ignitia

Referral Strategies

Tips and tricks for helping us land clients

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2010

version 03132010

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this document is to help you, as a friend or partner of Ignitia Consulting, effectively pitch our services to a number of different kinds of clients. This document will show you how we sell and explain how our referral policy works.

THE SALES PIPELINE

This is sales and marketing 101. This is what we used to teach high tech entrepreneurs when I was with Rocket Builders. We helped nearly 100 companies increase their sales and penetrate new markets. What we are selling is different than what your average software company sells but the principles are the same.

The first thing I want to introduce is the concept of the "sales pipeline". This is the idea that sales is a numbers game (and it is to a certain extent) in which every person you talk to about our services enters a funnel that gets narrower and narrower as we get down to the people that are actually going to do business with us.

Figure 1: Typical sales pipeline diagram

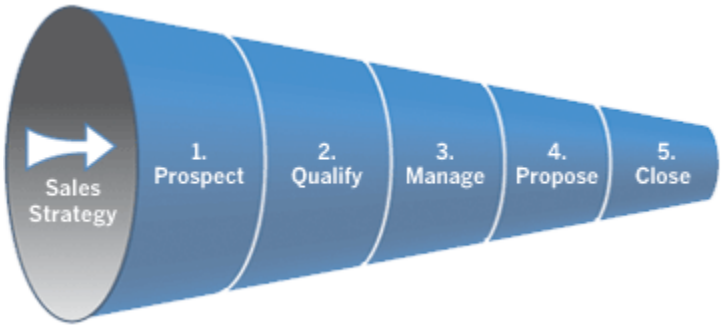
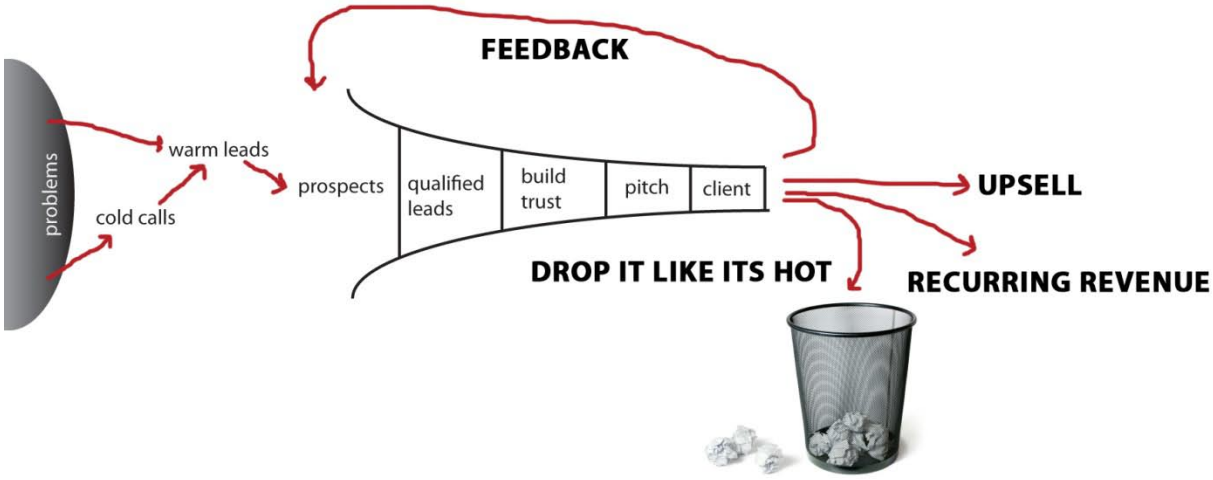


Figure 1 is a typical sales pipeline diagram that you would see in any business textbook or sales training book. Figure 2 (below) illustrates how Ignitia's sales pipeline works.

