

Driving Federal Sector Growth While Constructing a Sales Development Team for BAI

Introduction:

For more than three decades, Blackwood Associates, Inc. (BAI) remained small in order to stay true to its values: providing exceptional service and technology to federal agencies. Once the third generation of the family joined the executive team, the company determined it was in a position to grow without sacrificing those principles.

BAI's growth strategy consisted of two major changes: First, the company redeveloped its value proposition. Instead of trying to offer every type of technology to every type of business, BAI narrowed its focus to cyber security. In addition, it shifted its focus to partnering with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) as a value-added reseller.

Historically, OEMs would offer companies market development funds to use toward marketing activities such as trade shows and webinars. However, BAI had a different idea for how to use those funds that would provide even more value to OEMs — but first, it needed a strong inside sales team.

About BAI:

BAI is a woman-owned small business based out of Annapolis, MD, that has focused on providing innovative IT solutions since 1977. BAI Federal products and services protect government agencies against targeted attacks while creating more highly available, responsive, and automated networks. BAI aims to provide a superior customer experience with the personal touch of a family-owned company.

Business Challenge:

To drive value for OEMs and demonstrate wise use of their funds, BAI needed to produce a flow of sales-qualified leads. Instead of using OEM funds for traditional activities such as trade shows and webinars, however, BAI decided to dedicate those funds directly to lead generation. Because the internal sales team at BAI spread its focus across several different clients and manufacturers, BAI needed additional sales support to drive targeted strategic campaigns for its Global Partner tier of OEMs.

That presented a dilemma: Hiring and training additional sales development representatives would be time-consuming, cost prohibitive, and challenging. Additionally, BAI had previously used other outsourced sales teams with mixed results.

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— Kristen Wisdorf, managing director at memoryBlue

To ensure success, BAI needed a trustworthy partner that could hit the ground running and provide immediate value to the technology manufacturers. Sohale Razmjou, director at BAI Federal, knew where to find trustworthy outsourced sales development assistance — because it was exactly where he had begun his own sales career: memoryBlue.



The Solution:

Deeply familiar with the unparalleled training that memoryBlue sales development representatives (SDRs) receive, Razmjou felt confident recommending that BAI work with memoryBlue for outsourced sales development activities. He knew that by partnering with memoryBlue, BAI wouldn't simply be providing a list of names and a script to a group of people unfamiliar with the company — they would be working with a passionate, knowledgeable, hard-working team.

"These reps are really going to be trained on the product; they're going to know how to speak to it," he explained. "They'll truly be an extension of both our sales team and our OEM partners' sales teams."

Plus, he knew that BAI would have the opportunity to hire full-time SDRs from the memoryBlue team.

In fact, Razmjou himself was the first memoryBlue alumnus to follow that route, and the inspiration for the memoryBlue model.

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BAI decided to partner with memoryBlue on four specific manufacturer campaigns: Gigamon, FireEye, Palo Alto Networks, and Okta. The memoryBlue team was tasked with concentrating solely on these manufacturer campaigns, so they could generate quality leads and free up the internal BAI sales team to focus on other opportunities.



Results:

Opportunities in the federal sector typically take a long time to close. However, the memoryBlue team quickly produced closed opportunities that led to over \$500,000 in revenue. In addition, the team has generated over \$5M in pipeline, setting the team up for long-term success.

When internal sales roles opened up at BAI, Razmjou took advantage of the memoryBlue business model to hire three full-time SDRs: Caity Cover, Sam Cartner, and Amanda Alphs.



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"They were hungry, they knew our culture and expectations at BAI, and I knew they would be able to ramp up quickly," he said. And that proved true; rather than the three to six weeks it typically took for a new hire to be brought up to speed, the memoryBlue hires immediately hit the ground running.

"They've been phenomenal," said Razmjou. "Culturally, they're fantastic. They completely changed the dynamic of the team. And of course, they delivered on performance as well."



The Future:

After seeing such phenomenal results, BAI plans to continue working with memoryBlue as it expands its sales team — both with continued campaigns driven by the outsourced team and by potentially hiring additional full-time SDRs directly from memoryBlue.

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About memoryBlue:

memoryBlue is a sales development consulting firm that specializes in helping a wide range of high-tech clients accelerate new business growth. The firm gives clients a competitive advantage in the reach and effectiveness of their sales development efforts. With nearly two decades of experience, over 850 successful client engagements, hundreds of highly successful alumni and local office presence in four major U.S. regions, memoryBlue is high-tech’s source for sales development expertise, execution, and talent.

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