



SALES ENABLEMENT WEBSITE CHANGES APARTMENT GUIDE CULTURE

CHALLENGE

PRIMEDIA was focused on shifting from a print-centric media company to an online media company. New online products and product enhancements for www.apartmentguide.com were a major focus. There was no B2B marketing team in place to develop product positioning and customer-facing sales tools (brochures, PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

Turnover among field sales teams was over 30% per year because new sellers could not quickly ramp up on products and services and quickly found themselves behind sales goals. Sales teams placed orders for sales materials via an internal website to have the material printed and shipped to them in two to three weeks. New online products were being launched frequently rendering old sales materials obsolete. The sales materials available to the field often did not correspond with current corporate messaging because of the delay in getting material to the field. Apartment Guide needed a way to get sales material in the hands of sellers faster to help them translate the value of new products to clients and grow revenue. Training material for new products and other tools were scattered across a variety of intranet sites and there was no “sales intranet” for teams to use to search for sales or training material to prepare for customer conversations.

ACTIONS

- Evaluated current system and process for distributing sales material to the field.
- Evaluated existing sales intranet sites and explored feasibility of adapting these sites to meet sales needs.
- Ruled out the possibility of using existing intranet resources due to “clunky” content management system and lack of resources to adequately utilize the tool.
- Identified several software-as-a-service (SAAS) vendors who provide sales portals to help sales teams ramp up faster and reduce the time required to find the appropriate sales material when needed for a customer conversation.
- Scheduled meetings with SAAS vendors and key internal departments at PRIMEDIA charged with supporting field including (Sales Operations, Product Management, Sales Training, Corporate Communications, and IT) as well as Senior Leadership.
- Developed business case to justify the cost for purchasing software from one of the vendors that offered a “social media for business” solution and led negotiations with vendor.
- Developed a presentation/recommendation for building the structure of the site and presented it to stakeholders.
- Acted as primary point of contact with vendor for launch of site to load all assets, provide direction on graphics, develop and layout site using back-end tool and create training material.
- Implemented survey to gather feedback from sales teams regarding the time required to prepare for sales conversations as well as their awareness of certain tools available.

RESULTS

- Decreased ramp up time for sales teams from 120+ days to 60 days making new sellers productive much faster.
- Drove an adoption rate of 99% within first two weeks of implementation.
- Decreased the time required to prepare for sales calls by 30%.
- Increased communication between field sales and corporate exponentially and according the VP of Sales Operations and Strategy, “It **changed the culture of the company.**”