Figure 2: Ignitia's Sales Pipeline



Here are the elements of our sales pipeline:

1. **The cloud of problems**. This is a concept borrowed from the public policy profession. The cloud is the noise that is out there – potential clients telling (sometimes shouting) everyone who will listen their problems. That is what should catch our attention. When people say "We are having a tough time with…" or "we just can't seem to solve…", etc…
2. **Cold calls**. This is what we do when we zone in on a problem in the cloud. We call up the person having the problem to ask them for more information about their problem and tell them what we do.
3. **Warm calls**. Once you've established a rapport with the person that has problems, they are no longer a cold call, they're a warm call meaning that hopefully communication from you to them will be welcomed. In cases where you already know a potential client from another realm of your life (your personal or professional network), they start out as a warm call and develop into prospects.
4. **Prospects**. These are individuals that have a clearly identified problem that we can potentially solve. This is where we stop "networking" and start "selling".
5. **Qualified leads**. This is an important term to understand. A qualified lead is not just someone that we could potentially do business with but someone who has:
    a. **Identified that they might be interested in doing business with us**
    b. **Has the authority and budget to retain our services**
    c. **Has requested (explicitly or not) our assistance**
6. **Build Trust**. This is the stage of the relationship where you are building up that person's confidence in your ability to help them. We'll talk about what exactly to do later in this document but this is the soft selling part of the process.
7. **Pitch**. This usually happens in two stages.
    a. **A high level pitch** – what, in general, we think we can do for them.
    b. **A formal proposal** – this is the details. Costs, timelines, deliverables, workplan, etc…
8. **Client.** This is what we're shooting for. Close the deal.
9. **Feedback.** At the end of an engagement, every client is a potential repeat customer so we feed them back into our "warm leads" and "prospects" category and keep in regular touch with them to find new opportunities to work with them.
10. **Upsell.** This is when we do one small piece of work for a client then we try to convince them that we could help them even more with some additional work or a bigger budget.
11. **Recurring Revenue.** These situations are ideal where we get a long-term service agreement with a client to do the same projects or deliverables over and over again for a number of months or years without bidding each time.
12. **Drop it Like it's Hot**. Some clients are poisonous to us. We have been fortunate to have very few so far. At some stage, with bad clients, you have to walk away because it is unhealthy to do business with them on a number of fronts.

THE CLIENT FOODCHAIN

Certain types of clients are more valuable to us than others.

Table 1: Client Foodchain

Client Type	Cost of Acquisition	Value of Contracts	Chance of Repeat Business
Repeat Customers	Low	Med-High	High
Referrals from Customers	Low	Varies	Med
Referrals from Network	Low	Varies	Med
Pull Marketing	Med	Low-Med	Low
Push Marketing/Cold Calls/RFPs	High	Low	Varies

What do I mean by all of this?

1. **Cost of Acquisition**. How much time and money does it take for us to land that client. Do we have to go to 2-5 meetings? Drive all over town? Courier things to other cities? Spend a lot of time filling out formal RFP requirements? It all adds up.
2. **Value of Contracts**. No one is going to give a firm they've never worked with before a nice, big, juicy contract. You have to earn those. Until you have a trust relationship with the client, the jobs are going to be smaller. The cost of acquisition might not be smaller.
3. **Chance of Repeat Business**. This is how likely this person is to turn into a regular customer.

Repeat Customers are the best customers. They already know our work and know what kind of quality to expect. They'll often call us and direct award contracts to us based on past experience and this is ideal. We have relationships like this currently with UBC and Terasen Gas. We'd like to build more relationships like this.

Referrals from Customers are also good. This is when customers who are happy with our work tell their contacts and recommend us. This is almost as good as a repeat customer because it saves us a ton of leg work.

Referrals from Network. These are almost as good as referrals from customers but put yourself in a potential clients' shoes: someone you trust tells you that we're good but that they've never actually done business with you before. How far will you trust that recommendation?

Pull Marketing. This is clients that call us to inquire about our services after having hear about us through networking or read our blog or seen our card somewhere. These are good but you have to spend a lot of time with these people telling them what we really do and finding out exactly what it is they're looking for before they are a qualified lead.

Push Marketing/Cold Calls/RFPs. These are the hardest clients to land. We have to do a lot of leg work to get in front of these people and we have no idea if they're interested in talking to us or not. We also have no idea if they consider us professional enough to work with. Not a great starting place. As you can guess, our success track record with this group is low compared to the other groups.

Note: Dragana had a couple of excellent comments here. Specifically that clients who send RFPs directly to us or RFPs that are perfectly matched with our skills are higher up the food chain that plain cold calls but not as high as repeat customers or referrals from customers.

