Keep Up the Splash Up!! (Early Draft -> Martin Balestie
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Since it is not possible to participate in industrial fairs and international/regional travel is restricted, a prospecting strategy that has worked for us is helping building audience for three or four corporate webinars during the year on special topics. Over time your company or some participating industry may well articulate a series. A sequel of two or three is essential since people take time to get involved. It is not, however, a very generalized mechanism. For example, Baltimore, Tranter, articulate some from time to time and the sessions are not recorded - something that would be very useful though, I would say essential, a sort of subsequent podcast while doing something else. The most successful instances that I see in earned "engagement" are those of Dupont, perhaps CECO Environmental, all of them very active marketing departments. One of the most frequent questions that I am asked is the cost of attendance. The last time I saw training in the sector, say industrial refrigeration, amounts were around unthinkable for even managers of the area. All these series help to fill a knowledge gap, at least in an intermediate way, so that decision makers can appreciate the nuances/standapart specs - essential for noble equipment suppliers.

Webinar notification, informal/formal, leads to fairly regular contact (inter webinar !!) with audiences; consultations are often elicited LONG BEFORE the events themselves (60-90 days! versus 30 second TV ads time to persuade), which may well come from anywhere in SoLa (South / Central / Latin America) in our case. The webinar, rather than a starting point of expectations, is an amiable corollary of likely already screened/engaged audience, id est most people are known for some time and some idea is known as regards potentials or submitted proposals/pending quotes, also better matching of featured stuff.

Part of the market development strategies/rationale are presented in www.DigitalProspection.com although I changed some things as how to go about, in particular emphasizing one-on-one emails, one-on-one social media and only monthly backdrop reminders. We welcome almost any opportunity of digital prospecting (we have modified some approaches for greater engagement) of a small series from any manufacturer. Decidedly the opportunities may be in little or no traffic/secluded terrains, or infrequent access (versus large cities), something that with prospecting is a matter of just a few days/minutes. Using benchmarks, on occasion of conducting door knocking, I find it takes anywhere from 45 to 60 day to conduct a quite extensive outreach.

I find that frequently there's a spectacular overlap of audiences and supplementation of areas with other corporations and fosters valuable cooperation (food & beverage; energy/power; oil & gas; mining; industrial refrigeration). I would think that classic critical applications in many say capital goods sectors would profit, reaching out to places or plants that are far away from the usual circuits and that are normally not well served. The ideation of the concept of digital prospecting of known users or established customer base arised

(2016) as a business response to the use of Internet versus the classical / most frequently promoted alternative of the hypothetical sequence visitor, id est conversion of cold traffic to leads, RFQ/RFI or sales. To a certain extent one way to overcome the perceived failure of the original school of content marketing/organic search. While not at all comprehensive this perception was confirmed with regional experiences of other small regional firms with relatively similar activity profiles. Prior to corona/covid upset, one would typically incorporate in each instance of monthly publication or digital republication the accompaniment of off-line/face-to-face activities “at the foot of the machine/foot on the ground” and less ideally, formats of regional technical workshops of 4 hours. Typically a particular/theme topic is identified and designated, e.g. industrial cooling, and digital prospection is conducted for a given geographic region/state/city/other during three consecutive months plus three weekly surveys immediately prior to the planned activity, say 3-day long onsite industrial technical visits focusing say, as has been successfully done on industrial chillers and plastic processing. One possible / achievable objective/outcome was filling a schedule of three intensive field trip days, collecting an agenda of anywhere from total of twelve (12) to sixteen (16) visits to industrial plants depending on the involved specialty, a scheme clearly replicable city by city or eventually province by province (less preferable). This approach was first tested in 2003 and 2004 for market development involving the northern countries (Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, Venezuela) of South America. It was replicated some time ago for Mecalor (Brasil), Nidenor (Perú). Because of corona it was not possible to use traditional circuit riding as a vehicle.

Digital prospection's “disruptive” approach, using somehow outsourced or external market development agents/aid, DOES NOT necessarily aim to take the place of the traditional chain of representatives but allows headquarters to sporadically engage directly in/probe the market in order to obtain better results by better knowledge of the real actors and/or get involved or market opportunities not necessarily identified by the traditional channels, basically non-digital in essence or in regions lacking traditional opportunities for periodic market development such as industrial fairs, no printed press advertising available of certain special segments or enough critical mass (or “very remote”). The only thing "new" is how to approach prospects, essentially about 2 months of labor per webinar. Once a RFI/RFQ/RFP is identified it's classic B2B business protocol. Very frequently reps just wait for what the river brings. Very seldom they go hunting or fishing for projects. Having the upper hand, id est being an early bird and touching base with end users also helps to turn the table on contractors or engineering firms. Very often they mind their interests and because of cutthroat competition, not always bundle good quality equipment. It’s not likely you will lose contractors if you have good hardware and it NEVER hurts to be close to end users – they are the folks signing the checks! Digital prospection, monetized in this way, has the potential to provide/elicit returns and instill valuable “share of mind” (Trout & Ries) long before the event in question even if for unforeseen reasons the object of the prospecting itself (visits to the plant “at the foot of the machine “; regional workshop) is cancelled whatever the reasons. The business model is based on the increase in sales revenue as a result of digital prospecting, incorporating other deliverables (technical,

industrial, management, procurement, other) selectively and in agreement with each participating parent company.

The residual effect of the prospection is estimated very high. These results, very good residual effects, are in agreement with the direct mail predecessors of pre-Internet eras. Digital prospection can help ANY company HQ do ANY of the following and more!!!!

- Monitor and report market activity and trends.
- Find, train and manage new or existing Sales Representatives / Business Partners
- Establish and maintain preferred provider relationship with key client decision-makers and influencers.
- Routinely present to clients and Business Partners an overview of the Company, the Company's HQ approach to market and its capabilities.

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