



**BRAND  
SYNTAX**

SOFTWARE  
MARKETING  
TRANSFORMED



# SAPPER ACHIEVES RECORD RESULTS WITH FRACTIONAL CMO

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## CUSTOMER PROFILE

Since 2013, Sapper Consulting, a trusted resource for B2B lead generation, appointment setting, and sales insights and expertise, has generated millions in revenue for 500+ clients across 80+ industries.



## CHALLENGES

- Inefficiency and internal conflict impact marketing team's results and morale
- Lack of coaching, mentoring, professional development
- Close rates and revenue generated by inbound marketing didn't meet expectations
- Lacked expertise to manage and hold third-party vendors accountable for their results



## SOLUTION

Fractional Chief Marketing Officer with Brand Syntax



After just four months with Brand Syntax, Sapper's marketers are delivering their best results ever as they benefit from the marketing-specific leadership and structure they have always craved. They've set company records for revenue generation, new proposals, inbound leads, increased the bottom line, and employees are happier at work than they've ever been.

Blake Vernon, CRO, knew Sapper's marketers were smart, driven self-starters, deeply loyal to the company and genuinely passionate about marketing; in fact, that is exactly why they'd been promoted to the in-house marketing team. But the fact that marketing team had grown so quickly and so sporadically, increasing from 2 to 17 employees in only two years, had created a lack of deep marketing expertise and experience, inefficiencies, no clear direction, and internal conflict.

"We needed a B2B marketing specialist with experience managing large teams that really understood our unique needs as well as marketing trends and technologies to restructure our department," says Blake, who considered full-time and fractional marketing options before interviewing at least 10 fractional marketers and hiring Brand Syntax. "Brand Syntax asked lots of questions to find out what Sapper actually needed, then presented a customized strategy created exclusively for us unlike competitors' generic, cookie-cutter plans."

## RESULTS

- Restructure marketing department and clearly define roles/responsibilities
- Measurable improvements in results and job satisfaction
- Experienced feedback and support enables marketers' professional growth
- 4% increase in close rates with more focused leads
- 848% increase in won revenue from paid social in Q1 2021 over Q1 2020
- 35% increase in won revenue from inbound marketing in Q1 2021 over Q1 2020
- Consolidate and manage third-party vendors to optimize value and ROI





## RESTRUCTURING & REORGANIZATION CREATES CLEAR-CUT ACCOUNTABILITY

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Brand Syntax restructured Sapper's marketing department to create clear-cut accountability with specialized job titles/roles and responsibilities that fit marketers' abilities and experience as well as Sapper's goals. When Sapper's marketers lean into their strengths, the company gets better results, the team is more efficient and individuals' confidence skyrockets.

"Our marketers are more productive because each person has a target and knows what to do to reach it," says Blake, who is fully focused on revenue and sales now that Brand Syntax oversees the marketing. "Our marketing team is sharing resources, such as content, and because we're not duplicating efforts and stepping on each other's toes, we don't have the inefficiency and the interpersonal conflict."

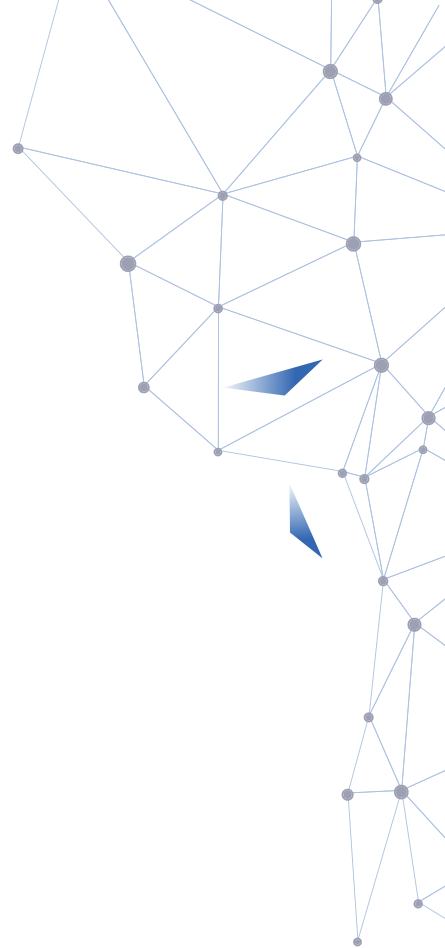
After creating a new position to fill a specific marketing need, Brand Syntax's founder Kristen Ortwerth also managed the hiring process and pre-screened the most qualified applicants before introducing candidates to Sapper.

