



MIRACLE METHOD IMPROVES ITS NATIONAL BRAND AND BOOSTS LOCAL FRANCHISEE SALES WITH RATEPOINT

An Unwarranted Black Eye

For nearly three decades, Miracle Method and its franchisees have been in the business of refinishing kitchen and bathroom surfaces—tubs, sinks, showers, countertops and the like—in homes and apartments around the U.S. And they have left a stream of happy customers in their wake. Yet, to President and CEO Chuck Pistor’s chagrin, “we offer a service that continues to be marginally unknown...About 80% of the populace doesn’t know about it.”

Despite Miracle Method’s long roster of satisfied customers and years of experience, the industry, says Pistor, “suffers from a black eye.” Mostly because customers have no previous awareness of bathroom and kitchen refinishing services, “they ask the wrong questions.” Without a frame of reference, these customers tend to “go cheap,” says Pistor. “In the end, you get what you pay for. These cheap finishes can fail; they can peel. So, the word gets out, contractors get a bad reputation...and the market comes to believe that all refinishing is the same.”

Solving the Problem of the Best-Kept Secret

Pistor was sure there must be some way to both leverage the actual positive results so many of Miracle Method’s customers had experienced, and also to overcome the broad-based negative market perceptions with which his company was unjustly burdened. Ultimately, Pistor’s investigation into the problem led him to RatePoint.

Miracle Method began rolling out the hosted RatePoint online reputation-management and customer feedback service to both its corporate Web site and to its approximately 120 franchisees around the country. At last, Pistor explains, “RatePoint gives us the objective, third-party endorsement we were looking for.

Keeping an Eye on the Franchisees or the “Zees”

Beyond his desire to raise market awareness about Miracle Method’s surface refinishing service and to heal and overcome the effects of the industry’s “black eye”, Pistor was looking for a reliable way to ensure superior customer service among his far-flung franchisee operations. “Everybody talks about customer satisfaction,” Pistor says, “but how do you really measure it, location by location?” Now, with RatePoint, Miracle Method customers around the country gain an interactive method that permits them to provide honest feedback to the “zees” – feedback that Miracle Method corporate can monitor, Pistor explains.

While each of Miracle Method’s franchisees will have their own RatePoint account, Site Seal, reviews, and ratings at the local level, Pistor’s managers are able to keep a watchful eye on all customer feedback at the corporate level, good or bad. In effect, RatePoint is becoming Miracle Method’s in-house franchisee review system, giving corporate the tools to track and promote customer satisfaction across its franchisee operations.



Challenge: Though in business since 1979, the Miracle Method franchise operation offers a bathroom and kitchen refinishing service that is still largely unknown to the large majority of U.S. consumers and businesses. To complicate matters, in order to win new sales, Miracle Method and its franchisees have to overcome the negative perceptions their prospects often have about “typical contractors”.

Solution: In order to raise the company’s visibility and improve public perceptions, Miracle Method began rolling out the RatePoint online reputation-management service on its corporate and franchisee Web sites. Currently, Miracle Method uses RatePoint’s Enterprise Plus solution.

Results: According to Miracle Method President and CEO Chuck Pistor, “RatePoint represents a competitive advantage because it provides customer testimonials, not just product information.” These testimonials from real people go a long way, Pistor explains, toward overcoming built-in prospect objections, thereby increasing the company’s overall sales closing ratio.



How RatePoint Helps Miracle Method Take Control of Its Online Reputation

RatePoint leverages Miracle Method's many satisfied customers to boost the company's public image, and help it overcome the negative industry perception that has been hindering Miracle Method in its pursuit of new sales opportunities.

How does the RatePoint online reputation-management service do it? By giving Miracle Method and its franchisees easy-to-use, automated capabilities to:

Collect Authentic Feedback and Reviews:

Miracle Method corporate and its franchisees collect customer feedback and reviews through their Web sites, e-mail inboxes, on invoices and other post-sale communications.

Manage Reviews

Miracle Method corporate and franchisees manage their reviews and feedback through their RatePoint Business Center portals: an all-in-one-place Web console or "dashboard". Once a review has been received, the designated manager within each organization is immediately notified via e-mail.

Promote & Publish Reviews

With a single click, a Miracle Method corporate manager or franchise owner can easily publish consumer reviews from the organization's Business Center account. They can also choose to have all positive reviews automatically pushed out to their local Miracle Method website and easily add reviews to estimates and other printed materials.

Respond to Negative Feedback

Any negative feedback (a one- or two-star customer rating) automatically kicks off a RatePoint-moderated Dispute Resolution Process that permits affected corporate or franchisee managers to interact directly and privately with the customer to resolve legitimate (authenticated) issues. If the issue is resolved to the customer's satisfaction, the negative review does not impact the business' overall rating and is not posted.

Stay Connected with E-mail Marketing and Surveys

Using RatePoint's e-mail marketing tools, franchisees can not only easily request feedback from customers, but also promote news and special offers using eye-catching HTML e-mails. Plus, easy-to-use survey tools let Miracle Method get additional customer insight at both the local and national level.

Empowering Franchisees

Emily Sayles, together with her husband Leo, owns the Miracle Method franchise in Columbus, Ohio, the pilot site for the RatePoint roll-out. The Sayles' daughter also works in the office full time, completing the picture of the traditional, hands-on family operation.

Emily Sayles is enthusiastic about the way in which RatePoint streamlines her operation's marketing activities. She explains that they had previously collected a list of "approximately 250 clients who were willing to accept phone calls from potential customers and provide testimonials." But managing a testimonial-by-phone program, she knew, would be complicated and time-consuming. RatePoint offered a better way. "It eliminates the down time in e-mailing phone lists or physically mailing the lists...and the time it takes to call clients and then decide, 'Yes, there are enough satisfied clients out there to justify the decision to work with our company.'"

Sayles is impressed with the effectiveness and ease of use of the RatePoint reputation-management solution. She says that her team is currently focusing on collecting reviews and testimonials.

As for the near future, Sayles says, "I am working on the survey tool and the e-mail marketing, which I think will be excellent additions to our marketing strategies, specifically in regard to introducing new services and developing repeat customers who may not have been aware of other services when we refinished their tub or shower 5 to 6 years ago, and who may now be looking at remodeling their kitchens or a second bath."

Competitive Advantage

Sayles is enthusiastic about what the online reputation-management solution can do for her business: "RatePoint will increase sales and set us apart from our competitors," she believes. Here, she touches on a central point underlying the decision by Miracle Method's chief executive to implement the solution. RatePoint's ability to make available to prospects authenticated customer reviews and to offer Miracle Method the value of reliable, third-party endorsements is something "no one in our industry has," says Pistor. "This is a real competitive advantage."



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