



SalesRenewal

Growing Sales, Sharing Risk and Reward.

JointSourcing™ in Action

How the Concord Flower Shop
More Than Doubled Its Online Sales
and was Ranked in the Top 1% of
Local Businesses by Google

Executive Summary

The Challenge

Like most small businesses in today's economy, back in 2009 Concord's premier florist faced multiple challenges. Its most obvious source of significant new sales was online, yet it seemed obvious the me-too, expensive website and sales services being provided by a large, national florist association would not scale.

Further, given the demands of its retail operations there was neither the time to devote to marketing the site, the money traditional vendors were asking for enhancing it, nor the *technological expertise* both efforts required.

Consequently, The Concord Flower Shop's owner, Helen Halloran, turned for help to Sales Renewal and its unique, joint venture approach to increasing sales.

The Strategy

Blueprint - First, based on The Concord Flower Shop's desired goals and strategies as well as the local competitive landscape, Sales Renewal went through its standard analysis and problem solving process to create a "Blueprint" for a customized "sales machine" that would help the company meet its expanded sales goals.

Build Services (Technology) - Second, Sales Renewal renovated and added to the florist's existing online marketing and sales systems to bring them up to the new Blueprint's specifications.

Ongoing Sales Services (Technology, Marketing, and Sales) - Third, on an annually renewing basis, Sales Renewal began marketing the florist's site and generating new sales, while the Concord Flower Shop continues to be responsible for fulfillment and providing overall business management and control.

This ongoing, joint venture-like, third stage is where Sales Renewal's approach is most unique and compelling, because it *aligns* both parties' interests to create a win-win relationship.

The Concord Flower Shop, for instance, knows Sales Renewal is going to work very hard to sell its products and services because the resulting commissions provide *all of Sales Renewal's ongoing profits*. Furthermore, Sales Renewal actually contributes toward any marketing expenses in the same percentage it earns from sales. As a result, the flower shop's owner feels confident that Sales Renewal will recommend only cost effective marketing techniques and campaigns.

- Helen Halloran

"Working with Sales Renewal is a real partnership, I know the floral business and Sales Renewal knows technology, marketing and sales."

The Results

In the two years since Sales Renewal began its efforts on behalf of The Concord Flower Shop, online sales have more than doubled (227%) from what the national florist association was producing. In addition, Google awarded The Concord Flower Shop a “Favorite Place” designation, proclaiming it “one of the most popular local businesses on Google ... less than 1% of all U.S. businesses receive this recognition.”

Background

The Concord Flower Shop was established in 1898 and has been locally owned and operated since 1983 by Helen Halloran. An independent, “green” florist that carries a large selection of cut flowers from local sources as well as from around the world, Helen prides herself on her shop’s floral creativity and ability to design compelling, long-lasting arrangements.

Challenges

The Concord Flower Shop had been selling online for a number of years, but Helen was unhappy with the results. For one thing, the provider of her website and online sales and marketing services was a large, national corporation that tended toward a one-size-fits-all approach. Halloran, however, wanted to go *hyperlocal* and focus exclusively on

Concord and its 15 neighboring towns. This was not simply a matter of marketing within a narrow geographic area: for the florist, anyone in the world could be a customer as long as the flowers were to be delivered within her

towns. Similarly, Halloran wanted to better differentiate her business from its many competitors, but again, only local competitors concerned her.

Halloran had also learned the importance of having a single, easy-to-update, marketing and

e-Commerce site. The store had been struggling with two separate sites: a regular web site with marketing information and an e-Commerce site (provided by the national company) with products for sale. Because neither site was integrated with the other, or more importantly, with the point-of-sale system in the retail store, any product change in one system often required making the *same change* in the other two. And because this process was so time-consuming and inconvenient, it often wasn’t done promptly or wasn’t done at all. This meant the e-Commerce catalog (specifically, flower shop items for sale on the Web) was not kept up-to-date.

Given that the floral business is very time sensitive (Mother’s Day designs don’t sell very well after Mother’s Day, for example), Halloran knew that having a stale catalog was not the way to create sales success.

Finally, Halloran had many ideas she wanted to try online

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(such as specific features for the site, creative ways to promote it, etc.). Yet as a small business, she feared she would not be able to afford to do these things and would have to risk making many time consuming, confusing technology decisions (she was, of course, by training a florist, not a technologist).