LEAD GENERATION PROCESS

I call this process "mining your network". This is when you go through your contacts and the people you know looking for people to self-identify problems that they are having that we might be able to solve. Like precious metals in the ground, our best leads are mixed in with other connections that may or may not be valuable. Here is what your mining will typically yield:

1. **Connectors**. These are the people you know who seem to know everyone. These are extremely valuable people to contact about our services.
2. **New clients to pitch**. These are warm leads where there is a clearly identified problem and it looks like they're going to be a qualified lead.
3. **Other staff within current clients' organizations**. In some cases, you might be working with one department or individual in a company or organization without getting to know the rest of the company. Finding other people within that company – especially if they know your client is a golden opportunity to turn that client into a repeat customer. We've been very successful at doing this at UBC.
4. **Garbage**. There are some people in your network that are going to be useless to you in this regard. Don't waste a lot of time on them.

When you're sorting and sifting through your network, I would divide them into:

1. **Business to Business Clients (B2B)**
    a. **Capacity on Tap clients** (other consultants, large organizations, etc… who need extra help with ongoing projects)
    b. **Product and Service clients** (people looking for specific projects to be done)
2. **Connectors**
3. **Currently useless**

Once you've got your network categorized, I would spend the majority of your time chasing B2B clients, some time networking with connectors and don't go out of your way to reach out to those who can't really help you.

OUR REFERRAL POLICY

Our official referral policy is to give a 10% kickback to anyone who provides us with a **qualified lead**. This kickback is paid to the person who gives us the lead after we get paid in full by the client and it's only 10% on the first $100,000 on the first engagement only. This means we don't pay on follow-on projects – they're our client after the first referral. We also don't pay kick-backs to our own team. If you land the contract, increase your day rate when you're budgeting the project – no kick-backs to yourself.

To remind you, a "qualified lead" is not just someone that we could potentially do business with but someone who has:

a. **Identified that they might be interested in doing business with us on a specific project**
b. **Has the authority and budget to retain our services**
c. **Has requested (explicitly or not) our assistance**

Just giving one of us a name and a number of someone we should cold call or even an introduction is not a qualified lead. We can do that stuff on our own. A "qualified lead" is when someone's done much of the legwork for us. That's what we're paying them the 10% for.

WHAT IS IGNITIA SELLING?

Unlike a company with a product catalog and inventory, what we are selling is services. This is harder to describe to people than you might expect. I've appended some of our version 1 marketing materials to the back of this document so you can see our official pitch (work in progress) but to give you some concrete examples of what you can pitch to people, refer to this list below:

NON-PROFITS

The two areas where we get the most traction with these groups:

1. **Social Enterprise**

   This means that we can help non-profits and charities generate revenue for their cause by selling goods and services instead of relying solely on grants and donations. We have done this for several organizations already and as demand for funding increases, we are only seeing interested in these services grow.

   A common example that I like to give is what we helped the Learning Disabilities Association do in Vancouver. They had a workshop that they were giving to teachers on professional development days called "walk a mile in my shoes" which allowed teachers to see the world through the eyes of someone with a learning disability.

   When I asked them how much they were charging for this workshop, they said "$375". I said "per head?" and they said "no, for an entire gymnasium full of teachers". My jaw just about hit the floor. We worked with them to develop a new marketing program for their workshop targeting HR professionals in the private sector and managed to fill about 10 workshops in the last year alone with 30+ participants all paying $300 per head.

   This effort raised them $90,000 gross and roughly $75,000 net. For an organization with an annual budget of $280,000, this was a significant chunk of new funding. That's just one example.

2. **IT Infrastructre**

   A lot of non-profits have poorly developed, difficult to maintain websites that webmasters charge them every month for to both host and to fix content. We believe that these organizations are throwing their money away. Development of a basic website for a non-profit is quite often $5,000.

   What we offer non-profits for about the same amount of money is a wordpress-based website that is clean, search engine optimized, ready to link into popular social media tools and easy for staff to update. For that price, we also throw in a changeover to Google Apps to handle e-mail, calendaring, shared documents and chat functionality. We also throw in intergration with Basecamp and Highrise (37 signals). We also include some basic user manuals and training for all the software platforms we introduce. We do all of this for $5,000.

   What that price does not include is writing new content for their website and travel expenses for the training. In comparison, many IT Consultants will recommend the installation of MS Small Business Server for a small non-profit at a cost of $25,000 for their time, licenses and hardware. The maintenance fees and license renewal fees for this package are unknown at this time but are likely not small.

