

# CASE STUDY

## Lane Telecom: Outsourced Marketing Director/Support

### At a glance

- Outsourced 'Marketing Director' fully integrated into the business
- Strategic and detailed marketing communications planning
- Full responsibility for implementation of marketing plan
- Dramatic increase in sales enquiries year-on-year
- Budgets appropriate for the business with tight control and reporting

### The Background

Lane is a well-established business that has been providing messaging communications solutions for over 30 years. Having started life supplying telephony systems, Lane has evolved over the years and now has considerable expertise in the development and integration of fax and messaging servers as a part of wider communications networks for businesses primarily in the financial, healthcare, manufacturing and transport industries.

Lane is a small player in a highly competitive global market dominated by a few major companies. The business has bases in the UK, US and Far East. From a technical viewpoint, Lane's solutions can compete successfully with their rivals but they have always lacked the sales and marketing resources to make a significant impact outside of niche markets and beyond a few major international clients.

### The Requirement

The fax server market is in a period of rapid transition; new technologies are emerging against a backdrop of declining global demand for fax as a communications medium. Fax is still, however, considered to be a business-critical form of communication among those organisations that still use it – notably within the financial, transportation, commodity trading and healthcare markets.

The Directors at Lane recognised the need to add marketing expertise to the business but were reluctant to engage a marketing agency as they felt that the business needed to address marketing at a strategic level before they would be in a position to establish a coherent brief. As the Board lacked specific marketing expertise and could not justify the appointment of a Marketing Director, they needed to find a solution that would not only produce an effective marketing strategy and communications plan for the business but also a mechanism to implement these.

### The Solution

Lane engaged Kudos to undertake a 'Marketing Healthcheck' on the business which involved a thorough review of the business and its markets from a marketing perspective. The resulting report highlighted issues relating to the lack of an agreed marketing strategy or marketing communications plan, positioning of the business, inconsistent messaging, inconsistent and dated corporate identity, poor website and basic marketing collateral and no outbound marketing activity resulting in very low numbers of inbound sales enquiries made worse by the absence of a channel marketing strategy.

Acting in the role of Marketing Director, Kudos held discussions with the Directors and worked with them to define the core competencies of the business, agree a marketing strategy and establish messaging that would position and differentiate the business within its market. A marketing communications plan together with quantified objectives working within agreed budget constraints was put in place and implementation schedules established.

It was agreed that Kudos would continue performing the role of Marketing Director for the business, taking responsibility for the implementation of the marketing plan, control of budgets, reporting to the Board and monitoring performance of the plan against agreed objectives. Time commitments were estimated based on the plan and it was agreed that Kudos would be engaged on a retainer based on 3.5 days per month. This arrangement provided Lane with a highly experienced

marketing professional for just the amount of time required by the business and also ensured that their 'outsourced marketing director' was highly engaged with the business at a senior level. This aspect of the arrangement was crucial to its success because Kudos became integrated into the business and was involved in all sales and marketing decision-making.

The marketing plan provided for complete re-branding of the business and renewal of all marketing collateral, including the website, sales literature, case studies and technical documentation to reflect the new messaging that would differentiate the business and position it appropriately. Once this activity was complete, Phase 2 of the plan was implemented which included outbound marketing elements aimed at raising awareness and generating qualified sales enquiries.

### **The Result**

Within a few months of engagement, Kudos had managed all aspects of business rebranding including definition of core activities, generation of core messaging, implementation of a new website, update of all literature (including case studies, white papers, brochures and datasheets), etc. Phase 2 of the plan resulted in ten times as many in-bound sales enquires as had been achieved in the previous year. Sales during the year grew strongly despite increasingly strong competition, changing technology in Lane's core market and the worldwide recession.

Kudos is now in the fourth year of engagement with Lane and has continued to refine the marketing plan and thereby achieve year-on-year growth in qualified in-bound sales enquiries from a consistent budget. Kudos is now an integrated member of the Lane management team and routinely handles all marketing related issues for the business as well as ongoing project management of the marketing communications plan.

The relationship works extremely well as **Colin Marsh, Sales Manager at Lane** confirms: *"When we first engaged Kudos our marketing activity was limited and our messaging un-focussed. The task ahead seemed daunting as there was so much to do and we didn't have the resources in-house to address these issues. The trust we placed in Kudos has been well rewarded and we now have a reliable and effective addition to our management team that provides us with exactly what we need at a cost the business can afford."*

