



building revenue

“Doing the right thing” - RCR helps employment law firm GQ get focused on marketing

Case Study

Start-up employment law firm, GQ, knew they needed to be doing more marketing and business development. The question was, where to start? By working with RCR as their 'outsourced marketing director' they are now confident that they are 'focusing on the right things' and, more importantly, getting them done.

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Jon Gilligan and Paul Quain set up GQ Employment Law in 2010 following successful careers for both of them in major City law firms, such as Linklaters, and working in-house for large financial institutions. Their goal was to create a specialist firm that offered top flight employment expertise, with the close kind of partnership clients might expect from in-house lawyers. For the first year, GQ grew successfully by word of mouth and through the partners' networks of contacts but, as Jon says, “We knew we needed to do more; we’d decided that our strategy was to grow quickly by taking more people on, and growing outside our network, but it became obvious that Paul and I are both lawyers not marketers and we were unsure what we should be doing to achieve our growth objectives.”

A meeting with Victoria Ash, one of RCR's partners, at a networking event led to discussions about how RCR could help GQ. Jon describes working with RCR as “a very good fit” because of their experience of working with growing businesses, particularly professional service firms. He says, “They understood our challenges and knew we didn't have a huge marketing budget, so we'd be looking to get the most bang for our buck.”

Marketing planning project allows GQ to test relationship

The relationship began with a project to review GQ's business development objectives and develop a marketing plan that would be practical to implement, with or without RCR's help. Jon Gilligan also felt comfortable that this would be a good, low-risk way to test whether RCR was really a 'good fit' with GQ.

RCR's approach included several workshops with Jon and Paul using RCR's 9 Box Framework to help the firm focus on key priorities, as well as conducting some client and competitor research to understand how GQ was positioned in the marketplace. Using this input, RCR then created a practical marketing plan with three clear points of focus: rebranding the firm, raising its profile through strong communications, and proactive new business development.

Jon Gilligan clearly values the practicality, and says “It was very much not about lots of marketing babble but about getting things done; we identified what would work for us given our goals to grow and raise our profile, and how we were going to do things and when.” In addition to a written plan, RCR gave GQ a schedule and detailed budget for the various projects that had been identified, ensuring that GQ could implement the plan without RCR's help if they chose.

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Outsourced marketing director services underpin implementation

In fact, GQ chose to continue working with RCR as their ‘outsourced marketing director’ to support their implementation - a role that has been shared by Victoria Ash and Ursula Bosworth, another RCR partner. Jon Gilligan comments that this has definite advantages over employing a senior marketing person, even if GQ needed or could afford someone full time in this role. He says, “RCR’s independence helps in many ways because we feel we’re benefitting from their experience with other clients, plus the external relationship makes it easier for Paul and I to feel challenged. And I feel that we are getting very good value, as well as flexible resource.”

RCR’s experience and network has also brought other benefits, particularly in saving GQ time and expense. Having decided at the planning stage that the firm wanted to re-brand and develop a range of new communication materials, as well as a new content-based digital strategy, recruiting the right designers and developers was going to be crucial. The ability to create a clear brief, screen potential web and design agencies, and challenge costs and recommendations, was not something that GQ felt they would have managed well on their own. “We didn’t know exactly what we were looking for or what was best for us. Without RCR to help us, we would have been less efficient, less effective and it would have all been much more expensive.”

After the first phase of implementation, GQ and RCR have already achieved a number of the initial goals for the marketing plan. The new branding is due to launch shortly, along with a content-driven website and digital marketing strategy, designed to differentiate GQ’s positioning of working in partnership with clients and understanding the psychological issues at play as much as the legal ones.

The firm is also achieving its goal of an increased profile in the media. RCR helped appoint a specialist PR agency to help in this regard and GQ has already achieved some excellent media coverage on a range of issues.

The next phase of campaigns

Since RCR began working with GQ, the firm has taken on three new associates so the focus going forwards is on using the communications platforms and new positioning to drive new business development and growth. RCR has been working with GQ to develop a marketing campaign that aims to debunk some of the myths about the restrictions and complexities of employment law. The campaign will be going live shortly, using a mix of mailings, workshops, PR and telephone marketing to start and continue conversations with prospects.

Jon Gilligan sums up the experience of working with RCR so far: “They are very impressive and it’s given us access to experience and resource that we couldn’t otherwise afford, on a flexible basis. Victoria and Ursula have complementary skills, work very well together and with us, and they really understand the challenges of marketing a professional service business. The results to date have been great, and we’re looking forward to moving into the next phase of implementation.”

About RCR

RCR works with growing businesses to change the way that marketing works for them. We look at how you grow Revenue, build Capability and enhance your Reputation to create a sustainable increase in the equity value of your business. We help you work out what marketing and business development you should be doing, and how to get it done.

Clients choose to work with us in a variety of ways. Some use us as an outsourced marketing director, working flexibly to develop and implement strategy. Others engage us for specific projects, from prioritisation workshops to website projects. And some value our role as mentors and coaches for junior marketing staff and management teams, to help you achieve the change you need to make yourselves.

We work across a variety of business-to-business sectors. We have particular expertise in working with professional service firms (lawyers, accountants and consultants) but we also have experience in the manufacturing, design, technology, healthcare and construction sectors.

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