

MBA4NYC Summary Analysis for #####

The primary purpose of this project was to provide ##### with a marketing plan that would enable the company to establish itself anew as a firm after the World Trade Center disaster.

Our initial focus was agreed upon as differentiating #####, and later our analysis uncovered its strengths as an IT consulting and staffing firm. This became the structure for the development of a marketing plan which would address issues such as sales, market positioning, promotion, customer segmentation, distribution channels, client interactions, product segmentation, pricing, geographical coverage and eventually specific marketing and sales tools. The underlying objective would be to help ##### develop its business in the US, increase its sales and placements, and generate more revenue.

Initial Review

In order to prepare for the development of a marketing plan, the first two months of the project (October to December) were allocated to an initial review of the company. The review focused on resources and capabilities, goals and vision, and matters related to organization. In particular, the review covered the following:

Clients

What is the existing client base? On what type of client did ##### focuses? What industry and functional areas does it serve? How do their contacts and clients perceive the company?

Skills and Staff

What are the areas of specific strength? What does the recruitment process entail? What are the details and values of #####'s work culture? How to assess #####'s depth and suitability for its specified interests?

Marketing Activities

MBAs4NYC Summary Analysis for #####

How does ##### approach clients and sell their services? What is its financial base and performance? What is the business model of ##, and its pricing strategy? What are the results, liabilities, and assets? What are the operational, strategic, and financial objectives?

Findings

In early December, our initial review was presented. The objective had been to give a fair picture of #####'s current standing, strengths, and weaknesses as it might position it for expansion in IT consulting. Our conclusions were the following:

On Clients

There was little awareness or credibility for ##### as an IT consulting firm due primarily to the fact that ##### was subcontracting as opposed to directly staffing clients. Most of its contacts and candidates were Asian, which might affect perception and positioning. Overall, ##, its staff, and its candidates received high professional regard, and there was especially high approval for the quality of #####'s service.

On Skills and Staff

The academic background of staff, with most having engineering and computer science degrees granted from Indian universities, appeared to be of a high level. #####'s management team had advanced degrees, from either US universities, and/or a focus on business management. Technology skills, although varied, are characterized as being based on a UNIX OS, a relational database backend, and a web-based, Java or Visual Basic front-end. Industry experience was broad with finance being the most common, but with a large number of functional areas including, accounting, inventory, health care, and HR/CRM.

On Marketing Activities

Client acquisition and matching is primarily through networking with contacts in business fields (especially finance) and sectors of expertise, with initial interactions

MBAs4NYC Summary Analysis for #####

being via a phone call. A letter and brochure follow successful first calls.

is primarily focusing on a staffing business model by contacting IT consulting firms and staffing agencies in order to guarantee subcontracts and listing as a preferred vendor. Volume and efficiency of direct contacts (calls and letters) remain at a low level currently. Added resources are currently invested to address these issues.

Overall, the feeling was that the firm lacked a sense of focus. ##### was typically only responsive to opportunities arising from recruiters and networking. No clear self-assessment was undertaken to target specific industry or functional areas. ##### was trying to be price competitive at the risk of being unprofitable without leveraging their competitive advantages and strengths.

In order to give marketing recommendations, a business segmentation model was presented that could help differentiation and positioning. The three lines of business considered were the following:

- Current staffing business model
- Extension to IT consulting services
- Extension to product development and business solution implementations

The shared opinion was that it made sense for ##### to focus on the staffing segment, since they had clear competencies in this area, and they were already entered in this market. As a limitation, ##### had no established capabilities in IT consulting and product development, at least at this early stage. Given these considerations, we felt better suited to offer advice in staffing, as opposed to the other two lines of business.

Responding to #####'s desire to grow into and be perceived as a recognized IT consulting company, we recommended that they use their IT staffing assignments as a way into client companies that could, with adequate contractor training, lead to actual project work or consulting engagements.

Differentiation and Positioning

MBAs4NYC Summary Analysis for #####

The next step of our project was to establish differentiation strategies to generate more staffing contracts, and ways of deepening relationship with existing clients.

A thorough analysis of competition was done. We assessed competitors in the IT staffing business by examining their websites, analyzing their sales and promotional strategies, using examples of other firms to help ##### differentiate and present itself in the most effective way. This work was accompanied by procedures for assessing prospective candidates and clients. Marketing tools, such as website design, brochure layout, call scripting, communication technique, and the development of a staff database were also addressed.

In mid-January, we presented an initial competitive review. It included the competitors' websites assessment and modes of differentiation: intrinsic (such as industry served, size of client, length of assignment), by marketing initiative (training, client/partnership model, candidate qualification process), by marketing materials (website, specific industry hiring overview, specific industry case histories). We also built up a questionnaire to assess selling points and differentiation factors.

The peer comparisons helped us to define critical factors in positioning and differentiation covering successful IT staffing companies:

- Proven Track Record of Successful Assignments
- Long-term Relationships
- Case histories
- Business Certification
- Endorsements and Testimonials
- Clear Presentation of Functions and Industries Served
- Responsiveness to Clients' Needs
- Broad Base of Resources
- Press statements

In early February, we followed up our focus on differentiation with meetings with Evan Herbst, an IT executive, who emphasized the importance of segmentation and the use of an elevator pitch (how to present your company in a few seconds). Brainstorming was done over case histories, differentiation factors, and marketing

MBA4NYC Summary Analysis for #####

techniques. Specific work covering potential client follow-up and introductory letters was presented.

Our work up to end of March was principally helping ##### to develop its case histories, anecdotes, self-assessment, and detailing its processes. In other words, we insisted on the importance of communicating to prospective clients examples of successful work, since understanding its strengths and success stories would help it to better position itself.

We conducted interviews to decrypt #####'s resources and capabilities; we presented them with tools for self-assessment such as a case history matrix, resume analysis and questionnaire base. Support to define a strategic focus and mission statement was given in order to better identify the functional and industry areas to target.

In mid March, a brand architecture and value proposal elements were presented. It covered ##### as a whole and not only the staffing business. Key differentiation factors were listed. Briefly, they were the following:

- ##### is up to date technologically
- They are easy to work with
- They have a corporate culture of integrity and commitment
- They are highly cost competitive
- They have worked with major US and International companies
- They show flexibility in their employment structure

End of March we gave ##### a list of building blocks that would be used in marketing tools for differentiation and positioning.

presented their work on interaction with Siemens (its major client) and other clients' assignment descriptions, award information from Capital One, congratulatory E-Mails regarding Sudhi's (principal member) work at World Bank, and other testimonials from clients (ex: Pierce Technologies). Details on candidates review, screening and training were also provided.

MBAs4NYC Summary Analysis for

The final part of the project was to provide ##### with deliverables (appended to this document after ##### and MBAs4NYC team signatures):

1. Elevator Pitch
2. Brochures
3. Cold Call Script
4. Website Content and Suggestions
5. Networking Opportunities and Industry Associations

The presentation of these deliverables end of April and early May concluded our project. A final meeting with a summary of our work will be held early June.

Signatures

		Date
Suchit K----- (#####)	_____	_____
Nirmal G----- (#####)	_____	_____
Sudhendar H----- (#####)	_____	_____
Robert C----- (MBAs4NYC)	_____	_____
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