

**(Removed For Client Privacy) Marketing Strategy**

## **Executive Summary:**

To achieve its marketing objectives (Removed For Client Privacy) will be implementing a highly personalized communication strategy to build demand for its outsourced accounting services. The campaign will focus on pull marketing. We will **target executives and influencers within the organization who are actively researching accounting solutions or are in the midst of the recruiting process**. By reaching prospective customers' **pain-points** we will develop a communication strategy that will present the brand in a unique way that captures customer attention and leads to engagement. The content marketing aspect will focus on **brand recognition** and assuring **strong social media presence** and building various trust factors for prospective clients. We will focus on **direct marketing outreach to connect with decision makers at targeted organizations**.

## **Brand Strategy:**

The below propositions sum up the (Removed For Client Privacy) purpose:

### **Unique Selling Proposition**

Your financial KPIs, delivered to your inbox, by our bespoke bookkeeping system.

Every business is different. Every business owner has different goals. Accordingly, it is imperative that a bookkeeping service or accounting tool captures the data that is most important to the business, the owner, the market or the product. (Removed For Client Privacy) learns about your aims and we asky you – what financial data do you

need to capture and report on. When you tell us, we deliver it by building a software-assisted bookkeeping system that reports and automates operational accounting tasks.

### **Value Proposition**

As a business owner, no one knows your business better than you and no one has the right to tell you how to spend your time. At (Removed For Client Privacy) we don't how to run your business or how to spend your time improving it, we just get you more of it.

### **Value proposition**

The most important competitive advantage in any business is the people. They're the decision makers the creative thinkers and the relationship builders. And there's a massive risk in having them tied down in error-prone, time-consuming bookkeeping processes. Free them up and allow them to spend time on the tasks that will add the most value to your business.

### **Value proposition**

Software can never replace the human touch

While bookkeeping software has improved and helped businesses better prepare for the end of the financial year, there are things automated bookkeeping will never be able to do as well as a human. We build systems that help you interpret data, not just enter it. We manage the end to end financial data process which is something an off the shelf tool will never be able to do.

How the value propositions can manifest into taglines and branding plays

- Take the fear out of accounting.
- Free yourself from your accounting and grow your business in your free time.
- Get the skills of an Accountant, without the boring personality.

## **BRAND POSITIONING STATEMENT**

Using the brand promises above we can simplify our brand and marketing strategy into the following brand positioning statement:

**(Removed For Client Privacy) is...**

FOR...small to medium sized business owners and managers that are spending too much time stuck on their accounting.

WHO BELIEVE...that their energy is best served focusing on whatever they are best at, that they love doing and that represent the reason they started in this business.

WE PROMISE...to free them from frustration by building and operating a bookkeeping system that helps them avoid unnecessary data entry, time-consuming reconciliation, and generally re-inventing the wheel of operational accounting.

**REASONS TO BELIEVE:**

- Personalized offering – choose the services that suit, not the ones organized in three recommended packages.
- A new perspective – an in-house controller can get too accustomed to their own products. On the flipside, an external resource is exposed to industry best practice and new ways to help businesses grow.

## **BRAND PERSONALITY**

- Neat and Concise: We optimize and promote efficiency, so our communication style should reflect that
- Elegant: Our customers have an expectation of quality when they interact with us. One deliver to that expectation is to portray ourselves with an elegance that is prestigious not pretentious. Our copywriting will be sophisticated, our design beautiful and our advice intelligent.
- Trustworthy: The nature of our work means we are responsible for a large amount of sensitive and confidential information. Therefore, at all times we need to display to our clients that we can be trusted. Trust is earned by committing to deadlines, delivering the solution we promise, and being one of the team, even though we're outsourced and offsite. The best long-term customer and vendor relationships are built on trust.

