

Educational Systems

Background

An educational systems company makes curricula for primary and secondary schools for science, business, computers, technology, and family and consumer science. The products are normally sold through distributors who call on school systems selling a variety of solutions including furniture and fixtures, supplies and services.

The Problem

When selling through distributors and dealers, manufacturers must compete for their time and attention against other manufacturers whose products the dealers carry. Dealers generally set their priorities based on what is going to make them the most money, in the least amount of time, and with the least amount of effort. So if you aren't the most profitable line, you're likely to get short shrift – which was the case for the educational systems company.

What They Tried

Like most companies, the firm spent thousands of dollars creating sales aids and support material designed to help the distributors understand the product so they could sell it better. But this only added to the burden, reducing the incentive to promote it. The firm also participated in local trade shows, but manning the booth also had a negative effect, since it took the reps out of the field where they would otherwise be selling.

The Solution

JV/M provides telemarketing, lead generation, and executive appointment-setting services for companies selling in the B2B market. On a hunch, the Marketing VP surmised that the education market wasn't that different, and invested in lead generation with JV/M. In a twist, though, he decided to give the appointments directly to his distributors, rather than to his small direct sales force.

Results

There is one thing that distributors' sales reps value more than anything, and that's a qualified lead. If you can introduce him to a qualified prospect who has a need, and is interested in talking to him about how he can help, most reps couldn't care less that the volume or margin are a little less. You've already done the "heavy lifting" of sales, and he'll follow you to the ends of the Earth – which is how the client generated a 600% return on their investment.