

## Case Study Series: What's Working in Marketing & Selling Professional Services

### **Gourmet Brownies and Multi-Touch Marketing Help Firm Compete with Global Giants**

By M. Sharon Baker

#### **Overview**

Over the past five years, Babcock & Jenkins, an integrated B2B marketing agency, successfully evolved from a traditional agency by building a strong content and strategic-consulting practice backed by a robust analytic practice.

The Portland, OR-based firm has created innovative direct and web-based marketing campaigns for enterprise clients such as Ciena Corp. and CenturyLink.

Its client account-based marketing and analytics work helps clients connect, engage, and nurture B2B prospects and customers through the sales cycle. While the firm once competed more with smaller, west coast agencies, today, it competes with larger, more established global giants such as Ogilvy, Gyro, Doremus and McCann.

#### **Situation**

In 2009, when trying to reach its own targeted customer base of enterprise technology companies, the firm's sales team had a hard time breaking through the noise of much larger competitors when trying to set up initial sales meetings.

"Our organization is not a household name, but the clients we work with and the challenges they have are huge," said Lauren Goldstein, vice president of Strategic Planning for Babcock & Jenkins. "We found we weren't able to strike up a conversation in an appropriate manner and sales was hitting its head against the wall."

Babcock & Jenkins (BNJ), needed a way to break through to busy and hard-to-reach chief marketing officers and find an opportunity to tell their story, Goldstein said.

They didn't need to look any further than the work they were doing for their clients – creating innovative, targeted campaigns – to find a solution. "When you think about the best way to get a story out there, it's always show versus tell," Goldstein said of the decision to copy the success they were achieving with their clients.

## **Approach**

Goldstein and the Babcock & Jenkins team decided to give prospects a chance to experience the very same campaign BNJ thought made sense for the prospect to use. The agency created a highly personalized, database driven, multi-touch marketing campaign designed to rise above the messages that typically bombard B2B technology marketers.

The campaign targeted a hand-selected list of 1,200 marketing decision makers in technology and finance where BNJ had significant client experience. The multi-touch campaign included dimensional mailers, a personalized video embedded in a website and email, all driven by a centralized database.

First, the agency determined who they wanted to reach and what challenges those prospects faced. “We’ve worked with hundreds of these people – chief marketing officers, directors of marketing, vice presidents of marketing, those in charge of demand generation, and even some in sales,” Goldstein said. “We know her challenges, and understand who she is. We knew we needed integrated touches and we knew our audience liked to have fun.”

### **Touch One: Gourmet Brownies, Personal Web Page**

When Goldstein received a gourmet brownie from a marketer trying to get her attention, she knew they had their first touch.

“It was a fun, light creative way to get someone to pay attention and go online where we could cue up a value add statement,” she said. For their campaign, “the note is written with some intrigue but is not heavily branded.”

### **Touch Two: Content to Help Grow Prospects’ Business**

The note invited the prospect to go online to watch a welcome video and download three articles to help them better their business.

“We wanted to give people a variety of content,” Goldstein said. One article was a thought leadership piece on how and why account based marketing works, and included an example of a successful BNJ client campaign. Additional articles included case studies of how other companies had successfully implemented similar approaches.

“We made it very real,” Goldstein said. “Not only were they reading about the approach but they were literally experiencing it at the same time.”

### **Touch 3: Follow-Up Email**

Two weeks after the brownie delivery, prospects received a follow-up email. Those that had visited their personalized website received a relationship-building email referencing their activity.

Those that failed to login to the website received another prompt to visit the site with their personalized web page, also known as a PURL.

### **Touch 4: Personalized Mug and Coffee Mailer**

The final campaign touch point was also divided by responders and non-responders in the database. All contacts in the campaign received a personalized coffee mug with their name printed on it and

Starbuck's Via Coffee. However, the responders received one last relationship building note card while the non-responders received one last reminder of BNJ's articles and customized page just for them.

"The coffee and mug were another opportunity to get back in front of them and tell our story," Goldstein said.

The entire campaign ran from 8 to 10 weeks, and included additional informal touches, particularly with prospects BNJ had begun conversations with prior to the campaign.

## **Results**

### **Brownies, Whole Campaign a Hit**

Goldstein said not only did people love the brownies, but the ROI from the campaign "was phenomenal." The agency landed a half dozen clients over the past three years. Each new client typically means an increase of \$500,000 to \$1 million in revenues, she said.

Initially, the goals were to have 40 percent of the initial contacts access the online site, to have 15 percent convert into meetings, and to land one new client in the 12 months following the initial campaign.

They far surpassed those goals with 62 percent accessing the website, 18 percent asking for an initial meeting, and landing two new clients in the first iteration of the campaign. Since then, they have re-launched the campaign multiple times, tweaking it each time.

"We know that it has helped us shorten our sales cycle in some cases," Goldstein said, adding that it can take 6 months or a year to land a new client.

The agency now has sales of more than \$7 million annually, and has grown to a staff of 45.

### **Additional Insights from Babcock & Jenkins' Lauren Goldstein:**

- This campaign was a lot more than sending brownies out to prospects. Marketers have created many cute campaigns, but typically, they do not close business because of it. To execute a successful campaign, you need to map out the full conversation of how you are going to connect, move the prospect along, address a buyer's needs, and how you are going to position the conversation based on detailed research of your buyers.
- Campaigns like this need absolute alignment between sales and marketing. Both departments need to be at the same table planning the campaign together. If sales is not involved, the campaign will most likely not convert into revenues.
- Your creative needs to be engaging and relevant to the audience, but it isn't the only piece. One of the most important steps is the list-building process; it has to be very thoughtful and accurate.

- If you don't have the talent in-house to help you create personalized web pages or track engagement, look for a consultant or creative agency to help you. Ask them to show you examples of previous campaigns, how they get sales and marketing to work together, and to show you examples of successful implementations.

Resources:

Website: [Babcock & Jenkins](#)