Online Marketing of a Dental Supply E-Store on a Tight Budget

David Gadish, California State University – Los Angeles, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dental offices have been switching to online purchasing of their dental supplies and equipment. This case presents the marketing strategy for a newly created online store for a dental supply company. The online store provides dentists with over 16,000 different dental products from alloys to dental instruments to x-ray products. Online sales are a more efficient approach to the traditional catalog order method where dentists place orders with a salesperson, call in, or fax their orders. Online, as well as traditional marketing techniques have been incorporated into a marketing campaign to promote online sales. The process and challenges of marketing this Web site with a tight budget are discussed. Results of the first two years of marketing efforts are reported.

Keywords: B2B e-commerce; dental product marketing; online marketing strategy; Web site promotion

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Company

ENG Dental Supply is a family owned and operated dental supply company serving the community of dentists of Southern California. It currently serves approximately 1,000 clients and offers over 16,000 different products from over 200 manufacturers.

ENG Dental Supply was founded as a family business in the 1940’s by European immigrants. In the mid-1990’s, the management of the company was turned over to the owner’s children, Ron and Laurence.
Business Issues Addressed in the Project

ENG Dental Supply was a labor-intensive company where traditional methods were still used for most of the company’s operations. ENG was relying on the fax machine and most processes were completed manually. Management did not have the vision to keep up with technology. Management did not consider the importance of technological solutions that other firms have implemented to increase efficiency and cut costs. The company’s processes were considered to be so straightforward by the management that little attention was paid to changing the way business was conducted. A decision to modernize came as revenues started falling and existing clients started ordering dental supplies from competitors. The first step in the process was the creation of an e-store which sells dental supplies. The next step is to promote this store to dental offices.

The Management

The company is managed by the following executive team (see Figure 1):

- Ron serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer. He is responsible for managing the sales team, the customer service department and the purchasing operations.
- Laurence is ENG’s Chief Financial Officer. He is also responsible for human resources, accounting as well as the technology infrastructure.
- Middle management consists of the warehouse operations manager, and the customer service manager. The warehouse manager is responsible for shipping, receiving, storing, and tracking warehouse inventory. The customer service manager is responsible for the customer service team.

The Organizational Structure

The organization consists of the following units (see Figure 2):

Figure 1. ENG’s management team
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