

FINDING THE RIGHT CONNECTION

What can a customer-centric software services firm run by really nice people learn by having a third-party talk to their clients? Quite a lot. For one company, it saved them from alienating customers who by all rights should love their offering.

For home health agencies operating on thin, and sometimes uncertain, margins, back office technology automating scheduling, billing and tracking should be a slam-dunk. Maximizing billings while controlling costs ought to be an easy sell. That's what the investor group funding the firm's expansion thought too. Despite all the right features, potential clients were decidedly cool to the firm's software and services.

Expectation mismatch

In-depth interviews of existing and potential clients revealed an unexpected mismatch of expectations.

Nurses-turned-business owners operated most of the agencies served. Nurses are like Marines; once a nurse, always a nurse. Because they placed patient care above profits, the nurse-owners were wary of national chains of profit-driven providers. The pursuit of profit at the perceived expense of patient care offended their values.

The firm's focus on highlighting profits and efficiencies came across as a lack of concern for patient care. Even routing software that minimized travel time between patients was perceived as simply a way to increase the workload of each nurse.

Winning the trust of nurses who spent much of each day fighting faceless bureaucracies to secure appropriate care for their patients was going to take something different.

Same product + new positioning = a hit

Repositioning the company to appeal to nurse-owners' overriding concern for patient care generated a 180 degree reversal.

Rather than a threat to patient care, efficiencies and expanded margins became the means to fund the care patients deserved. The firm's paperwork-reducing mobile application was suddenly welcomed as an opportunity to spend more time with patients rather than a workload increaser.

With new positioning, the same product with the same math became a hit. The firm's marketing strategy of being a true partner of home health agencies supported a series of acquisitions, and growth into a market leader.

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.

