



VISIONING



SOLVING



RELATING



RESOURCING

CONSULTATIVE SALES TRAINING FOR YELLOW PAGES SALES TEAMS

CHALLENGE

BellSouth Advertising & Publishing Corporation (BAPCO) was the leading provider of print and Internet Yellow Pages products in the Southeast, but struggled to position itself as a media and advertising company. Small business customers viewed BellSouth as a telecommunications company, not a media and advertising company. The majority of BAPCO sales reps did not have a strong understanding of the advertising or media industry in which they competed. They understood the value proposition of the Yellow Pages product relative to direct competition from other Yellow Pages publishers, but not indirect competition from other media such as television, radio, direct mail, etc. One of the major objections that sales reps encountered on sales calls was that a customer had already decided to spend dollars with an indirect competitor such as radio, direct mail or outdoor. Since sales reps didn't understand the strengths and weaknesses of indirect competitors, it was difficult for them to position The Real Yellow Pages as a complementary ad buy. Furthermore, sales reps had no understanding of the media pricing and production costs for other media vehicles, so they were not able to engage in consultative selling with small business clients.

ACTIONS

- Identified a sales manager who saw value in teaching sales reps about indirect competitors and influenced them to support a media training program, while acting as the "sales champion".
- Led Media agency of record in the development of Media 101 presentation tapping into existing materials they had developed to train new employees.
- Scheduled meeting with sales manager to present rough draft of presentation and made suggested revisions.
- Scheduled meeting with a team of front line sales reps to present presentation and gain feedback.
- Revised presentation to include sales rep feedback and rolled out to all sales teams in the Atlanta area.

RESULTS

- The training program was well-received by field sales and scored a 9.0/10.0 consistently.
- Feedback of the program by sales leadership was overwhelmingly positive and demand for the program was high.
- A training schedule was established to share the program with a broader sales audience.