# BRAND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

## 1. We talk in benefits not features

One of the core differences between us and our competitors is the way we communicate to our customers. Other accounting firms speak of amazing product features or incredible professional experience, we speak to the way we can improve their business or at least the time-saving benefits they can gain from using our services. We explain the benefits of our service to them, why we are right for them, not why they should choose us. Here are some examples (note these are only examples, not final or suggested copy):

Features	Benefits
Customizable service	“If you still want to be involved in doing your books you can, we completely customize your experience to give you the best one possible. Stay involved in the nitty gritty or leave it to us, it’s your business and your call”
Automated bank reconciliation	“Stop trying to figure out why your book balance doesn’t equal your bank balance.”
Reporting	“You’ve been copy-pasting the P&L from Quickbooks <i>each month</i> into your

	Excel model, which breaks every time you tweak the chart of accounts.”
Accrual Accounting	“You can’t figure out how much money you made in April, because you billed your clients in May for the work you did in April, and you billed your client in April for work you did in March. We can help you line it up correctly.”

**2. We talk about our customers, not about ourselves.**

This is similar to the feature / benefit shift above. For the most part, our customers don’t care for our history as much as we think they do. They want to be able to trust us, but they don’t need our entire resume or back story. Note, there are clients with bookkeeping and accounting experience that will respond to an expertise pitch.

**This can be achieved through:**

- A blog that gives practical bookkeeping and financial management tips to readers. This will also help with our SEO strategy and sales prospecting;

- Free trials or initial consultations. These are also a sales generating exercise, but it proves to the customer that we're willing to give them advice, learn about their business and add value even if they aren't a customer of ours.
- Language that is in the style of our customers not technical, technical jargon. One of the rules of communication is to communicate with people in the way in which they communicate with you. Our customers, particularly the small business owners who are not as financially savvy, require simple explanations, using natural language and a conversational tone.

### **3. Channel specific and target segment tailored communications**

The differences between a small and medium sized business are bigger than just the number of employees. The ownership structure, the involvement of the founder / owner and the business requirements are significantly different. Therefore, we will at all times ensure that our communications are targeted to the correct decision maker (aiming to make their job easier) and the correct channel (a blog might have a different tone of voice than a business proposal). Here are examples of the different messaging for different audiences.

#### **Direct**

With this channel we're seeking referrals from our existing network. We need to develop brand ambassadors by making them fall in love with the brand and then



empowering them to share our services. Once the relationship is strong, we could introduce referral discounts, sharing functionality on messages and posts or a novel B2B gift voucher. “Why are gift vouchers only ever given for birthdays? Why can’t they be for your business friends that need a bit of help balancing their books. Give the gift of free accounting advice today and use the time to have that coffee with your business friend that you’ve been promising for ages”. The language here is much more casual and the platform can be too, for example, social media.

### **Accountants**

This channel is much more complicated and specific, so our language must be professional and our offer (for example a finder’s fee or referral sharing) must be attractive. The pitch is also different. We still talk to them, but we phrase it like so, “Your relationship with your client will go from strength to strength, reducing churn and increasing recurring revenue, and the financial data you work with will always be clean. No back and forth with the client”. The setting for this message is more formal than social media but can be achieved through email prospecting.

### **Asset Managers**

Getting every single company an asset manager has on their books will take time and professionalism. However, it’s still imperative to use compelling language that helps asset managers solve their problems. We adhere to our brand voice (neat, concise, trustworthy and elegant), but we’re also compelling and we use what we’re good at to tell the story -numbers. We should present opportunities and proposals with clear evidence behind them of the benefits. Is it a time saving (our asset managers have found they’ve reduced the time spent in the office during the monthly

close by 30%), is a cost saving (by bundling all of your companies into one bookkeeping service, you'll save \$1,000 week), and/or something else that can be quantified with numbers in an impressive dashboard.

### **Outreach Strategy:**

There're 4 primary channels (Removed For Client Privacy) will focus on in its digital outreach:

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Search Engine and Social PPC (Google Adwords, Microsoft Ad Center, and LinkedIn)
- Business discussion social media groups and forums organic outreach
- Direct outreach (email)
  - The above will be complimented by a referral incentive program, partnership marketing, and a communication funnel.

Due to the potentially lengthy lead closing cycle, it is imperative to maintain continuous communication with the prospective customers to build brand recognition, increase the perceived value of (Removed For Client Privacy), and encourage engagement. In order to accomplish this (Removed For Client Privacy) will develop a comprehensive sales funnel that will prompt both warm and cold leads with various specific benefits of outsourced accounting, tips on how to leverage accounting services to grow the

business and surpass the competition, and address the unnecessary financial and resource burden of going about it the old fashioned way. Basically the funnel is intended to hit the right pain-points on a weekly basis until the prospect engages or turns into a referring party.

