

CITIZEN

Citizen Systems America: Channel Strategy Execution

Citizen Systems America (CSA) is a receipt printer, mobile printer, and barcode label printer manufacturer. CSA sells via distribution to valued-added resellers (VARs) who install Citizen products at restaurants, bars, retail, convenience stores, and hospitals throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America. The receipt printer market is a mature market with entrenched behavior and a competitor who, at the time, controlled in excess of 70% of the market. CSA needed a way to take sales away from this giant.

Action: CSA engaged Seth Avergon to address their need for better marketing – including development of key initiatives, marketing programs, new materials, and a new website to meet the needs of distributors, VARs, and end-users. After analyzing the market and the competitive landscape, Seth developed a strategic approach for Citizen based on “attacking the edges”. By going after product applications where the competition was weaker CSA was able to achieve a series of wins in niche categories. CSA’s CT-S2000 front-exit printer was repositioned as their flagship product. Offering a front-exit design that made it better suited for bar and restaurant environments, where fluid spills and frequent jamming was an issue, the CT-S2000 was the perfect choice to differentiate CSA. Seth trademarked the printer’s “Spill Shield” design and went to market with an aggressive sampling program and an enhanced warranty, targeted at bar and restaurant owners.

A new website for CSA was developed with improved web features including a mechanism configurator, product and application search, and an easy-to-use product support section complete with downloadable drivers, marketing materials, and technical reference materials. The website also featured consumer product videos and an online learning section for distributor and VAR training.

Under Seth’s guidance, CSA pulled away from some of the larger tradeshow venues they had been attending historically and refocused marketing dollars and manpower towards smaller events across the country where the CSA staff could spend more quality time with customers and win them over. While the #1 competitor was bigger and more powerful, CSA was able to offer more personalized service, engineering support, and customer care.

Seth also spearheaded CSA’s involvement in select C-level end-user events, allowing CSA to influence high-level executives at restaurant and retail chains and pull-through product sales. Further, he pursued additional software certifications for the product line that opened up new sales channels and allowed these independent software developer partners to recommend and/or resell CSA hardware along with their software.

Finally, Seth developed and executed a VAR loyalty program in channel that allowed CSA to further promote their products by offering discounts and special offers to Citizen resellers via their preferred distributors.

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Results: CSA was able to emerge from a long product slump and able to successfully revitalize VAR and distributor relationships, increase distribution sales, increase special project sales, and was chosen by a major software manufacturer to be their receipt printer of choice for a large-scale retail store solution.