Our system – combination of Wordpress, Google Apps and a few 37 Signals products, offers a superior solution for small organizations at a fraction of the cost. The hard IT costs for keeping these products going to approximately $1,200 per year. I honestly can't say how much the upkeep for Small Business Server but let's look at both systems over five years:

Features	**Our System (Google Apps/Wordpress/37 Signals)**	**MS Small Business Server**
Up-front costs	$5,000	$25,000
Annual fees	$1,200	Unknown
Annual fees with no CRM/Project Management	$100	Unknown
TCO over 5 years (does not include IT support)	$11,000	$25,000
TCO over 5 years with no CRM/Project Management	$5,500	$25,000
Mac/PC co-compatible?	Yes	No
Website content management system?	Yes	No
Offsite access?	Yes	IF VPN installed, yes for some features
Maintainable by non-IT staff	Yes	No
CRM included?	Yes	No
Project Management software included?	Yes	No
Shared Calendaring	Yes	Yes
Smartphone access to shared files	Yes	No
Ecommerce capabilities?	Yes	No
POP3/IMAP support?	Yes	Yes
Full BlackBerry and iPhone support?	Yes	No (would require extra programs for all features)
Number of Seats at this price?	Up to 50, max 30 recommended (no incremental cost for adding additional users up to 50)	5 ($77 extra per seat added)

As you can see, our solution is cheaper and does more than what many IT Consultants will quote for a small business or non-profit. How do we know it works? It's what runs our business.

UNIVERSITIES

Our biggest client over the years has been the University of British Columbia which has 50,000 full time students across two campuses. We have helped them do the market research for and design nine new degree or certificate programs that are designed to be full cash recovery after they are launched.

We also work closely with the technology transfer office to help them commercialize inventions that are coming out of their labs. More information about that in our brocures.

GOVERNMENT

The majority of our work for the government is in research and program reviews. We have done a substantial amount of work in this area and helped design new strategies for government in the areas of nanotechnology, life sciences and skilled labour.

SMALL BUSINESS

We have worked with a number of small businesses in the past seven years on their market intelligence research. We spend our time doing two things:

1. Helping our clients understand their own market
2. Generating qualified leads for sales

A good example of our flexibility on these kinds of projects is the story of Clarity Accounting. Clarity came to Ignitia in a bit of a bind – they'd been denied a grant that they were counting on getting to pay for marketing intelligence research. They came to our firm and said that they were broke but could scrape together $5,000 from their person savings.

I told them that a good market assessment is usually between $28,000 and $35,000. I did promise to get back to them with some kind of solution and after some deliberating, decided to be their "market research coach" by telling them what to do, how to do it and letting them do all the work, they got a $30,000 market research project for $3,500. They came back to us a year later after gaining funding based on our market intelligence and hired us again to do a much bigger project.

ignitia services for education

We can help your institution stay at the forefront of education services by assisting you in entering new markets, developing new programs or improving the existing ways of working.

Ignitia Consulting has a solid understanding of the post-secondary education environment, developed by working with institutions such as the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and BCIT.

The education market is changing rapidly and competition for students is growing, presenting a number of opportunities as well as threats. New education providers are entering the market, innovative methods of education delivery such as eLearning are gaining in popularity, applied degrees and continuing professional development are gaining in importance, while the highly-skilled graduate students are likely to become even more sought after. Traditional institutions need to position themselves as high-value brands to maintain their market share in this environment.

We specialize in bringing a market-driven focus to the post-secondary environment and have developed extensive sector experience in the following areas:

program development and research

We have translated our experience conducting market assessments in the private and public sector into program development research for new degree and certificate programs.

Typically, we identify and speak with potential students to investigate what they are looking for in the proposed program. We also consult potential employers to find out which core competencies the graduates of these programs need to have to make them good candidates for jobs. This intelligence allows the faculty to better design learning objectives and outcomes with both students and relevant industries in mind.

We have completed market assessments on substantial number of full cash-recovery certificate and degree programs for UBC. This has helped UBC ensure that there will be sufficient demand to make the programs financially viable before they are launched.

technology transfer

Since 2008, we've been running an IT Review Panel for UBC that sees as many as 20 principal investigators per year present their technology in front of experienced IT commercialization professionals. In several cases, a panelist has taken a direct interest in a technology and helped the inventor to either launch a start-up company or license the technology.