While the sales efforts will be primarily driven through partnership and direct marketing efforts, a strong online presence will help build demand for influencing parties to bring up your solutions at meetings and encourage upper management / c-suite to explore the option.

#### **a. LinkedIn**

a) Organic engagement through business discussion groups.

The social media manager will publish content on a bi-daily basis, providing advice on how a business can take itself to the next level and incorporating (Removed For Client Privacy) as the call to action. The posts should address various aspects and benefits of outsourcing accounting services. This should be educational focused content hosted on the site's blog, which will help increase SEO traction.

1. For example a post can advise software companies on how to improve their a subscription model, and correlate the benefits of implementing your services for a sophisticated subscription structure. The goal is to provide content that is often on the decision makers

mind (accounting typically isn't) to grab their attention and work your services in once you have it. The secondary CTA would imply the potential financial and operational benefits of using (Removed For Client Privacy) over in-house staff.

b) LinkedIn paid media. The ad management system has a unique targeting component, which allows to segment customers by a correlation the following criteria:

1. Position within the company. We will use this to pursue the c-suite you're targeting (CEO, COO, and CFOs) as well as senior financial management at the larger organizations. Since LinkedIn ads are expensive, I would like to use them to focus on decision makers only and use organic outreach to connect with influencers.
2. Industry of the target prospect. We will use this function to segment your primary industries.
3. Past experience of the prospect. We want to focus on those who have some financial or accounting background. These will naturally be faster converting leads, because they will require less education.
4. Seniority within the organization. It is important to reach individuals who have enough influence within the company, so targeting by years spent with the organization will allow us to reach those who are most

likely able to influence the rest of the team to use your services.

- a. That in mind, there is value in targeting “new arrivals” or promotions, because there is pressure on them to change things up and often to reduce costs quickly.

**b. YouTube**

- a) YouTube has high influence on search and a strong presence in the business development space. We will leverage YouTube’s search functions to assure (Removed For Client Privacy) appears at the top of search results for all trending accounting, and related business development verticals. This is accomplished through weekly research identifying business financial discussion topics with highest levels of engagement and implementing those tags to (Removed For Client Privacy)’s multi-media content. YouTube is widely used as a research tool for both business growth advice, making it the perfect channel to raise awareness for companies who may not be aware how outsourced accounting can benefit them.

**c. FaceBook/Twitter**

- a) I recommend these being a tertiary channel due to the lack of ability to target by company size. Focus here should fall

on cross promotion/partnership marketing explained later in the document.

- b) Relevant group engagement and on-page posting should be used on both channels in order to show company activity and grow the brand name.
- c) Paid media should not be used on either channel.
- d) Note: Google+ should be used for SEO traction only, we will simply copy your LinkedIn feed there automatically.

**b. Search Engine Organic (SEO)**

- a. Accounting services and associated synonyms have high search volume. It is important that (Removed For Client Privacy) solutions are found at the top of page 1 on Google, Bing, and their associated partner networks. This will help build brand recognition and assure that the financial decision makers at the companies you target see your company as the number 1 solution on relevant search results while researching anything bookkeeping or accounting related.
- b. We anticipate Google and Bing search to become the primary digital marketing lead generator following the 4-6 month window, at which point high traffic keywords are expected to reach the top pages of search. Initiating SEO efforts early is important to stay ahead of any potential competitors entering the space.
  - 1. Since your SEO and your site is likely going to be rebuilt or modified considerably, you want to start out with

about 15 keywords and add a new set of 5 each time a set reaches the top page. I am recommending the following 15 keywords to start out with per my analysis. We want to initiate with longer tail keywords that will rank sooner and not have very large companies dominating the top pages. I would like to go over the charts with you when we speak to determine the best ones.

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The following steps must be adhered to in order to ensure steady and rapid ranking growth.

