

Success Story: Mindex Teams with Athena SWC to Capitalize on Athena's Proven New Business Development Process to Promote Its schooltool Student Management System



Client Profile

Mindex Technologies, headquartered in Rochester, NY, is the developer of schooltool student management system. schooltool, its flagship product, is a 100 percent web-based system developed specifically for New York State schools.

Business Situation

After winning the bid to develop a web-based system to track student data for one NYS school district, Mindex quickly realized that because of the complicated reporting requirements in NYS there was a great need for a dedicated system throughout the state. In 2001, Mindex Technologies developed schooltool, which is now used by approximately 40 percent of the school districts in NYS and has become the most widely used student management systems in the state.

As more school districts signed on, Mindex found itself lacking appropriate support for its technical sales person, who was working at capacity just to maintain the current customer base. Attempts to place junior personnel in the role, which required talking about the product, making cold calls, understanding when to follow up, and knowing when to elevate to a more technical person, were unsuccessful. Lacking the necessary dedicated internal resources and skills to execute the required sales activities, Mindex needed a structured and consistent process for new account opportunities.

Mindex required a partner who could help them to develop a front-end sales process to generate and manage new business development opportunities.



You want to feel that an outsourced service is part of your company. You want to feel like they have passion, are acting in your best interest, and they care as much about your company and your product as you do. I have received that from the top down at Athena."

– Mark Fiore, President

An Approach That Resonated

Mindex Technologies chose Athena SWC to help them fill the voids in its sales process. Athena is a premier provider of demand generation, lead management, marketing, and sales support process services. The company's systematic approach and dedicated infrastructure resonated with Mindex Technologies president Marc Fiore.

Athena's systematic approach focuses on prospect development and nurturing through research, direct mail, phone calls, emails, permission-based e-newsletter, and ongoing follow-up until a resolution is reached.

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Each step of the processes is strategically designed and scheduled to provide optimal results. A Process of Ongoing Improvement is built into the system to quickly manage any areas needing adjustment.

A Unified Team

During the process, Athena personnel become an extension of its customer's sales and marketing team. For Fiore this was an area that worried him most. Typically taking 6-12 months to train technical sales personnel, he wondered how an outside firm could come up to speed quickly.

Jack Hibit, Technical Sales Executive had the same concerns. "I was initially concerned that a third party vendor might not have the knowledge. I didn't want a contract firm to hurt future prospects, but I also knew that I didn't have the time to do the things that Athena could do."

Those concerns were soon put to rest as Hibit and Fiore witnessed how efficiently Athena handled the onboarding experience.

"One of the things Athena did very well was come up to speed quickly on what our product does and what business challenge it is solving. They took it to the level of technical understanding necessary, knowing that anything beyond a certain level would be passed back to us," Fiore said. "The way they went through the process of onboarding— understanding our product, developing scripts for our products, reading the scripts back to us while pretending we were the customer, having us challenge them on how they would answer specific questions—all worked really well."

The Process Brings Results

Armed with list of nearly 350 schools, Athena's team went to work finding and validating the contact information of decision makers at those schools. Athena ensured that the messaging was cohesive across all methods employed (direct mail, email campaigns, phone calls, etc.) so that it would resonate with the target audience. Once new sales opportunities had been identified, Athena coordinated sales appointments and assisted Mindex with reporting follow-up of each active sales opportunity and provided status updates on all leads as they moved through the sales cycle.

The Results

**Over
\$21K**

**in new account
closed sales**

(1412 Students)

**Over
\$600K**

**in the current
sales pipeline**

(50,000 Students)

**Increased
Brand
Awareness
within NYS**

Mindex schooltool has a 18 to 36 month sales cycle, and after 18 months since initiating Athena's process, they have had three closures that have resulted in \$21,000 in sales, a \$15,000 verbal commitment, and \$600,000 currently in the pipeline.

"We hired Athena to get us in the door of the school and we take it from there. Even if it hasn't resulted in a sale yet, they've gotten us into a lot of doors we wouldn't have gotten into otherwise," said Fiore.