With our background in technology commercialization, market intelligence and post-secondary education, we are well equipped to liaise between faculty members who have invented technology and parties in the private sector who can help them bring their technology to market.

We spend a significant amount of time with each inventor to make sure they're ready to present their technology. Through our coaching, they gain new insights into their technology's market potential and refine the key selling points before presenting to investors.

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project management

Our team has worked with UBC as project managers on a number of initiatives, including the development of several new certificate programs for the Continuing Studies department at UBC and the establishment of a national research network co-ordinated from the Department of Economics at UBC.

We are normally brought in as project managers when there is insufficient staff to take on the project, when an outside perspective is desired or to set up infrastructure for a new initiative. The secret to our success is constant communication with the project sponsors to ensure that the desired outcomes are being achieved and effective management of resources involved in project delivery.

business planning and analysis

We assist IT departments to prepare business cases, and to elicit and negotiate stakeholder requirements when designing new services, applications and processes.

We use total- cost- of -ownership models and quantitative analysis as the backbone of the business cases. As in anything we do, stakeholder consultations and involvement are a key source of data for our business cases. In addition to providing business analysis services, we have played an active role in the development of a new Business Analysis Certificate at UBC and wrote one of the courses for the program.

Our team has provided business case development and business analysis services to the central IT department at UBC to assess feasibility of several new services. We worked with a range of stakeholders within UBC IT and faculties to incorporate their practices and requirements into the new models of IT delivery.

strategic planning and program reviews

We have worked extensively in the public and not-for-profit sectors reviewing existing programs, organization structures and future plans to identify ways to improve programs or to take the organization in a new direction.

When reviewing your programs, we're helping you to determine if a program is achieving the desired outcomes and whether you are using the available resources in the best possible way. If the program is not meeting your needs, we provide practical advice on both a new direction for the program and on how to make the transition.

Through our strategic planning services, we can help you carry out a solid background analysis which will help you take your program or department in the right direction. We are experienced in carrying out environmental scans to determine external opportunities and threats and in assessments of internal organizational strengths and weaknesses. We can then facilitate the process of defining your goals, objectives, performance measures and action plans to provide your organization a clear focus for the future.

In both program reviews and strategic planning, we examine your organizational structures to ensure you have appropriate resources to achieve your desired outcomes.

media

Ignitia helps clients understand and leverage traditional and new media content and marketing trends in order to reach out and engage their target markets. We focus on a variety of media best suited to achieve the goals of our clients, such as: print, film & television, the web, mobile, and social media.

Social Media is a new sector that is quickly becoming an essential communication platform between education institutions and not only their students but their employees and stakeholders as well.

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services for education

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ignitia services for energy

Ignitia has been working in the energy sector since 2005 on a range of projects that leverage our experience with stakeholder engagement, market research, product development, alternative energy, program review and demand-side management. We offer services in the following areas:

program review

Most energy companies in North America are either public utilities or are accountable to the government through a utilities commission. This means that your programs are either regularly reviewed or come under scrutiny unexpectedly.

What we provide is an independent review of your programs that can help you publicly demonstrate your successes or strengthen specific aspects of your program. Our program reviews will also help you establish long-term metric tracking that will make future reporting easier.

We have extensive experience reviewing commercial demand-side management programs and stakeholder engagement tracking metrics.

new market development

We have helped our clients explore district heating, geothermal energy, solar ponds, municipal waste methane repurposing and solar collector technology.

The world is increasingly moving towards alternative energy systems such as wind, solar, geothermal and bioenergy. With their existing infrastructure and public desire for alternative energy, energy companies are well positioned to move into new markets.

We are not engineers. Instead, we bring our knowledge of the technology from a laypersons' perspective and our ability to explain it clearly to the end user. We test market readiness to adopt these technologies such as the willingness to bear the increased cost. We also help develop the business case for entering into these markets so that you can put your idea in front of stakeholders, senior management and regulators for approval.

competitive intelligence

As energy markets become increasingly deregulated, they become more competitive. Marketing energy to consumers can be fraught with misinformation and confusion. The market intelligence we produce can be used in marketing materials and provides independent validation of your claims that consumers can trust.

We work with our clients to clarify the market offerings of their competitors, delivering a balanced comparison of their own and their competitors' products.

