

Case Study: Corporate Express

"It was their approach, how they made their calls, and their persistence that was really great for us."

*- Gregg Malmstrom, Director,
Strategic Account Administration,
Corporate Express, USA*

"Gunpowder helped us to sow the seeds that will continue to come to fruition over the next 5 years."

*- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate
Express Canada*

Corporate Express, Inc. (CE) is the world's largest business-to-business supplier of essential office and computer products and services with 2001 sales of approximately \$5 million dollars in North America and \$11 billion dollars globally. They service approximately 90% of the world's Fortune 500 companies.

The Story

In 1999, Corporate Express extended operations into Canada. As a business-to-business supplier, CE was in direct competition with Grand & Toy - a Canadian institution. Their challenges ranged from building brand awareness in a new market to infiltrating established business relationships. In addition, CE was committed to changing their methodology from a piecemeal price oriented one to that of a single source supplier and partner. But to do this, they would need to free their sales team up from administrative and lead generation responsibilities.

Through a referral, CE approached Gunpowder Business Development in May 2003 for a 4-month trial. Their mandate was clear; "Get us C-level meetings with Canadian Fortune 500 companies".

The Work Begins

Gunpowder Business developed clear value proposition messaging and immediately employed its 3-tiered process to begin generating C-level contacts. Their team of highly skilled representatives acted as Executive Assistants to CE's sales force, developing and nurturing relationships on their behalf while managing schedules and meetings.

"Gunpowder Business presented us as a highly professional and high-powered organization. They were smart, professional and knowledgeable - not just a pretty voice on the phone. This really resonated with our targets. When you put that kind of professional face on this process, it really changes things."

- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate Express Canada

The Trial Ends

At the end of the 4-month trial, Corporate Express was thrilled with the results. Their former success rate of 2 meetings per 10 calls was literally doubled by Gunpowder Business. This 40% penetration of CE's target list inspired them to sign up for additional 6-month period.

"We were getting meetings with people we NEVER thought we'd be able to get to see, and we wanted to continue to make that happen!"

- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate Express Canada

Case Study: Corporate Express (cont'd)

"We really were able to trust the information they were giving to potential clients."

- Gregg Malmstrom, Director, Strategic Account Administration, Corporate Express, USA

"I wouldn't change a thing about the experience we had with Gunpowder Business."

- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate Express Canada

The Engagement Goes Global

Impressed by the Canadian results, Corporate Express US signed on for a trial period to service the New York Tri-State area sales group. This quickly rolled out to a 1-year USA wide and European (including France, Germany, Belgium, & the UK) engagement. They felt that Gunpowder Business could not only help them to identify key decision makers within their target base, but also ensure the sales team was able to meet them face-to-face.

"The value proposition Gunpowder Business brought was the expertise, experience and Christine Aquin's leadership."

- Gregg Malmstrom, Director, Strategic Account Administration, Corporate Express USA

The Learning

Through learning from Gunpowder Business's highly successful processes, Corporate Express has now made significant and hugely effective changes to their own sales approach.

"From a high level prospecting perspective, we realized that we won't just 'fit' with every corporation. Now we've learned that we can't sell ourselves in a generic way. We need to meet with a potential client first, establish their real needs and then respond to them effectively with materials and further meetings in order to gain them as a client."

- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate Express Canada

The Results Are In

By the time the additional 6-month Canadian contract was over, Gunpowder Business had literally run out of targets - having effectively contacted everyone on the Corporate Express "wish list". On the US side, Gunpowder Business was able to penetrate the target list by approximately 60% - a stunning result!

"In terms of measuring the success of the engagement, regardless of closing the sale, we first had to ask whether we were getting closer to the C-level or key decision makers within our target list. The answer was 'yes', Gunpowder Business really got us to the 'dance'."

- Gregg Malmstrom, Director, Strategic Account Administration, Corporate Express USA

"Gunpowder were able to get us appointments we never thought we'd be able to get, and start us in on sales processes that will mean short, medium and long term success for us. We'll still be seeing the value that Gunpowder brought in 5 years from now "

- Gerry Reid, SVP, Corporate Express Canada