



First Direct Corp.'s "Marketing Machine" Drives Company to Top One Percent Among FrontRange Partners

Among FrontRange Solutions partners, and small businesses overall, First Direct Corp. (1stdirect.com), stands out from the crowd. In a highly competitive industry, the firm has climbed to the top one percent of partners nationwide through what it calls its "marketing machine," developed with the use of GoldMine software and related add-on solutions. The company has more than 2,000 devoted customers around the country, ranging from major corporations to small home offices. Yet throughout its phenomenal growth the past few years, the company has not added staff.

Using the very products that it shows customers how to use, the company's success and exceptional efficiency come down to best practices, from the first contact with a customer to delivering ongoing service. According to Bob Ritter, President of 1stdirect.com, GoldMine software from FrontRange Solutions is the engine that has executed Ritter's time-tested strategies and processes since the company first opened as a marketing consulting business in 1991.

"I chose GoldMine as a product to use in my own business first, before we were a GoldMine dealer," Ritter said. "I was drawn to GoldMine because its automated processes, customization and strong work group concepts made it unlike any other products. I saw how GoldMine could be used to grow my clients' businesses along with my own. Simply put, GoldMine was going to yield the best return-on-investment (ROI)."

"Marketing Machine" Key to Business Growth

A serious direct marketer who teaches advanced college courses on the topic, Ritter believes, "Targeted communications is key." He relies on GoldMine to help him deliver a stream of highly targeted communications to contacts – with very little staff oversight. He added

that, with GoldMine's automation capabilities, "the computer doesn't forget, and it operates at a very low cost."

"Relevant, timed and compelling communications is what it takes!" Ritter said. "Depending on various factors about a contact, a firm or individual may be on more than one direct marketing track, each tuned to a different category of interest or purpose. My 'marketing machine' keeps things straight, so the type of communication, and medium of delivery, whether email, print, fax or a call, are timed to each specific client."

With ongoing communication, 1stdirect.com educates prospects and customers about sales, marketing, CRM, as well as its offerings. And in the process, the firm builds awareness of First Direct itself. "Add professional sales assistance and caring customer service into the mix, and you've got a formula that builds long-term relationships," Ritter said.

To do all this, Ritter points out, "the database is mission-critical to a direct marketer." 1stdirect.com maintains key details about companies and contacts for marketing, sales and service. Ritter is dutiful about maintaining information. "Dirty data is the enemy of marketing," he explained. At 1stdirect.com, maintaining data integrity comes down to training staff on what information to collect and input, continuously reinforcing the importance of that process, and effective use of reporting.

Ritter appreciates the need for "pipeline management," which any good CRM system does well, but he also emphasizes the need to use CRM technology to augment the efforts of sales people. "By anticipating questions, objections, cross/up sell opportunities, we can prepare fulfillment materials ahead of time so that staff can respond rapidly and professionally."

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Sales, Marketing
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Customer Service



Communication
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Master the Dynamics of Change™



Finally, with all activities and results stored in GoldMine, 1stdirect.com analyzes its efforts with regular reporting. The company uses that data to identify trends, learn what works, and manage people and processes more effectively. With reports, 1stdirect.com ensures contacts are not lost or forgotten. Ritter shares reports with employees, which gives them valuable feedback on their efforts.

Beyond the “Marketing Machine”

Beyond marketing, GoldMine has proven valuable throughout the company. “GoldMine is much more than a marketing solution to us,” Ritter said. “It’s also vital to administrative functions, customer service, vendor management, purchasing and other critical business functions.”

Ritter knows you can’t overlook people in the process. “Try as one may to automate, without people who care and work hard, any marketing and sales system will flounder,” he said.

Extending Functionality with Technology Add-Ons

With GoldMine as its foundation for sales and marketing automation, 1stdirect.com further supports its growth with a variety of add-on products. “Because of GoldMine’s popularity, I found a deep community of affordable integrated products that give me and my clients a more complete solution.” Ritter said.