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regulatory affairs

We have the experience and the industry knowledge to help you respond quickly to complicated requests for information from interveners who have a range of motivations for getting involved in the regulatory process.

With our background in the energy sector and public policy, we are well positioned to help your company manage its regulatory affairs. When regulatory filings happen, they're an additional workload burden that many of our customers cannot handle without outside help.

Our fast response time and ability to work after normal business hours makes us an ideal boost to your regulatory affairs team.

stakeholder engagement

Our team is International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) certified and has direct experience in stakeholder engagement for a major hydroelectric utility. We also have extensive experience in stakeholder engagement IT solution procurement and implementation.

strategic planning and IT analysis

Through our strategic planning services, we can help you carry out background analysis to take your program/department in the right new direction. We are experienced in carrying out environmental scans to determine external opportunities and threats during assessments of your operations. We can then facilitate the process of defining your goals, objectives, performance measures and action plans to provide your organization a clear focus for the future.

In IT business cases, we use quantitative, total cost of ownership models as the backbone of the analysis. As in anything we do, stakeholder consultations and involvement are the key source of data for our business cases.

We have worked extensively in the public and not-for-profit sectors reviewing existing programs, organizational structures and planning for the future to identify ways to improve programs or to take the organization in a new direction.

In IT, we assist our clients to prepare business cases, and to capture and negotiate stakeholder requirements when designing new services, applications and processes.

media

Social Media is a new sector that is quickly becoming an essential communication platform between businesses and not only their customer but their employees and stakeholders as well.

Ignitia helps clients understand and leverage traditional and new media content and marketing trends in order to reach out and engage their target markets. We focus on a variety of media best suited to achieve the goals of our clients, such as: print, film & television, the web, mobile, and social media.

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services for energy

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ignitia services for government

The Ignitia team has a long history of working with the public sector. Many of us have worked for government earlier in our careers and continue to do projects for government clients at a variety of levels in a number of jurisdictions. The majority of our public sector work is at the Ministry or Crown Corporation level and we tend to work directly with departments within these ministries.

What we bring to our government clients is a good understanding of policy issues, the operational realities of working in the public sector and a belief that government has an important role to play in society – one that we want to support. We leverage best practices that we have learned from the private sector and non-profits to help our public sector clients start new things or take what they're currently doing in a new direction. We offer services in the following areas:

public policy and program development

We follow the Bardach Eightfold Path methodology of policy development which focuses on clear issue definition before embarking on research and review.

Our team has significant experience in public policy development – some of the areas we have worked in include labour markets, high tech, post-secondary education, cultural services and economic development.

We have translated our experience conducting assessments and planning exercises for non-profit organizations, private sector companies and universities into program development for government. We can help you carry out pre-requisite background analyses such as environmental scans or assessments of organizational strengths and weaknesses. We will work with you to articulate the purpose of your programs, the desired outcomes and activities that will help you achieve them, and to develop the suitable monitoring metrics.

program review and evaluation

As departments, ministries or crown corporations, all of our public sector clients are accountable to elected officials and the voting public. This means that your programs are either regularly reviewed or come under scrutiny unexpectedly. Program review and evaluation complements the suite of program related services we offer, helping you to demonstrate your successes.

What we provide is an independent review of your programs that can help you publicly showcase the outcomes of your program and strengthen specific aspects of your program in the future. Our program reviews will also help you establish long-term metric tracking that will make future reporting easier.

Some of the reviews and evaluations we conducted include employment and training programs, high tech cluster development, communications campaigns, organizational reviews and stakeholder engagement tracking metrics.

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project management

Our team has worked with the BC and Federal governments as Project Managers on a number of initiatives including the BC-wide Integrated Technology Initiative, an initiative to spin off a research arm of the National Research Council, the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table and other projects.

We are normally brought in as project managers when there is insufficient staff to take on the project, when an outside perspective is desired or to set up infrastructure for a new initiative. The secret to our success is ongoing communication with the project sponsors to ensure that the desired outcomes are being achieved on time and project resources are being managed effectively.

stakeholder engagement and research

We can provide public sector clients with original research and stakeholder engagement to pinpoint the needs of the communities your organization serves. This research can form the foundation of new programs, outreach campaigns and public relations material. Our research can also be used to discover opportunities to service an underserved communities with new programs and policies.

