

Success Story Follow-Up: For Jamestown Container, Patience Leads to \$1.3 Million in New Account Sales



Client Profile

Jamestown Container Companies is a provider of custom and stock corrugated packaging products and shipping supplies with locations in Rochester, Buffalo, Jamestown, and Lyons, NY, as well as Cleveland, OH.

Business Situation

Jamestown Container Companies (JCC) has been a client of Athena SWC for six years. When it first partnered with Athena, JCC was finding it difficult to meet its annual new customer sales goals and needed a more dedicated and structured process to help create a steady flow of qualified leads. The goal was to create an environment that would maximize account manager productivity and focus on only the most qualified relationships with the intent to shorten its sales cycles and increase sales.

Our [first success story](#) with JCC focused on the early successes that were seen.

Six years later, the relationship between Athena SWC and JCC has grown significantly as the two companies have developed a synergistic partnership.

"Certainly, all of the aspects of the partnership that were in place when we agreed to work together remain in place. If anything, they have grown stronger as we have gotten to know more about each other over time," said Larry Hudson, Jamestown Container Companies vice president, sales and marketing. "The aspects that attracted us to Athena in the beginning—Athena's approach to how they do their work, manage the prospect pipeline, and communicate and coordinate with our people—are still true today. It was exactly as advertised and continues to be exactly as advertised."



"You've got to be in it for the long haul. If you make the commitment, it's going to take time. It's not a one- to two-year program."

– Larry Hudson, Vice President, Sales and Marketing

Importance of the Prospect List

One of the most important aspects of Athena's process is the prospect list. A prospect list is created based on the company's profiling criteria, which includes contact titles as well as company market segments, applications, revenue, potential spend, and geographical locations. If the list isn't right, it is difficult to

impossible to get quality leads. Sometimes through experience and market intelligence, it becomes apparent that tweaks are needed to the criteria.

For JCC, adjusting the list building process became necessary to start attracting companies that had a high enough annual spend. "Part of the challenge when we first started was we took anything and everything. Although we had a lot of activity in year

one and year two, it didn't amount to much until we refined our list," said Hudson. Hudson said since making those adjustments, opportunities they are receiving typically have annual spend between \$50,000-\$250,000.

More Than Lead Generation

Athena strives to offer its clients best-practice sales and marketing services, which means as technology and strategies evolve, its services and offerings have expanded. Most recently, Athena began offering its clients licenses to Pipedrive CRM, which it uses to manage its client's leads and opportunities as they move through the sales pipeline. In addition, Athena began using Thomas WebTrax to monitor website visitors because it provides more detailed information about visitors than other products currently available.

"Athena came forward with new services, Pipedrive and WebTrax being the latest," said Hudson. "But the bottom line is we've been able to replace some of our previous vendors with their new programs, products, or solutions where it makes sense."

Initially, Athena had focused on JCC's core business—brown and white boxes with up to three color printing. But as the relationship developed and its project managers began to trust in Athena's ability to deliver, Athena eventually took over the front-end prospecting for its entire product line and service portfolio. Athena has also helped the company keep connected to prospects when account managers have left the company.

"When we have had an account manager leave a territory, and there has been a gap in coverage, we've asked their folks to

help us stay in touch with our customers remotely and maintain a presence while we transition from one account manager to another. That has happened a couple of times," said Hudson. "For us, its great flex capacity that we don't have internally."

Patience Pays

One of the most important takeaways from the partnership is that it takes patience to reap the benefits of the hard work that has been put in. In the case of JCC, adjusting the prospect list helped drive greater sales, but a large part of the success comes from trusting in the process and having the stamina to allow opportunities to come to fruition.

"It took us about 15 months from the time we began working together until we generated enough sales to pay for the relationship," said Hudson. "Results were pretty consistent in years two, three, and four. We really took off in year five. We more than doubled the results from year four to five in the way of sales, and then in year six, it grew dramatically. We started to see in year six a significant improvement in our closures and also in dollars that are associated with the accounts."

"A couple of things lead to the increase. One is learning how to maximize the partnership. Certainly, its an improved prospect list. But also it's a reflection of our account managers' trust in Athena. As the trust built, more account managers got involved. Another part was making an investment in resources and time," he said. "You've got to be in it for the long haul. If you make the commitment, it's going to take time. It's not a one- to two-year program."

The Results



Closed \$1.3 Million
in total new account sales



Closed over \$570,000
in new account sales in last fiscal year



Improved Productivity
of account managers by continuously
feeding the sales pipeline



Improved Opportunity Flow
and resolution through the sales pipeline