Sales Renewal's JointSourcing Solution for Increasing Sales

1. Blueprint: Analysis, Strategy and Planning

Working with the Concord Flower Shop, Sales Renewal first developed its trademark Blueprint for an online sales machine—a comprehensive, integrated set of technology, marketing and sales services to be deployed in stages over time—that started with Halloran's hyperlocal, independent business strategy for her company, brand and website. For example, the finished Blueprint specified development of a new email marketing system featuring a look and feel consistent with the new site

(technology). It then recommended the creation of a yearlong promotions calendar (marketing) that would be used to create once-a-month email blasts (sales).

Says Halloran, "The Blueprint phase was important to me because it gave me a road map for the site as well as future marketing campaigns and helped me stay focused on results. But it was also important that it was not a rigid document, because as we proceeded, I saw additions I thought would be valuable, and Sales Renewal had its own recommendations.

So, depending on the importance of the enhancement—say adding a special feature to the website or developing an online ad campaign in time for an upcoming holiday—we could modify the schedule to get that done. Sales Renewal's flexibility meant that, although we were working towards a defined goal, we were also nimble enough to respond to new ideas and opportunities."



The new Concord Flower Shop homepage.

An example of that flexibility, and the comprehensive, integrated nature of Sales Renewal's partnership

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approach, occurred at the end of the school year in 2010, when Halloran was looking for ways to grow her high school prom business. First, Sales Renewal worked with her to devise a new teenage-oriented marketing strategy. Then, Sales Renewal enhanced the site's technology so that:

1. Buyers could request a delivery update in the form of an email or text message, and
2. Employees could quickly update an order's status—critically important given the high volume of sales on busy days.

Finally, Sales Renewal created and managed a Facebook advertising campaign targeting local high school students. These ads offered teenagers something unique they could relate to: receiving a text message when their order was ready for pickup.

2. Building the Sales Machine

Once the Blueprint was complete, Sales Renewal began deploying new digital sales systems (such as the direct email marketing system) and renovating existing ones (such as the new website) with the goal of bringing sales performance up to the Blueprint's specifications, which included:

- A single *marketing and e-Commerce site* integrated with FloristWare Inc.'s Point-of-Sale system.
- Sales Renewal's *Content Production System*, that makes it easy for flower shop staff to update the product catalog.
- An intentionally homespun *website design* as befits a local, small business site.
- A *promotion system* that can display messages on the home page and all interior pages, and a *contest registration & awarding system* used to promote the company and acquire new email addresses. Both systems are controlled locally by the Concord Flower Shop, giving Helen and her staff complete control over their own messaging and timing of special offers, promotions, and other contests.
- The *e-Commerce ordering/shopping cart*, with various compelling features such as allowing a customer to choose a specific delivery time.
- The *blog*, which serves as a customer retention tool and allows Halloran to build her reputation as a knowledgeable resource and also raise the store's ranking in online searches.

"I've been a small business owner for 26 years and I appreciate having someone who, thanks to its financial interest in my success, is almost as motivated as I am to grow my business."

• **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** – The website is regularly optimized for search engines through site, keyword, and competitive analysis and refinement, assuring it remains

well positioned to receive “free” traffic.

Sales Renewal also began submitting the site to national and local search engines, directories and Yellow pages to further improve the Flower Shop’s “findability.” In addition, whenever these third

parties allow a business to customize and enhance their listing, Sales Renewal creates (and maintains) these, too.

• New direct marketing (Constant Contact) and advertising campaigns run monthly on Google, Facebook and LinkedIn.

3. Ongoing Sales Services: Running the Sales Machine

Sales Renewal, unlike its competitors, extends its services beyond the one-time delivery of a website. Instead, it works in an ongoing partnership with clients to maximize their sales.

“Working with Sales Renewal is a real partnership,”

says Halloran. “I know the florist business and Sales Renewal knows technology, marketing and sales. I’ve been a small business owner for 26 years, and I appreciate having someone who, thanks to its financial

interest in my success, is almost as motivated as I am to grow my business and who is happy to help me hash out ideas and gives feedback from the perspective of the customer.”

Once the Initial Services were complete and the Sales Machine was “up to snuff,” the Concord Flower Shop’s Ongoing Services began. These include:

• **Quarterly Marketing Plan** – This includes monthly email newsletters, on- and off-line ad campaigns, and contests and specials often tied to the season. The goal is to maximize sales during big flower-buying periods (Valentine’s Day, Easter, graduations) while also boosting revenue during slower times.

• **Online Ad Campaigns** – These programs help to increase online sales for deliveries within a narrow geographic area. With Google ad campaigns focused on specific holidays and targeted to specific towns plus Facebook campaigns targeting specific demographics, Sales Renewal has been able to maximize the

The very busy, day before
Mother’s Day 2011, a happy
(and tired) Halloran remarked:
*“I feel like we’ve created a
monster, we’re so over-whelmed
with web orders! Can we make it
stop? Just kidding ... ”*

flower shop's advertising ROI. Furthermore, insights gained by Sales Renewal's marketing experts from the advertising campaigns (such as which messages and language are working the best) are directly fed into and regularly improve the email campaigns and Search Engine Marketing efforts.

