Marketing Research and Business Planning for PlayLab

Introduction

PlayLab Inc. is a small Canadian company that offers a series of unique hands-on project-based educational experiences for students in Grades 1 – 6 in a multitude of disciplines, from the arts and the humanities, to science and engineering. The project-based learning approach not only enhances math, science, and literacy skills in children, but also helps them develop leadership, creative problem-solving, collaboration and entrepreneurial skills.

PlayLab came together with the George Brown College (GBC) School of Business to create a marketing and sales strategy for their services. A team of GBC business students, led by Professor Matthew Linton, took on the challenge. Their objectives were to convert PlayLab’s list of prospective clients to a usable Client Database, and devise a branding and marketing strategy that incorporates a web and social media technology.

Outcomes

Work began on the project with conducting marketing research, completing a competitive analysis and competitor report, and identifying prospective client groups. The next step was to design a promotional strategy and set the new marketing plans into action.

Utilizing an online CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, the team compiled and organized PlayLab’s contacts, as well as a broad range of detailed contact information for organizations that could help PlayLab expand its reach and increase the size of its potential customer base. This software now allows PlayLab to manage their sales process, as well as to create records of contacts made, conversations with their new contacts, next steps, and notes, so that the sales process can be managed interchangeably by any PlayLab employee, and overseen by PlayLab executives.

Next, the team established an online presence for PlayLab, creating social media pages for applications such as Facebook and Twitter and integrated these pages with the new CRM. PayPal was also integrated across all channels, which would allow users of the new system to donate, and allow PlayLab to accept payment via credit card online, in person, or over the telephone. An automated payment process can also be set up so that customers can receive bills and receipts automatically on a monthly basis.

The solutions provided gave PlayLab the freedom to share sales progress with a variety of employees, in a simple and effective way. PlayLab now has a structure from which a single person can effectively distribute content and attract a wide group of potential customers to the organization. Clients viewing PlayLab’s site also have the ability to submit their contact information, creating the potential to organically grow PlayLab’s reach.

Conclusion

This project, managed by the Office of Research and Innovation at GBC and funded by ONII (Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation) has enabled the research team to create strategies for this Canadian SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) to establish itself in the market, and the students involved in the project have gained valuable experience in their field. The project also marks the start of a fruitful research and innovation relationship with PlayLab.

The marketing and social media strategy born of this collaboration has provided PlayLab with increased opportunity for market outreach to a broader base and large pool of potential customers. It has also increased connectivity with current customers and partners, so as to keep customers well informed.

The GBC team has established a base from which PlayLab can communicate with the world!