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Marketing Works' competitive strength is at an all time high, as is its financial position. In 18 years, I have never witnessed a more direct or meaningful return on investment for the agency than the one made in hiring Hugh.

Brenda Stier
CEO
Marketing Works

Marketing Works Case Study

The Situation – Marketing Works is a well-respected marketing and public relations agency that has served small- and medium-sized businesses within Ohio and across the U.S. for more than 18 years. With an almost accidental start – Brenda Stier had constructed a business capable of feeding seven full-time employees, sponsoring three strategic alliances and supporting fifteen core clients, twenty percent of whom had remained with her since the agency's inception.

Despite her success, Stier sensed that more was needed to elevate Marketing Works' competitive position. With the help of Columbus-Partners Principal Hugh Cathey, Marketing Works' founder was able to develop short and long term goals that would set the agency on a clear path toward growth and increased profitability.

The Challenge – Articulating a long-term vision and goals was the first of several strategic exercises Cathey would walk Marketing Works through. The second was helping senior management understand its strength as well as its greatest source of vulnerability.

Cathey's ability to guide Marketing Works' executives through a series of interviews and evaluations enabled the agency to identify specific challenges that stalled growth. Cathey led Marketing Works to the following conclusions

- A top-down, customer-centric focus fueled modest growth among founding clients, but consumed resources needed to stimulate expansion.
- Success within the small- and medium-sized business market held management back from seeking business from robust, upscale client segments.
- Executive management of client relations distanced staff from clients, stifled individual accountability and inhibited career development.
- The marketing expertise that strengthened client businesses was rarely employed to grow Marketing Works.

The Outcome – Understanding the factors that inhibited growth enabled Cathey and Stier to develop a comprehensive, long-term plan that would:

- Ensure a consistently expanding revenue stream to finance the company's operations well into the future.
- Attract, groom and retain Central Ohio's brightest marketing and communications talent to the agency.
- Build an organization and business model that could sustain itself long after the current management's departure.

Cathey led Marketing Works to challenge long-held business assumptions, to objectively critique internal operations, and to develop and manage a strategic growth program that is already paying for itself.

Today, each member of the agency's expanding organization understands their new roles, contributions and client responsibilities. Management has put in place achievable monthly revenue objectives to ensure 20 percent growth year over year and a sales program that doubles the agency's new business opportunities. And as a result of adopting a more aggressive competitive stance in the market, Marketing Works is winning business from some of Central Ohio's most reputable institutions.

Already the agency is beating its revenue projections and winning business from clients it never before considered.