- **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** – Sales Renewal routinely reviews the flower shop's site to be sure it maintains its optimal position in search engine results, and that listings are accurate. Many of the flower shop's pages on third party sites (e.g., Google Places) are managed by Sales Renewal with minimal input from Halloran.
- **Email Marketing** – A monthly email campaign, driven by the marketing calendar, promotes one to two relevant themes each at a time (Mother's Day in May, graduations and Father's Day in June, for example).
- **Ongoing Strategic & Marketing Consulting** – The Concord Flower Shop also consults with Sales Renewal for general expertise and advice, on an as-needed basis. As an example, during the quiet summer months, Halloran was interested in creating a contest to boost her sales, and Sales Renewal helped her plan and implement the promotion. Our advice ranged from what form the contest should

take, to how long it should run, to how best to promote it both on- and off-line. Sales Renewal has also assisted Halloran in writing a description of her business for a brochure the local Chamber of Commerce distributed.

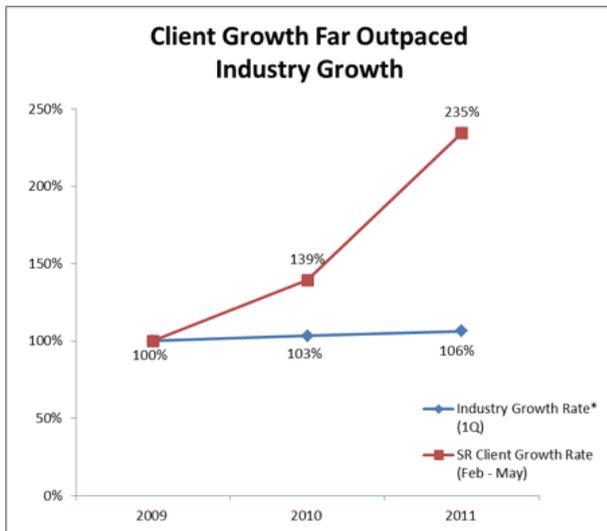
Results

Just eighteen months after the new website went live; the Concord Flower Shop's partnership with Sales Renewal had already paid off, with Halloran happily meeting all her goals: increased sales, a better-differentiated brand, a new, integrated website, reduced costs, and better use of technology.

- **Online Sales** – The new site was launched in February of 2010, and Sales Renewal simultaneously began its sales and marketing on behalf of the Concord Flower Shop. Seventeen months later, overall sales have increased 235%; while key holidays (such as Mother's Day, that can make or break an entire year) have more than tripled.



Critically important, this new growth did not come from a rising tide lifting all boats: while most flower shops struggled with challenging economic times, the Concord Flower Shop's growth placed it in the top 2% of the industry:



The annual trend is also favorable: 5 of the 7 highest revenue months since Sales Renewal started assisting with sales occurred in 2011, and growth since then has been remarkable. The annual trend is also favorable: 5 of the 7 highest revenue months since Sales Renewal started assisting with sales occurred in 2011, and growth since then has been remarkable.

- **Online Orders** – Halloran also wanted to take market share from her low-end competitors (such as supermarkets) while maintaining and growing the upper-end customer base. This goal has been successfully met also:



- **Google Local Favorite Place award** – Due to Sales Renewal Search Engine Marketing efforts, the Concord Flower Shop became one of the most popular local businesses on Google, as measured by how many times people found the business listing and clicked on it for more information. Less than 1% of all U.S. businesses receive this recognition according to Google's award letter.



Conclusion

While developing a new website to combine marketing with e-Commerce and to increase online sales were its primary goals, in partnership with Sales Renewal the Concord Flower Shop proved how well a small, local business can reduce its costs and grow its online and real-world business by means of an ongoing, integrated technology, marketing and sales effort.

“I did not take the decision to increase my spending on the website and online marketing lightly. But I know you have to spend money to make money ... I’m very excited that the new site is generating so many more orders than my previous one, and I really appreciate the other tangible benefits of my partnership with Sales Renewal as well.”

Concludes Halloran, “In this economic environment, I did not take the decision to increase my spending on the website and online marketing lightly. But I know you have to spend money to make money; growth doesn’t come for free. I’m very excited that the new site is generating so many more orders than my previous one, and I really appreciate the other tangible benefits of my partnership with Sales Renewal as well.”



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