"Kristen knew exactly what we needed and without her, it would have been a more arduous, time-consuming process," says Stephen Baier, Vice President, Demand Generation, Sapper.

As a marketer and mentor, Kristen also helps Sapper marketers troubleshoot a crisis, and brainstorm a solution, while guiding their professional development. Marketers now see a clear path to 5- and 10-year opportunities and happiness and job satisfaction scores are up.

As a result of the reorganization, Sarah Baier, Director of Marketing Operations, is fully focused on Sapper's data, platform and marketing operations and she is no longer held to vanity metrics that don't benefit her team.

"I'm more effective and in control (not to mention less stressed and frustrated) since I stopped trying to do too much," says Sarah B, who has seen Kristen chop down roadblocks left and right. "We were really hungry for that marketing leadership and I've seen how much further I get when I'm not lone-wolfing it."



## LEADS UP 500% PER QUARTER

Meanwhile, Sara Wynn, team lead for Sapper's inbound marketing, has seen the leads per quarter increase 500%, from 50 to 300, because she and her team are now highly specialized with new skills. As a result, morale and motivation are up significantly and the entire team looks forward to topping their previous results.

Sara W has become comfortable in her role as an expert because Kristen guided her to training materials and certifications for her new responsibilities. Kristen also worked hands-on with Sara W to show her how to manage new tools and hold vendors accountable. Sara W now gets better results because she manages and guides vendors, a significant shift from her former hands-off approach.

"With an in-depth understanding of how paid inbound strategies work, I'm collaborating with

vendors instead of letting them do whatever they want, which has produced better results," says Sara W. "Now that I have people reporting to me, Kristen has really shown and taught me the value of pushing people to grow in new areas and do things on their own so that they learn and gain confidence."

In four months, Sara W has learned how to do everything from run calls with Google and pay-per-click vendors to create LinkedIn ads on her own. She knows she is a more competent marketer and subsequently, more confident. Also, whenever she has a marketing question, Sara W feels reassured that she can turn to Brand Syntax. She'll get reliable, credible answers and expert insights targeted to Sapper's business model and go-to-market strategy rather than searching for answers online and often coming up short.



## MANAGING VENDORS & SPEND IMPROVES RESULTS

Sapper marketers relied on a variety of third-party vendors for services such as search/social advertising, SEO, PR, social media, content marketing and graphic design, but recognized they could better manage those vendor relationships and spend to improve results. In fact, because some vendors did not meet Brand Syntax's minimum standards for revenue generation, they were replaced. Others were given the support and guidance they needed to deliver better results. And finally, Brand Syntax brought one service in house and that alone saved about \$2,500/month.

"Overall, inbound leads are up over 30% and costs have stayed the same," says Blake.

As a B2B lead generation provider, Sapper gets customers the leads they want. However, Sapper needed Brand Syntax's tactical focus and experience with multiple industries to better define their ideal customer and maximize the cost-result ratio on metrics like customer acquisition cost and cost per lead. Sapper has boosted its close rates since Brand Syntax helped

Sapper focus its time and money on the leads that are most likely to become customers.

"Brand Syntax helped us become a chameleon that can use any channel or technology to get the best reactions from prospects in specific roles in a range of sectors; for example, now we can specifically engage with the president of a logistics firm," says Stephen.

The initial short-term contract with Brand Syntax has been indefinitely extended because their actions, results and commitment show they are real partners and true Sapper team members. With a fractional CMO, companies like Sapper can take time to assess the fit and results virtually risk-free and avoid the costs and team turnover typically associated with a bad hire.

"Before Brand Syntax, I didn't think a fractional CMO could replace a full-time CMO – Kristen proved me wrong," says Blake. "A full-time CMO would cost four to five times more to do exactly what Kristen has done for us part-time – I can't see how Sapper would function without her."