity, use fewer resources and generate greater momentum. His job is to draw out insights and craft a marketing strategy that reflects each firm's specific situation, available resources, and culture. Contact Bruce at Bruce@LaFetraConsulting.com or (408) 749-1028.