Our policy research can form the foundation of a briefing note to a Minister or the public and has been used to revamp programs to make them more reflective of the current socio-economic-political climate.

media

Ignitia helps clients understand and leverage traditional and new media content and marketing trends in order to reach out and engage their target markets. We focus on a variety of media best suited to achieve the goals of our clients, such as: print, film & television, the web, mobile, and social media.

Social Media is a new sector that is quickly becoming an essential communication platform between government and stakeholders.

training

Our team has experience training public sector officials in communications, marketing, research and stakeholder engagement. We can tailor our training to any size audience and always make ourselves available for follow-up questions from training session participants. We have conducted training on a variety of topics that range from how to leverage social media to how to conduct market research.

We pride ourselves on keeping audiences engaged but not rushed and provide resource materials so that participants aren't overwhelmed trying to take notes during our sessions.

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ignitia services for non-profits

The Ignitia team has a passion for the non-profit sector. Most of us have worked for non-profits earlier in our careers and continue to do both paid and pro bono work for a variety of non-profit organizations. What we generally bring to our non-profit clients is a good understanding of the non-profit environment and enthusiasm for their cause, combined with best practices we have acquired in other sectors. We leverage these tools to help non-profits start new things or take what they're currently doing in a new direction. We offer services in the following areas:

start-ups

We focus on helping our clients set up new non-profits for long-term success. This includes ensuring that they can generate sufficient revenue to carry out their mission/mandate and develop their boards. We also make sure that our clients' messages reach the intended audience and make a desired impression on them.

Starting a non-profit is not an easy task. Our team has built non-profits from the ground up by developing a business plan, setting up operations and working with stakeholders to hammer out the vision, mission and mandate. We have relationships and experience with organizations that fund non-profits. This allows us to help our customers meet funder's granting and reporting requirements successfully.

enterprise opportunities

Many non-profits receive a base of funding for a relatively short period of time to help them get established in their field. Few organizations can sustain themselves indefinitely on fixed grants and none can grow. When non-profits look to their future and see a need to diversify their revenue base, Ignitia can help.

A consistent truth amongst non-profits is that they rarely see the monetary value of the services that they provide to the community. Helping our clients see this opportunity and acting upon it is one way that we can diversify the revenue base for a non-profit. We can also help your organization position itself differently to qualify for new grants and funding.

We've worked with several non-profit organizations to find new sources of revenue – oftentimes commercializing a service or a product that was given away for free (or at cost) up until that point.

media

Social Media is a new sector that is quickly becoming an essential communication platform between non-profits and stakeholders.

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public policy and lobbying

We'll work with your organization to put the right information in front of those groups you need to lobby to ensure that your message is heard and acted upon. With our background in public policy and regulatory affairs, we understand what your partners need to see in order to help you meet your mandate.

Many of our non-profit clients not only provide a valuable service to their target communities but lobby government and industry on behalf of those communities. Too often, the lobbying efforts of well-intentioned non-profits are poorly received and rejected by government and industry because these solutions are not presented in a public policy framework that resonates with decision-makers' priorities.

Our team is made up of people who have experience working in government and industry – in many cases sitting across the table from organizations like yours.

stakeholder engagement and research

As a counterpart to our policy and lobbying work, we can provide non-profits with original research and stakeholder engagement to pinpoint the needs of your target communities. This research can form the foundation of fundraising initiatives or provide evidence needed to campaign for change in your community. We also show our non-profit customers how to turn research and stakeholder engagement into a revenue-generation opportunity for their organization.

program development and evaluation

We have translated our experience conducting assessments and planning exercises for government agencies, private sector companies and universities into program development for non-profits. We can help you carry out pre-requisite background analyses such as environmental scans or assessments of organizational strengths and weaknesses.

We will work with you to articulate the purpose of your programs, the desired outcomes and activities that will be delivered. Our evaluation services complement the suite of program-related services we offer, helping you demonstrate your successes to current and potential funders.

We can help you both plan and develop your programs, and showcase your achievements through evaluation. Our approach draws on a variety of best practices. We apply proven concepts from other jurisdictions as well as borrow and adapt concepts from the private and government sectors.

training

Our team has experience training non-profit staff and boards in communications, marketing, research and stakeholder engagement. We can tailor our training to any size audience and always make ourselves available for follow-up questions from training session participants. We have conducted training on a variety of topics that range from how to leverage social media to how to conduct market research.