### **Step 1 – Onsite optimization**

The website will be fully optimized to follow all Google and Bing best practices to assure compliance. The current optimization issues are outlined in the research folder. A dedicated SEO specialist will monitor updates to search engine algorithms to assure compliance, and maintain ongoing white-hat search practices.

### **Step 2 – Content development**

The objective is to assure the website ranks for all bookkeeping, accounting, and relevant business financial related searches. To accomplish this we will publish content weekly on the website internally, as well as on external channels, with appropriate keywords embedded. A dedicated writer will be

assigned to developing unique copy for (Removed For Client Privacy). The content will be focused on exposing current flaws in business accounting practices, lost resources and opportunities from keeping bookkeeping in-house, growing trends in the industry, and other high engagement topics surrounding your services.

### **Step 3 – Link building**

In order to surpass future competitors as well as non-direct competitors who are targeting business accounting and bookkeeping related searches, (Removed For Client Privacy) will publish editorial content on a weekly basis to external blogs, forums, business listings, and other press channels. Search engine algorithms react to this process by increasing the website's positioning under the notion that if a 3<sup>rd</sup> party channel is willing to host content it is presumed to be of high quality.

#### **c. Search Engine Paid Media (SEM)**

Taking advantage of sponsored search listings will allow us to obtain instant targeted traffic while the SEO rankings continue to climb. The campaign will be optimized by a dedicated PPC marketing specialist based on the following criteria:

- a) Peak performing / low cost keywords as outlined in the research folder



- b) High converting ad copy matching landing page content
- c) Negative keywords to eliminate jobs searches, accounting software, and specific accounting or bookkeeping services you don't offer (I would like to discuss this part).
- d) Device and time of day search patterns. If we elect to run mobile ads the website needs to have a fast lead capture (I would advise to have one in any case). Also eliminate ads during night time, lunch hour, after work hours, and weekends. Since you're not targeting micro companies you are really dealing with people during business hours so you want to focus advertising during that time. In the beginning we want to really focus on only the most high converting prospects and times, then depending on performance and ROI we can expand the reach.
- e) High converting landing pages need to be developed for key ad groups to assure high quality scores and competitive rankings. Currently the site is not well optimized for paid media. For example I would either build landing pages for specific industries like software and service resellers, or for specifically focused services, or for individual pain-points. We need to discuss how your updated website will be structured.

The PPC expert will be responsible for monitoring campaign performance on a daily basis and continuously optimizing ad copy, keyword bidding, and campaign targeting.

The Adwords search campaign will target the Google search and partner network, as well as Youtube. The Microsoft Ad Center campaign will target Bing and Yahoo search engines, and the respective partnership network

**d. Affiliate / Referral Incentive Marketing**

Our goal is to incentivize potential and existing customers to refer (Removed For Client Privacy) to partner companies, as well as give support to influencers within organizations to bring you up to c-suite. A referral incentive program will provide a profit share to the referring party. Affiliates will be provided with training, promotional banners, and other marketing collateral to help make the most of their efforts. A good example of an affiliate can ofcourse be the accountants and asset managers you mentioned, but they can also be general business consultants who are brought in to advise on staffing, operations, and business development. Their advice is trusted and it will be easy for them to bring you up at a meeting. I would dlike to discuss this strategy

a) A more traditional affiliate program will be implemented on the website and function as follows:

a. A registration system should be built where the visitor enters their contact information and will be given a referral url (ex: [http://\(Removed For Client Privacy\).com/affiliate2](http://(Removed For Client Privacy).com/affiliate2)). Idevdirect is a good program to use for this or it can be custom coded.

- b. The admin panel will secure all contact information and payment details of affiliates and track their performance.
- c. The affiliate will be paid a % of revenue from anyone who comes through their tracking url. There're 2 ways this can function and I'd like to discuss this in more details after review:
  - 1. A high % payout on the initial sale only
  - 2. A lower % payout on the initial sale + small ongoing payments for the full life cycle of the customer or as long as the affiliate remains with the company. This is more expensive in the long term, but will attract higher quality affiliates and if the program performs well will allow you to market as a regular sales/business development position.
  - 3. Pay per qualified lead. This will attract the best affiliates, but you run the risk of paying for poor quality referrals. This is something I recommend implementing after you truly know your customer acquisition cost and conversion rates on the website.

