

Madeline's Catering: How a Small Business Increased Sales During the Economic Downturn

During the recession Madeline's Catering experienced solid, sustained growth. For an industry considered non-essential in the eyes of consumers this is a remarkable accomplishment. Here's their story.

Madeline's Catering is a full-service caterer in Rochester, NY and the in-house service provider for ArtisanWorks, a popular, creative site for special events. In addition to ArtisanWorks Madeline's Catering relies on outside sales to maintain business.

A PERENNIAL CHALLENGE

Traditionally, Madeline's Catering relied on the marketing efforts of partner vendors but following a decision to restructure **Madeline's Catering found themselves facing the perennial small business challenge**—they were so busy providing a high quality service they had neither time nor knowledge on how to sell it.

"I'm a chef not a sales person," says Madeline Neville, Head Chef and owner. "I needed basic eye-opening things I could do in an organized matter that would help us reach customers and close sales." ArtisanWorks referred her to Mike Krause of Sales Sense Solutions, a company specializing in complete online and off-line sales solutions.

Recognizing Madeline's situation, Mike broke his information up into small, manageable tasks. That struck a chord with her. Mike recalls, **"Madeline needed structure and a path. She needed a process that would accommodate her schedule and allow her to be self-sufficient with sales and marketing. And she needed it *immediately*."**

SIX-WEEKS TO RESULTS

Sales Sense Solutions established a six-week plan organized around specific action items.

1. **Rebranding.** Sales Sense built an attractive, new website fully integrated with the traffic driving, social media channels Twitter, Facebook and Linked In. To accommodate Neville's time limitations they established an account on Ping.fm, a social media management site that allows Madeline to update all her channels in minutes. A Sales Sense Solutions Internet Specialist connects with her twice each month to answer questions and interpret traffic. **The result: The Madeline's Catering's website traffic has increased by 41 percent and phone inquiries have nearly doubled.**
2. **Internal Management.** Sales Sense created an internal management system that organized online communications, emails, and contacts. **The result: A streamlined management system that recovered an average 5 hours per week while increasing follow-up productivity.**
3. **Scripting.** Sales Sense wrote scripts for phone calls and letters, and created an in-take form. Mike worked one-on-one with employees assessing their phone skills and educating them on sales call techniques. **The result: Increased number of closed sales. This efficient system has streamlined management and improved morale.**
4. **Data base.** Sales Sense set up a data base and client relationship management software. **The result: Madeline's Catering now stands above the competition with a reputation of excellent customer service.**

5. **Prospecting.** Sales Sense identified a target market with hard data and phone numbers. **The result: Time previously spent finding prospects is now used for researching and improving recipes.**

6. **Sustainability.** Sales Sense organized a personalized, daily, bite-sized task list for Madeline. **The result: Marketing and sales continue to gain momentum because Madeline's efforts are focused and executed.**

"We always knew we were one of the top-tier caterers in Rochester. Now our customer service and sales reflect that. Sales Sense Solutions was professional, accountable and supportive. Because of them we have a better, more unified staff and a process that has made our business strong. I'm grateful."

Madeline Neville, Head Chef and Owner
Madeline's Catering