

2012 “Better Your Best” Contest Essay



John Motazedi
SNC Squared

Gross Sales Up \$824,047

Net Profit Up 1,444%

Monthly Recurring Revenue Up \$19,418 per month

“We lost our entire building, over 50% of our clients’ buildings were completely destroyed and overnight we lost \$13,000 in recurring monthly revenue as a result of the Joplin Tornado. And yet we never stopped marketing.”

SNC2

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ESSAY

“There is no silver bullet.” Robin said this again and again. Eventually I got it. There is no one campaign. There is no one media. There is no one technique that will bring you reliable success. The only thing that is reliable is using lots of different things, over and over again, testing and checking results. If there’s one thing I got from Robin, this is it. And boy is that valuable.

I ended 2010 with net profits up 30%. Not bad, really. But I knew I wasn’t playing full-out. So in January of 2011, I set a goal which was way outside my comfort zone – 52 marketing campaigns in 52 weeks.

I developed a year-long marketing plan. Our biggest challenge - differentiate ourselves from our competitors. Create something different and unique for our clients and deliver services better and faster than anyone in our market.

My marketing initiative was simple - communicate to as many people as possible what we were doing differently, and how and why we were doing it. In my January 2010 accountability group meeting we challenged ourselves to produce 52 campaigns in 52 weeks. This actually became one year-long marketing campaign with over 100 total touches.

For the first half of the year, no matter what we did, we got the same response. (Cue the cricket noises.) People either said all their IT needs were covered or they didn’t know who we were and weren’t willing to give us a chance to show them what we could do. Admittedly, that was discouraging. But a commitment is a commitment. We continued to send out our marketing materials each week and I drove home this message to employees and clients alike. We say what we will do and we do it **period**. We do what is right and we do it better than anyone else, and we never skip, falter or ignore our responsibilities.

Then it happened. On May 22nd at 5:41 pm, the city of Joplin was hit by a tornado, one of the most devastating on record.

- We lost our entire building, and of the 1,000 machines we manage, 467 of them were destroyed, never found or damaged beyond repair.
- Over 50% of our clients’ buildings were completely destroyed or damaged beyond repair.
- 80% of our clients experiencing significant damage were physicians with 350,000 patient records and millions of dollars in accounts receivable not yet billed.
- Overnight, we lost \$13,000 in recurring monthly revenue.

And yet, I remained calm. I wasn't worried about our clients' data. I knew what had to be done and I believed something good could come out of something this bad. We had an opportunity to take a lead in the recovery and show what SNC² really stood for.

We started recovery efforts the very next day and had our clients up and running within 72 hours. We had done the seemingly impossible. The morning after the tornado hit, I contacted our Chamber of Commerce, told them our servers were up and running and offered to help anyone who needed it, whether they were our clients or not. The Chamber immediately put our offer on Facebook and, for days, we dominated the local tech community and marketed our services to everyone who would listen.

The phones never stopped ringing. Many of the calls were from new prospects we had been marketing to since January. They didn't need us then, but they needed us now. They wanted a real IT service company, not the IT company that let them down. Many of these new prospects are now clients with long-term contracts. The new influx of business offset our loss, raised our revenue to an all-time record and increased net profits by 30%.

And these clients love us. They married us and divorced their current provider. In fact it's very much like a marriage. You have to keep dating, bring flowers, tell them you love them and renew your vows every year.

Clearly I attribute the new business to the marketing efforts. But that was only part of the benefits of my participation. Everything else Robin brought to the table was gold. It was learning about best practices and how to manage my business better and about human resources and cost containment and how to write a business plan. Since we began working with Robin three years ago, there hasn't been a meeting, a Boot Camp, a teleseminar, a forum, or a Q&A call that I haven't walked away with something valuable, something that really made a difference for me and for my business.

I remember John Jantsch asking us at Boot Camp last year, "When was the last time somebody surprised and exceeded your expectations?...Create a business that does that...and you won't need to ask for referrals." And Randy Hall when he said "Make sure you do what you say" and Nido Qubain demanding that we "show people value." I took these lessons to heart and implemented them in my business.

The Producers' Club and my Accountability Group impacted me the most. The interactions I had with them and their ideas and support for what I was doing was invaluable. I didn't have to re-invent the wheel. I got direct feedback on campaigns without having to do each one. Where else could I get this kind of hands-on help? We are now raising the bar and planning campaigns along our entire 10 member accountability group. We had great luck with only one company campaigning we should have Astronomical results with all of us driving the message regionally.

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So, did I find that silver bullet, that one marketing campaign in the Toolkit that answered all my prayers? Was it that Worry Doll campaign or the hundreds of letters that went out to promote our Joint Venture Event? No, it wasn't just one campaign or one marketing idea. It was over 100 of them. It was invaluable advice from experts. It was peer support and advice. And it was never, ever quitting. You don't need a silver bullet when you have gold.

Thanks for the gold, Robin.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Motazed', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Motazed
CEO

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