

Sage CRM

TopLine Results empowers English agency

TopLine Results Corporation is accustomed to helping its customers make big sales, but few can match the magnitude of a recent client's task: selling an entire region of a sovereign nation, including thousands of square miles and over nine million people.

The North of England Inward Investment Agency is charged with attracting North American companies to establish overseas operations in Northern England including the cities of Manchester, Newcastle and Liverpool. The company's sales cycle can take more than 18 months from initial contact to the successful establishment of new English subsidiaries. Every step of the process demands close liaison with multiple client-side managers including top level executives in some of America's largest corporations.

"We are definitely not a typical sales organization," observed Deborah Mirandi, General Operations Manager of North of England's U.S. development operation. "We don't have a tangible product...we're not selling widgets." This may be, she observed, why the organization placed such a high priority on implementing a world-class solution for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.

"North of England is a pretty unique hybrid," observed Sean Croson, an organization vice president on the selection team for CRM software. "We're owned by the government [United Kingdom], but we're also run by sales people. We needed a software package that could serve both groups effectively." "We are publicly funded," Ms. Mirandi added. "That makes documenting our effectiveness especially important."

No to status quo

Their existing solution for contact management, ACT! software and a set of standard spreadsheets, was not meeting North of England's needs. "We just had to make the leap," recalled Kristen Hirst, Senior Vice President and head of North American operations. "We needed something that was web-based, something we could tailor to our unique needs."

"Our old system's utilization wasn't where we wanted it," noted Ms. Mirandi. "Some of our people weren't familiar with how to use it. Others chose not to utilize it fully because they weren't comfortable with how it was organized."



Customer

North of England Inward Investment Agency

Industry

United Kingdom Government Agency

Location

Chicago, Illinois
6 regional North American offices

Number of users

15

Product

Sage CRM

Scenario

Economic development authority needs to manage an 18-month customer engagement process with government accountability

Solution

Sage CRM, with training and implementation expertise from TopLine Results Corporation

Outcome

Powerful analytics for reporting success along with more effective project management

An inter-disciplinary team from North of England thoroughly investigated the CRM options and chose Sage CRM software. The company's network administrator recommended TopLine Results Corporation as their Sage CRM business partner for licensing the software and providing consulting services to fit North of England's unique customer development process. "Fortunately, we love a challenge," said Fred Varin, President of TopLine Results. "We saw this as a dual opportunity; to gain a new client and sharpen our skills with a very detailed implementation process."

Gaining Sage insights

Critical to the decision process, according to Deborah Mirandi, was TopLine Results's ability to develop a customized database for North of England. "Their staff really came in and took the time to get to know us. It was very important to have a partner that was willing to commit the time and effort to understanding our needs," Deborah Mirandi said. "I got the impression that some of the other vendors weren't too concerned about what makes us unique. TopLine definitely was."

The other deciding factor was the Sage CRM software itself. "The Sage system seemed more user-friendly," Ms. Mirandi recalled. "That's really important when you're dealing with a user base that ranges from technically skilled to technically challenged." "It's not complex, numbers-wise," added Kristen Hirst. "My people don't have to do a lot to create monthly reports we can really use."

Training for the new system was delivered in two stages. Step one included an initial day of in-person training with the

complete North of England sales staff. TopLine Results also provided ongoing web-based training refreshers. "We were very pleased with how quickly people have learned on the web, provided that they had access in real time to someone from TopLine who could help them through the learning process," Ms. Mirandi said.

Rich results

The initial investment in comprehensive training has delivered organizational dividends for North of England. The organization has a clearer picture of its success in convincing interested corporations to open English operations. In the near future, the organization will utilize Sage CRM to track responses to their direct mail campaigns and lead generation programs.

Senior Vice President Kristen Hirst appreciates the integrity of the software's results. "At the end of the day we're a government agency," she said.

"Behind our numbers, there needs to be transparency, accountability and absolute integrity. Sage and TopLine have helped us provide that."

Deborah Mirandi definitely sees TopLine Results as part of the North of England Inward Investment Agency's ongoing plans. "I found the process of working with TopLine to be smooth from start to finish," she said. "I know our needs will be changing, and it's good to know that we can always get quick and complete attention from the people at TopLine."

Our needs change, sometimes quite frequently. We found a partner [TopLine Results] who can change with us.

*- Deborah Mirandi
North of England Inward Investment Agency*

ABOUT TOPLINE RESULTS CORPORATION

TopLine Results Corporation is a customer relationship management (CRM) consulting firm specializing in ACT!, Sage CRM, Sage SalesLogix and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Our services include software sales, implementation, hosting and training. TopLine Results also develops custom applications such as the popular ACT! add-on product, TopLine Dash. Headquartered in Wisconsin, with offices in Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis and Los Angeles, our mission is to empower companies with customized CRM solutions which increase sales, marketing, customer service and overall business effectiveness.

TopLine Results Corporation

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