A CRY FROM THE FIELD

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The biggest cry we hear from field sales consultants in the Direct Sales industry is "We need more communication!" How many times have consultants told corporate or their up-line that they did not know or found out too late about an opportunity meeting, product change, compensation plan change, training seminar or conference (and the list goes on).

Today's technologies provide companies with new and exciting ways to communicate to the field quickly through several mediums. Using newfangled devices such as the popular Blackberry or I-Phone, people can make phone calls or send voicemails, emails and video clips almost anywhere at any time.

Take for example, Jack and Jill consultants. They walk into a Starbucks in Sidney, Australia, get a cup of coffee, sit down at a table, connect to Starbuck's wireless (WIFI) store network and receive an email message on their hand-held or pocket pal gizmo. The email has a voice message attachment from their up-line sponsor back in the USA who congratulates them in his/her own confident voice for being promoted to Executive Consultant. And get this – the up-line sponsor never even lifted a finger or paid a single penny for long distance. The sponsor had pre-recorded a voice message that was automatically sent by email the very minute they promoted!

We are moving to an "always on-line" world. A "get me, text me or email me anytime, anywhere" is becoming the norm. To keep a competitive edge, it is important for companies to take advantage of these technologies. Soon retail stores, grocery stores and restaurants will all be advertising they are WIFI and in the near future there probably won't be a cell phone or cell billing plan without continuous internet access. Internet kiosks are everywhere and even people who don't want high-tech mobile devices will probably have constant internet access when businesses add them right into grocery carts, restaurant tables, mall benches, waiting rooms and playgrounds. OK, playgrounds are a bit of a stretch but other aforementioned locations already exist!

The good news is that some software solutions for the Direct Sales Industry are up to par and even ahead of the commercial business world in regard to communications. Some of today's software does exactly what Jack and Jill's does for multitudes of consultants. Corporate staff can use software to send bulk email to the field (including attachments and HTML formatting) by consultants' country, state, city, sales rank, birthday and much more. They can create voicemails or emails and send them to pre-defined groups with the same criteria. Instant trouble ticket generation in a consultant's web login area can have a their problem being worked on and tracked at the corporate office in minutes with auto-responder emails going to them when the trouble ticket is opened, updated and closed. They can also log in and directly upload a personal picture and personal message into your corporate software database for instant posting on their replicating website. Rest assured that corporate staff and field consultants who have experience in building strong teams will know that communication is the key and they will use these effective tools often.

SO WHAT IS A CEO TO DO?

Direct Sales companies should approach their corporate technology decisions from an integration perspective. Some tips to jot down when searching for software solutions:

- Look for a software solution that seamlessly integrates with your website, email, voice, and problem reporting functionality.

- When viewing a software demo, ask to see these tools in action from both the field and the corporate office perspective.

- Ask the vendor if they provide training information and documentation for these tools.

- Once you find, purchase and launch a communications savvy software solution, provide field and corporate training sessions regularly. Post communications training material where it can be easily accessed by corporate and field personnel.

Remember, the field is crying out for more corporate and down-line communications. Your corporate software solution can be the key to heeding their cry and drying up the tears!

Wayne is Vice President of Sales with Trinity Software and brings a wealth of communications knowledge to the Direct Sales industry. After spending over 20 years in the telecommunications industry with corporate giants such as SBC and Nortel Networks, Wayne joined Trinity Software 3 years ago and has applied his communications and management experience in marketing Firestorm™ - Trinity Software's innovative enterprise-class software solution – to the Direct Sales industry. For more information, please visit Trinity Software's website at www.trinitysoft.net