We pride ourselves on keeping audiences engaged but not rushed and provide resource materials so that participants aren't overwhelmed trying to take notes during our sessions.

ignitia
services for non-profits

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ignitia services for start-ups and SMEs

Collectively, the Ignitia team has over 20 years of experience as entrepreneurs. Our experiences in starting and growing businesses through various stages of their lifecycle in a variety of industries allows us to offer start-ups and small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) a wide range of services to help start new things or take what they're currently doing in a new direction. We offer services in the following areas:

start-ups

We have experience building companies from the ground up in a variety of industries such as: hospitality, entertainment, high-tech and new media.

Starting up a business is not an easy task. There are many aspects of a business that require extensive research and thorough planning. We offer our clients assistance with assessing the feasibility of initial business ideas, developing a business plan and guidance in setting up the proper corporate infrastructure in terms of share structure, partnership agreements, employee agreements and supplier agreements.

In addition to our own mentoring services, we help our clients identify gaps in their company and help recruit additional advisors and directors that can complement the business. As our clients grow, we educate them in effective corporate governance in terms of proper communication and reporting protocols between executives and their Board members as well as succession planning for key team members.

market intelligence

In today's competitive global economy, knowing your market is critical. Ignitia leverages our experience in market assessments and helps our clients understand their position in existing markets, identify new emerging markets that can be tapped into, as well as third party validations and customer surveys.

We have helped a number of small businesses find their niche and grow their market share by correctly identifying the right opportunities.

product development

Some of our clients have used our services to refine their offering and their pricing to ensure that their product or service sells as well as possible.

Developing a world class product is hard enough, but without a proper "go to market strategy" taking your product to market can be an even more challenging task. Ignitia offers our clients a third party analysis of their products/services and assistance in developing effective pricing strategies, market validation and consumer testing of prototypes and concepts.

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sales and marketing strategies

We help our clients identify the platforms and channels that are the best fit with their business and develop customized strategies that can offer our client the best return on their investments.

With our entrepreneurial backgrounds, our team is well experienced in identifying and establishing effective sales channels. We assist our clients with developing sales strategies, marketing and PR strategies, marketing collateral, integrating Customer Relationship Management tools, implementing customer incentive programs, and social media strategies. As with all of our strategic plans, we don't stop with the development of a plan. We are ready, willing and able to help our clients execute the plans as well as measure and review the effectiveness of the strategies on an ongoing basis.

For clients with existing sales and marketing strategies we offer an auditing service where we review and provide recommendations for improvements to their existing strategies.

media

Ignitia helps clients understand and leverage traditional and new media content and marketing trends in order to reach out and engage their target markets. We focus on a variety of media best suited to achieve the goals of our clients, such as: print, film & television, the web, mobile, and social media.

Social Media is a new sector that is quickly becoming an essential communication platform between businesses and not only their customer but their employees and stakeholders as well.

business development

It is not uncommon for companies to plateau or hit a road block in any given aspect of their business. Our team is equipped to help clients break through road blocks and reignite growth within the company. Whether it be rebranding a company and its products/services, re-vamping business strategies, rejuvenating growth in stagnant markets, or exploring new emerging markets; our team is here to help our clients grow their business.

financial analysis

Most entrepreneurs are intimidated by the financial aspects of their business and thus unintentionally neglect this critical component of every business. Our team has financial expertise to help clients understand the financial components of their business, review current accounting practices, provide recommendations for improvements, put in place key measures and tools to help simplify their financial analysis processes, and understand key measures, metrics, and ratios that can be used on an ongoing basis to evaluate performance of products, divisions, and the company as a whole.

funding and investor relations

We have helped our clients successfully apply for and receive government grants, NRC/IRAP grants, and SRED tax credits. We have also helped connect and prepare clients for presentations to angel investors and Venture Capital partners.

Being entrepreneurs ourselves, we are well aware of the challenges of funding a business – especially start-ups. Ignitia helps match clients with potential funding sources. Once appropriate sources are identified we help our clients with application submissions, ongoing reporting required from various funding sources, as well as coaching before pitching to potential investors. Once investors are in place we also help our clients understand how to effectively communicate with their investors and in return leverage the knowledge base these new stakeholders can potentially offer.

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