

Taking the urgency out of an adrenaline-based business

Executive Summary

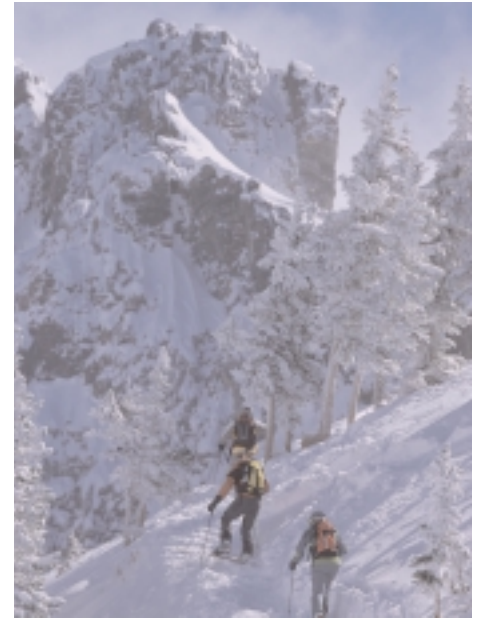
A high-profile, make-it-or-break-it project with an extremely tight deadline achieved success with the help of FranklinCovey training in FOCUS: Achieving Your Highest Priorities – Microsoft Outlook Edition. BackcountryStore.com, a fast-growing online retailer, utilized this training coupled with FranklinCovey PlanPlus, a plug-in for Microsoft Outlook that helps users focus on top priorities, boost productivity, and become more effective. As a result of the project's success the company realized a dramatic increase in the conversion rate of visitors to their site.

High adventure gear purveyors, BackcountryStore.com take planning to new heights

In the run-up to the holiday selling season, the money-making months at BackCountryStore.com, founders Jim Holland and John Bresee decided their next big bet would be to produce a printed catalog. This project would be the company's first venture into printed advertising – a departure from their stringent belief that all marketing for BackcountryStore.com is online and must show a 10x return on investment.

The company, founded with the purpose of providing outdoor adventure gear to hard-core recreational athletes, has experienced greater than 100% growth year-over-year since its inception in 1996. During the dot.com boom BackcountryStore.com eschewed the popular notion that taking on venture capital was the “only way to be a successful dot.com.”

According to the company website, Holland and Bresee began the company without investment, intent on selling cool gear over the Web, and found that if the content



is good the people will come. Nowadays it succeeds because of the hard work of real-life athletes who answer phone calls, e-mail, and keep the company up to date with the latest gear.

Since deciding in late fall to create a catalog, the team was pressed for time. To be effective, the catalog must arrive on doorsteps in less than two months.

Partners in Planning

The management team participated in FranklinCovey's FOCUS: Achieving Your Highest Priorities – Microsoft Outlook Edition workshop during this catalog challenge. The staff was

keyed up about the prospect of putting out a great book.

“We’re a company that is uber-focused. We apply rigid intensity to getting things done that’s unlike other places that I’ve worked,” said Christian Gennerman, Head Buyer. “We wanted to participate in learning time management, but didn’t think it would help us on this project.”

The new Focus – Microsoft Outlook Edition workshop from FranklinCovey was appealing to CEO Jim Holland who feels like he lives in Microsoft Outlook and doesn’t get to the important stuff due to the volume of email and voicemail that he receives.

“If a company can show me that staff time can be made more valuable then I’m sold,” said Holland. “This catalog project was just a great example of what FranklinCovey’s workshop and PlanPlus™ software was bringing to the table to enhance Outlook’s features. It helped us immediately.”

PlanPlus for Microsoft Outlook is FranklinCovey’s secret to making Microsoft Outlook more manageable. This Outlook plug-in layers the proven principles of time management and personal effectiveness on top of Microsoft’s ubiquitous software.

PlanPlus features a Home screen for users that gives one view into

email, tasks, daily notes, and their calendar. The task management functionality has been enhanced with a prioritized daily task list offering drag-and-drop usefulness in Outlook. Additionally the weekly planning walk through gives users a place to screen and schedule big rocks – items of great importance that must be accomplished. Where Outlook treats all information equally, PlanPlus personalizes and filters tasks, calendar entries and appointments against your most important priorities.

“I thought I was going to learn how to turn email pink, which I did, but what really got me was a greater forum for deciding what really matters to me and prioritizing time to spend on those items,” said Inventory Manager, Amy Luther. “I was able to have a conversation with my manager about the most important things, not just the urgent things. It’s a huge improvement for everybody.”

After bringing home the concepts from the Focus – Microsoft Outlook Edition workshop with PlanPlus and the tips and tricks for making Outlook more manageable, BackcountryStore.com discovered new ways to communicate about urgency versus importance. The catalog – an urgent and important project – was subdivided into goals. The team used PlanPlus to manage the urgency of the

looming deadlines and their ongoing personal commitments to keep balance during this stressful time.

“If I took the post-assessment now, I could honestly say that the training and tools we got from FranklinCovey kept us focused on our top goals,” said John Bresee, co-founder. “The team was more committed than ever to get the catalog out the door, but it didn’t feel like a race. We’ve learned to manage the tasks, sub-tasks and communications differently.” The catalog hit doorsteps across the country on time and on budget generating a one percent increase in BackcountryStore.com conversion rate of visitors to their site.

