



Re-Charging Lackluster Organic Growth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Successful wealth advisory firm experiencing declining organic growth and negative financial impact.
- Lack of unified messaging and repeatable sales process identified.
- Broad-based group effort to develop client-focused messaging and new, comprehensive sales process.
- Close ratios improved quickly, restoring firm financial health and employee morale.

PROBLEM:

A large wealth advisory firm was experiencing a dramatic decline in their organic growth which was beginning to impact their financial health. They were concerned that client service capabilities would begin to suffer and that long-term employees were getting restless with the lackluster growth of the firm.

The firm's lack of detailed sales reporting made determining causes for the growth decline impossible. They felt it could be blamed on the investment results of their broadly diversified portfolios for their slow growth. In researching growth rates of competitors (other firms with broadly diversified, more conservative portfolios) and this firm's growth rates during previous periods of below market portfolio results, their investment portfolios were not to blame.

SOLUTION:

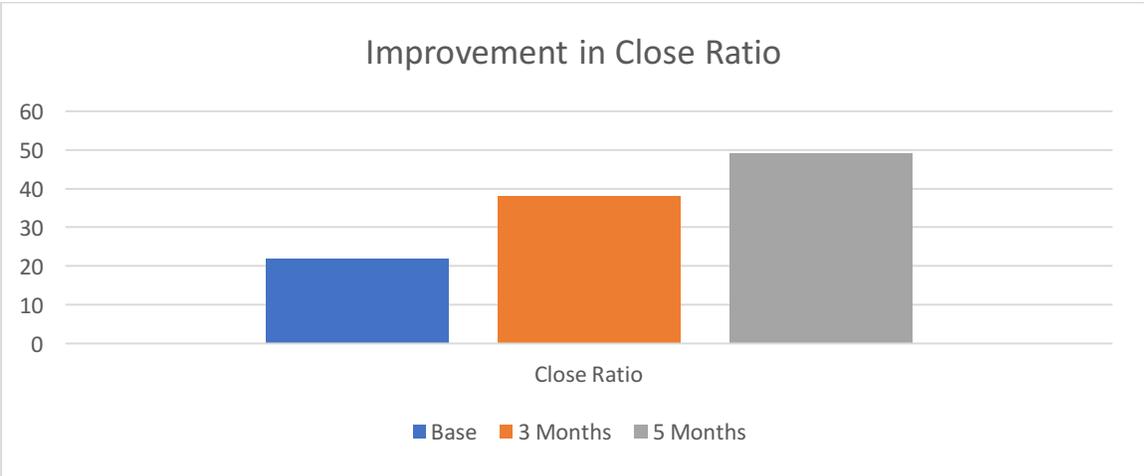
We started by conducting interviews with all firm partners, business managers, wealth advisors, and wealth managers to gain a deeper understanding of the firm's, and individual advisors', messaging and sales development best practices. As best practices were gathered it was discovered that unified messaging and sales process best practices did not exist, all individuals and teams were using their own messaging and sales process. Through several firm-wide sessions we were able to develop new, client-focused messaging that would be implemented across the entire firm. Specific training and role play sessions were created to assist individuals and teams in gaining confidence and consistency in message delivery. These same themes and words were incorporated into the firm's website and print materials.

After a unified message was developed, we created a task force, made up of business managers and select wealth advisors, to develop a consistent, repeatable sales process. The sales process was broken down into its simplified parts – prospecting, qualifying, discovery, proposal delivery, and closing. Goals for each of these parts were defined and existing processes were assessed against those goals. We instituted a new, targeted prospecting system along with a full-scale redevelopment needed within discovery and proposal development making both areas simpler and more cohesive. Sales process reporting was created and implemented to be able to track

firm, and individual, activity through each step of the new sales process so that real-time issues could more easily be identified and adjustments could be made by individual wealth advisors to achieve better sales outcomes. A phased rollout was chosen to implement this new sales process across the firm and team-level training plans were developed. Full implementation was phased in over 3 months.

RESULTS:

The most obvious result was rapid improvement in close ratios of new business across teams. The average close ratio for all teams prior to the new process was 22% (with a range of 16% - 40%). Teams showed a dramatic increase in their close ratios, on average, after 3 months of using the new sales process and saw their close ratios double (on average) 5 months after implementation.



Additional feedback from wealth advisors and teams identified that they were getting in front of a greater number of qualified prospects, the sales process was easier to follow, and they felt they could spend more time focusing on their prospects' needs and objectives during each stage. This efficiency within the sales process also allowed prospects to advance through the stages more quickly so average length of time from initial contact to new client was shortened. There was also an immediate increase in morale from all employees as they felt everyone was working together and that progress was being made to recharge firm growth.

OUTCOME:

While it took several months for new business close ratios to increase, the success at closing new business led to improved cash flow and profitability for the firm. They were able to begin several new development initiatives that had been put on hold previously and began to expand their wealth advisor team for the first time in several years.