A wide range of integrated add-on products extend GoldMine’s capabilities and add to the company’s efficiency, including, but not limited to, various OmniRush products from Z-Firm LLC to automate fax, print and e-mail functions; QuoteWerks by Aspire Technologies to expedite quoting; MasterMine by MasterMine Software for advanced data analysis and reporting; Stonefield Query by Stonefield Systems Group Inc. for custom reports; GoldBox from

Redstone SoftBase Company to manage data; and BounceLinker by CK Software and Consulting to handle undeliverable email.

Transferring Winning Formulas to Clients

The various manufacturers that First Direct represents call the firm a “value-added reseller.” “That’s a fair way to put it,” Ritter said. “1stdirect.com’s role is to help its customers apply technology and related best practices to their business models in the context of their own priorities, resources and capacity.”

That focus has been the key to customer satisfaction. As one First Direct customer put it recently, “First Direct’s knowledge of the product and the ability to apply it to our business processes has been an enormous added value,” said Andres Martinez, Manager, MISUMI, USA, Inc. “Their ability to pick up on our needs and deliver solutions that made sense quickly has been incredible!”

Best Practices, Executed with GoldMine, Pay Off

With an automated system, powered by GoldMine and add-ons, 1stdirect.com has achieved its award-winning results with little growth in staff. Time after time, the company has exceeded sales goals and propelled itself to be a top-performing partner for numerous technology products.

“First Direct is a great team of CRM specialists,” said Tricia Cate, Channel Manager at Z-Firm. “They invest in learning how to leverage GoldMine and they keep their customers happy. Z-Firm has worked with First Direct for eight years, and they have always represented the best in the CRM channel.”

AT A GLANCE

FrontRange Solutions Partner/User:

First Direct Corp.

Industry:
Consulting

Employees: 10
Customers: 2,000+

Products:
GoldMine®
GoldSync®

GoldMine Business Benefits:

Delivery of highly targeted, automated communications to build contacts and profitable relationships.

Activities and results analysis with frequent reporting to identify trends, learn what works, and effectively manage people and processes

GoldMine as a foundation for sales and marketing automation provides further support for growth and efficiency with a variety of add-on products from FrontRange technology partners.

Consistently exceeded sales goals, putting 1stDirect in the top one percent of FrontRange partners nationwide.

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John C. Lewe IV, President of Aspire Technologies, Inc., maker of QuoteWerks, agrees that 1stdirect.com sets itself apart from other top partners with its use of automation and a proactive approach to client needs.

“Customers are happier in the long run if you provide them with a complete solution that really meets their needs,” Lewe said. “What sets First Direct apart from other top 10 partners is that they proactively pursue business with GoldMine and add-ons as a complete solution for customers.”

According to Paul Petersen, Senior Director, CRM Business Unit, at FrontRange Solutions, that success stems from the company’s sales and marketing savvy. “From the top down, First Direct is a sales and marketing driven company,” Petersen said. “It starts with their culture, and then they turn on their marketing machine, GoldMine, to personalize communications and automate processes – and achieve fantastic results.”



About First Direct Corp.

Since its founding in 1992, 1stdirect.com has been a FrontRange Solutions partner supporting all FrontRange/GoldMine products. 1stdirect.com handles a full range services, including analysis/process design, installation and configuration, customization, training, automated processes, data conversion, reporting, as well as on-site and help desk support. For more information, call (800) 935-4386 or visit www.1stdirect.com.

About FrontRange Solutions

FrontRange Solutions develops award-winning software and solutions used by more than 130,000 companies and over 1.2 million users worldwide to manage a wide variety of business relationships and provide exceptional service. FrontRange product families, designed specifically for small-to-medium-enterprise (SME) and distributed enterprise organizations include: GoldMine® for business relationship management, team-based contact management and sales forces automation solutions; IT Service Management with HEAT® and ITIL standards-based modules for complete service management; Communication Management including IP Contact Center for reduced telephony costs and increased agent productivity, streamlined customer service and communications; and Infrastructure Management, which provides the ability to optimize the full lifecycle of a company’s assets. Customers representing 44 percent of the *Fortune* 100 and 76 percent of the FTSE 100, include Coca-Cola, Shell Oil, Prudential Securities, Électricité de France, Mack Trucks, Campbell Soup, Avaya, Bechtel Corp, Bank of America, and Turner News Network. For more information, call (800) 776-7889 or visit www.fronrange.com.

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