

RCG Uses Marketing Skills to Achieve OSAS "Top Dog" Status

by Randy Ennis

Like many BBx® developers, I started my career as a computer programmer writing Business BASIC applications. In February 1983, my employer sold Rixon computers with a whopping 5 MB for data storage, 64K system RAM, bundled with Rixon Accounting Software (RACS) and IDOL. The RACS software, which was actually Open Systems Accounting Software (OSAS) version 1.0, was a basic accounting package. With no vertical packages, we had to write the code to meet the customer's needs in order to close the deal. As a result, we developed solutions for a wide array of clients: point of sale, distribution, service, collections, property management, construction, communication companies, and even produce growers.

Our business structure has changed quite a bit. In 1988, I bought in as a partner of Response Computer Group, Inc. (RCG). There were several acquisitions (we actually purchased RECAP from Alpha Micro in the mid 90's), buy-outs, and eventually I became the sole owner. Today, RCG is a full service computer company with a staff comprising BBx programmers, OSAS installation and support, and IT technicians. We service and sell Linux and Microsoft servers, routers, networking, IP/PBX phone systems, and OSAS accounting software.

As a Top 25 OSAS dealer during the past four years, we were successful, but spread across too many areas. I attended many BASIS TechCons and Open Systems Inc. (OSI) OSAS reseller conferences, listening to various

presentations advising us to "find your niche," "focus on a vertical market, do strategic planning, and develop a marketing plan," and "keep your customers on maintenance." This stuff all sounded great, however I could never find the time to implement any changes.

At TechCon2004 in New Orleans, I attended Nico Spence's Sales and Marketing Workshop that was an intensive and very worthwhile eight-hour day. Some of the material was a review for me, but everything we covered was right on target. The most significant concept I took from this course was the need to "work *on* the business" not just work *in* the business. Our company had always been focused on customer service and pushing the technology envelope to develop innovative solutions. In the past, it had never felt okay to "waste" time creating a business plan when I could have been writing code or designing something new. However, Nico helped me realize that strategic planning should be a priority! I made time for it and it paid off.

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Randy Ennis
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Left to right: Paul Lundquist, OSI VP of Sales; Joe Pint, OSI Regional Sales Rep; Lisa Soulopulos, OSI Regional Sales Manager; Curtis Ennis, RCG Programmer; Randy Ennis, RCG President/CEO; Kathy O'Connor, OSI Regional Sales; Michael Bertini, OSI CEO



Response Computer Group, Inc.



Bottom row from left: Billy Clauges, Programmer/Analyst; Faith Ennis, Controller; Randy Ennis, President; Curt Ennis, Programmer/Analyst **Back row:** Bryan Eshelman, MCSE/Technician; Colin Ennis, Web Designer; Pat Coulter, General Manager; Garrette Slonacher, MCSE/Technician; Randy Wilson, Programmer/Analyst

Language/Interpreter
DBMS
Development Tools
System Administration

In September 2005, OSI teamed up with Bret Romney, President of Ascend Strategies, to launch the Learning Partner Program (LPP) that offered both hands on workshops and monthly conference calls focused on marketing education. One focus of LPP was strategy planning, where partners define and set clear business goals with target completion dates and assigned responsibilities. They dedicated other areas of the program to project management, process improvement, marketing, and team building. LPP is currently expanding the program to include a partner roundtable.

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Lasting change requires a steady, consistent effort. Slowly RCG began to implement changes derived from what I had learned at these workshops. We stepped up efforts to keep our customers current on software maintenance (BASIS'

SAM and OSI's CES), improved client communications, and focused our software development efforts. We routinely blasted e-mail and fax announcements, published newsletters, and mailed event reminder postcards. We also leveraged our relationship with key business partners that included OSI, BASIS, Payment Processing Inc., and other BBx resellers. This may sound like a cliché but "Use your resources!" really works.

All the hard work paid off when Open Systems, Inc. recognized RCG as their #1 Partner for 2006-2007's top sales performance at their annual conference in June 2007. A major factor of this success was our ability to upgrade four large mattress manufacturers to OSAS 7.0. This project had some unique challenges and a very rigid timeframe. It required us to realign our resources and juggle a few other projects, but everything fell into place and we delivered the project on time.

I am very proud of our entire team for helping us to achieve this great accomplishment. RCG is proof that if you invest quality time to work on your business, set well-defined goals, make strategic plans, and increase your sales and marketing efforts, you will see positive results. Visit Response Computer Group at www.rcgweb.com.



Attend the Sales and Marketing Workshop on Nov 7th - it conveniently follows TechCon2007 and is free to any TechCon attendee!
Register at www.basis.com/events/techcon2007