

Company at Sales “Crossroads” Experiences Dramatic Increase in Job Quotes from Industrial Trade Articles

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For PVA TePla America, a company that sells plasma equipment, reaching prospects to sell sophisticated equipment that is hard to explain even to internal staff and customers was a challenge. That, plus the fact that other marketing strategies were proving less effective was limiting the quantity of qualified leads and limiting job quotes. The recession at the time wasn’t helping either.

“When we were approached with the idea of marketing ourselves using industrial trade articles, I was at a crossroads because the old [marketing] methodologies were not working anymore,” explains Bill Marsh, president of PVA TePla. “It was also during a recession, so there were fewer opportunities. So, it became even more critical to find a way to reach potential

prospects.”

Today, less than a year and a half later, much of that has changed.

According to Marsh, PVA TePla decided to utilize a unique marketing PR approach that works by generating a large quantity of feature length articles about his company in trade publications print and online. The original articles promote the benefits of the equipment over other alternatives, while also including credibility-building customer testimonials.

Using this approach, Marsh says PVA TePla has experienced an increase in total equipment job bids quoted from approximately \$12 million a year to \$32 million in 2018. Marsh attributes the increase to the combined 80+ articles published by his firm, Power PR, in 2017 and 2018.



“The articles are making a big difference, and we now generate no less than 1-3 leads a day,” says Marsh, adding that plasma equipment represents a significant capital investment. “We no longer have to run around the world knocking on doors. Instead, prospects are reaching out and contacting us now.”

This success comes despite cutting out two-thirds of the company’s trade show exhibits each year and a web site that provided quality information, but needed updating.

“I say this with all honesty, I don’t think we would be here today if we hadn’t made the decision to engage in marketing publicity to generate all of the feature articles in the trades,” says Marsh.

Fork in the Crossroad

But all of this almost didn’t happen. As with any investment in marketing, indecision or kicking engagement “down the road” until factors magically align can prevent growth before it even starts. Although it seems contrary to some, the solution to poor sales or a down economy is to market more effectively, not wait.

For PVA TePla, the obstacle that almost prevented them from engaging was based on the concern that a marketing agency could comprehend and write about the highly technical process of plasma treatment and its many different applications.

“Our business deals with high-end chemistry and biology,” explains Marsh. “It has always been difficult for us to find sales agents or distributors with the background to sell our equipment.”

“To put a not-insignificant amount of money out there to try something and be a little uncertain about it was an obstacle,” adds Marsh. “Internally, I also had some naysayers that felt they could write articles. But of course, they never had the time. I couldn’t get them to do it.”

However, after meeting with Power PR, an industrial marketing publicity firm in its 27th year of business, Marsh decided they were up for the task. The company not only writes the original articles, but also conducts all interviews while overseeing edits from all parties. The articles are then pitched to an approved list of industrial trades with each generating 10-15 published.

The company is performance-based and therefore guarantees a minimum of 3-5 published on average per month (depending on aggressiveness of program), or 36-55 published each year, and often exceeds those goals.



After the first of what is now eleven original feature length articles written on the technology, any concern quickly dissipated.

“When we receive and review the initial drafts of the articles, we know they will be well-written,” says Marsh. “In every case, only very minor corrections are required.”

“Power PR’s writers take all the work out of it for us as far as putting a great article together,” he adds. “That has been tremendously helpful because we are just too busy to dedicate the time and effort to write articles or do extensive re-writes ourselves.”

Marsh also appreciates the credibility and value of the customer testimonials in the stories.

“They get our customers to provide quotes about their satisfaction using our equipment and that is very powerful,” says Marsh. It is a different mindset [for reaching and influencing prospects].”

Marsh suggests that trade articles, though they have been around for a long time, are emerging as a key method of reaching industrial engineers.

“Over my 30 years in this industry, the media has changed,” says Marsh.

“Before, it was simpler. We would go to a few trade shows around the world and many of our prospects would attend. Now, most stay put and just use a computer and cell phone.”

Engineers looking for information about plasma equipment often fall into two categories, according to Marsh. Engineers that are already familiar with this type of technology will do direct product searches. But there are also engineers tasked with solving a problem and don’t know the solution. The way they approach a search is very different.

“The articles Power PR writes and publishes are solution-based. They briefly talk about the product and its specifications, but are more focused on solutions to problems. I think we capture more people with that approach,” says Marsh.

News of the success of the program has even reached PVA TePla America’s parent company in Germany.

“At the corporate level, they have seen my book of the 80 or so published articles to date and are very impressed,” says Marsh. “My CEO in Germany said ‘you are light years ahead with regards to marketing.’ Nobody at corporate can argue the expenditure either because it shows in the financial turnaround.”

“If you can get over any initial indecision and make the investment and commitment in marketing publicity, you will start to achieve success as articles publish,” he concludes.

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