

“As a young company with an unknown brand, we were trying to grow but didn’t have the expertise to manage a lead generation program in-house. But we truly believed that if we could just demo our product to the right decision makers, we could win. Gunpowder was able to build and refine a prospect list for us and manage the whole process to get to that critical first meeting. With them, we were able to significantly improve the productivity of our sales force”

– Ted Madden,
COO, Comtext Systems

IntelliResponse, created by Comtext Systems, is an advanced self-service information retrieval system designed to help websites respond to information requests more efficiently and effectively. The product allows users to “ask” questions online in everyday language – complete with spelling mistakes, acronyms, slang and other anomalies.

IntelliResponse then provides correct answers in real-time, thereby drastically minimizing the need for email or call centre communication. For those users requiring more support, IntelliResponse also provides a transition channel from self-service to assisted service for one-on-one communication support.

The Story

In a continual race with US competitors, Canadian-based Comtext Systems knew they’d have to make some changes to their sales process in order to cross the finish line first. They had infiltrated many US Universities with IntelliResponse, but wanted to both expand within the sector and go after the difficult to crack US Banking sector as well. The final challenge was how to get their growing sales force up to speed faster – with less time devoted to product learning and prospecting and more time spent selling and closing! Based on a referral from a former Gunpowder Business client, Comtext COO Ted Madden engaged Gunpowder for a 4-month pilot targeting US Universities.

“We had a list of 10,000 prospects, each with up to 8 to 10 different decision makers. With limited knowledge of those decision makers and the market in general, we needed some expert help to get us through it. We chose Gunpowder Business because they had real expertise in the hi-tech market and came highly recommended by a business associate who had used them with good results.”

– Ted Madden

The Work Begins

One of the deciding factors in choosing Gunpowder was their extensive technology background. The Gunpowder team quickly grasped the software attributes and translated them into clear benefits for their target list. The knowledgeable reps were then able to discuss the product professionally with senior admissions executives.

Utilizing their unique 3-tiered process involving lead qualification, multiple contact points and tenacious follow-up, Gunpowder not only established a long list of qualified prospects, but also booked an average of 12 senior-level meetings per month. The final stage constituted effectively managing the meeting process to ensure the Comtext sales team got in front of their targets quickly.

“One of the key differences with Gunpowder is that over 90% of the meetings they booked for us actually took place as scheduled. And they got us in front of the right decision makers on a timely basis. This significantly improved our preliminary meeting success rate and represented a major productivity hit for our sales organization.”

– Ted Madden

“There’s no question that we’ve been able to build our market share faster with Gunpowder’s help.”

–Ted Madden,
COO, Comtext Systems

“We were so impressed with Gunpowder’s results, from the quality of the people we were meeting to the quality of that first call, that we had great incentive to extend the trial.”

–Ted Madden,
COO, Comtext Systems

The Engagement Grows

At the end of the 4-month trial, Comtext were more than happy with the results. So much so that with great confidence they extended the University trial and added several ‘seats’ to take on the challenging US Banking sector.

Gunpowder identified several major roadblocks in this industry. First there would be the challenge of tracking down the key decision makers within these mammoth organizations and then, convincing them to share enough information to qualify them as prospects. With their deep knowledge of the banking sector, Gunpowder went after the smart money, focusing on call center executives and retail banking executives – all for whom a reduction in center calls would mean massive savings. The second target was retail executives responsible for traditional branch networks – an environment that would additionally benefit from IntelliResponse’s intranet functionality.

Testing More Waters

Based on their success, Comtext COO Ted Madden decided to use Gunpowder to test the viability of IntelliResponse in the Utilities market. Gunpowder booked over 30 meetings within a 6-week period, allowing Madden to get a close up look at whether he should be adapting his product for that sector.

In addition, Gunpowder engaged in a research study on behalf of Comtext, assessing whether Universities were using a competitive product to IntelliResponse and if so, determining their degree of satisfaction. This also helped to generate a new qualified target list for further calls.

“By having Gunpowder test the Utilities market, we learned that it just wasn’t ready for us yet. This was actually good news because once we understood this, we were able to delay our entry into the market, saving ourselves significant time and cost. For a small company like us, this was a powerful benefit!”

– Ted Madden

The Results Are In

The IntelliResponse project has been an unequivocal success. After a two-year engagement, Comtext is now operating at such a volume that, using the best practices developed for them by Gunpowder, they’ve been able to move their prospecting in-house.

“There’s no question that we’ve been able to build our market share faster with Gunpowder’s help. When we started, we had absolutely no presence in the US Universities market. Now we’re one of the top three suppliers – and the likelihood is that we wouldn’t have been able to get there without Gunpowder.”

– Ted Madden