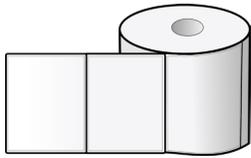


Success Story: Flexographic Packaging and Label Mfg. Expands Pharma Market Reach, Shortens Ramp-Up Time, and Fills Pipeline Using Athena's Front-End Sales Model



Client Profile

Our client is a narrow web, shrink sleeve, and flexible packaging printer and converter for the pharmaceutical, medical and wellness markets. The company employs a wide range of technologies and maintains more than 20 production lines with digital and flexographic capabilities.

Business Situation

The company made significant investments in the latest processes, equipment, technologies, and systems with the goal of engaging new account targets and offering additional services to current customers in the pharmaceutical market.

Its sales and marketing efforts had primarily been focused on the small business market segment where they experience good penetration and market share.

To achieve growth, the company needed to shift focus and target more mid-to-large sized account opportunities. New account development has proven to be a challenge in recent years, as the company lacks a formalized and dedicated approach to address this need. In addition, its sales cycle for pharmaceutical accounts is typically 12-18 months.

The company required a more structured, sustainable front-end sales model that could accelerate time to market, provide additional marketing/sales capacity and resources to build brand awareness, increase opportunity flow and coverage in the pharmaceutical market, and increase sales rep productivity by allowing them to focus on the active process of selling.



It's been a great step in the direction we wanted to go strategically from a standpoint of being able to get in front of prospects, secure appointments, and generate a business relationship.

– General Manager

The Perfect Partner

When the company decided to outsource its front-end sales processes, it reviewed several companies. Preferring a local solution provider with familiarity and experience with packaging in its target market, it decided that Athena SWC (Athena) was the perfect partner to support its sales growth initiatives. Athena provides outsourced marketing, new business development, and front-end sales support services that use a systematic

approach to assist clients in complex pharmaceutical packaging selling environments.

Athena's offering provided the infrastructure (people, processes and tools) to fill the gaps in the company's sales and marketing efforts and allowed its sales force to concentrate their efforts on the active process of selling.

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With the goal of further engaging current customers and developing new accounts, Athena used target account lists provided by the client, as well as its own research staff, to build custom lists based on the client's specific pharmaceutical profile. The targets were engaged through a series of marketing campaign touches that included direct mail, phone calls, email campaigns, and opt-in monthly e-newsletters. The key to Athena's success is perseverance and consistency. It systematically and repeatedly engages with target audiences until a resolution is reached—contact with targets is only ended through conversion or by request.

In addition, Athena provided marketing collateral, appointment setting services, market intelligence and feedback, and project management, which included a monthly review of each lead and the potential for pipeline growth and closures.

Developing The Message

Athena's team worked closely with the clients representatives to develop an appropriate message that would resonate with the pharmaceutical market. Ultimately, Athena's team was able to

confidently communicate the client's value proposition within the pharmaceutical packaging marketplace to potential leads.

"There is a steep learning curve with the markets we are trying to penetrate," said the general Manager. "Athena has done a great job of presenting us to the market."

A Quick Ramp-Up

One of the client's goals was to see a shorter ramp-up time to access the pharmaceutical market. Athena's packaging experience and systematic processes gave them the ability to quickly and effectively target new audiences, which led to the client's success toward achieving it goals.

"We are very pleased with the results so far," said the general manager. "We feel the results we've achieved by working with Athena exceed what we would have accomplished by doing it on our own. We have eight high potential opportunities with prospects that we might not have had success in getting in front of prior, or it would have taken us a much longer time."

The Results



Introduced \$350,000
into the client's active sales pipeline



Shortened ramp-up time
required to access the pharmaceutical market



Increased market awareness
in the pharmaceutical industry



Provided front-end marketing infrastructure support to assist sales with achieving its sales growth goals

Athena had been actively interacting with potential leads for about six months at the time this was written. The client's typical sales cycle for pharmaceutical clients runs 12 to 18 months; however, the eight opportunities being pursued have a conservative **value of approximately \$350,000**. In addition, there are **another 19 qualified leads in the sales pipeline**.