**e. Content Marketing and Partnerships**

A content outreach specialist should be brought in to handle outreach to various online communities. These should include message forums, such as

smallbusinessforums.org and social media discussion groups like linkedin.com/groups/138439. The goal is to assure (Removed For Client Privacy) is constantly seen on major discuss boards and groups so it's at the top of mind when accounting or bookkeeping issues arise in the organization.

(Removed For Client Privacy) will form strategic partnerships with business consulting companies, accountants, and asset managers. The nature of the partnership will vary from:

- a) Direct referrals – this is of course the goal
- b) Exchange social media endorsement
- c) Email blast inclusion – footer banners can be added to each other's funnel, endorsing each other's brand
- d) Website inclusion. I would recommend adding a section to your website where you can feature your partners, small link in the footer or partner links directly in footer are fine. This will also assist your SEO efforts if they link back to you.

f. **Email Funnel**

A key element to the success of (Removed For Client Privacy) marketing efforts is consistent communication. Customers will often reach your website before they are ready to engage. We will implement an email funnel which will continuously engage and prompt warm leads and existing customers to speak to you by exposing them to educational material surrounding best accounting practices. People will be more likely to open subsequent emails if they expect them to have valuable business advice, rather than advertising content. This is

the section that people should look forward to when they receive your emails, so it should not contain promotion. Prospects who do not engage within a 12 month cycle will be converted into the affiliate program and be prompted for referrals. The educational section should be followed by the focus section as stated in each email below, after it a brief on the value of outsourcing accounting services, follow that with 3 brief graphic bullets about your services going across, a paragraph on (Removed For Client Privacy) the company (basically an about you), and finish with the call to action.

The following is the recommended funnel structure:

- Email 1 – this email should vary from referrals and those you meet in person to cold prospects
  - Immediately after lead acquisition
  - Casual introduction if the lead is a referred, more of a promo if the lead is acquired
  - Focus on the overview of (Removed For Client Privacy) as a company and areas you cover
  
- Email 2
  - 72 hours after initial contact
  - Address the pain-points of a potential customer
  
- Email 3
  - 7 days after initial contact

- Request an opportunity to speak with a customer service rep regarding any questions or concerns (the goal of this is just to peak their interest again and show that you're a dedicated company)
- Email 4
  - 15 days after initial contact
  - Do a full educational content email on the potential savings from outsourcing accounting
- Email 5
  - 25 days after drop-off and following at 10 day intervals until the lead is deemed cold
  - Informational emails providing various bookkeeping advice, best practices, etc
  - Soft call to action with incentive to engage today
- Email 6
  - 400 days after initial contact
  - At this point the lead can be deemed cold at least in the near future (ofcourse for you industry a customer could need funding years from now, but we want to maximize the value today), so we will focus on salvaging its value through the referral incentive program. Here you should focus on the affiliate opportunity.

- Email 7 and on
  - 3 months after the affiliate email the lead can be re-entered into the funnel via email 5 structure.
  - It's recommended to re-initiate leads with a major announcement to peak interest again

#### g. **Starter Marketing Collateral**

The following items will be necessary for your promotion and will be developed prior to the commencement of the campaign.

- a) Social media content
- b) SEO content – 4 articles for the first month of distribution
- c) SEM content – 5 ad copies and campaign setup starting with Adwords and Microsoft Ad Center
- d) Media kit – 8 page document covering the benefits of a partnership with (Removed For Client Privacy), along with affiliate training content
- e) Email funnel – a 20 segment email communication to start
- f) Website restructure – I would like to discuss the actual formatting in more detail, but here some functions I would recommend implementing to the updated website:
  1. Lead capture incentive in the header
  2. Google analytics
  3. SalesIQ live support, this feature allows you to initiate conversation with people while they're browsing your website

4. Who Is Visiting software – allows you to capture contact info of roughly 20-25% of visitors without interaction (for this we need to check legalities in your industry)
5. Crazy Egg – this is a heatmap that allows you to see where customers focus their attention on the page. I would advise increasing content volume on your pages both for SEO purposes and to keep less educated customers from shifting to google to find answers. In this case it's good to know what information visitors find most interesting.