



The Roanoke Turn-Around

A White Paper

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Introduction / Background

Sabre88, LLC is a SBA 8(a) certified firm with a developed expertise in turning bad situations into good. The company has grown since 2008 as a result of customer referrals and a strong past performance in financial analysis, telecommunications and IT support services. Sabre88 was founded in 2008 to serve both defense and civilian agencies. The firm was built using founder Robert Cottingham's experience in both government contracting and his work serving the United States Congress.

Abstract / Business Case

By their very nature telecommunications ordering and pricing systems present government agencies with accounting challenges that can be difficult to manage. The General Service Administration (GSA) faced such a challenge and this paper provides an overview of the innovative management strategies that were implemented by Sabre88 while restructuring the financial service and support oversight team for them in Roanoke, VA.

Problem Statement / Introduction

The GSA Roanoke, VA Regional Services branch faced closure in 2008 as a result of subpar performance and inadequate results. GSA Management made the decision to not renew the incumbent contractor support and instead find a company with an agile workforce to step in and assess the situation and propose a turnaround solution.

In September of 2011, Sabre88 was awarded a contract for oversight and management of financial services for GSA's Roanoke programs. Under this contract Sabre88 was tasked with processing, reconciling, and analyzing all transactions affecting revenue, cost of goods sold and gross margins related to reimbursable business activities.

As the GSA Roanoke branch discovered a telecommunications ordering and pricing system process requires a lot more than simple data entry. It requires an employee base experienced in accounting and inventory controls as well as data accuracy review. When Sabre88 assumed the contract they discovered high levels of disorganization and the use of outdated accuracy review and data input methods at GSA Roanoke.

Solution

After a careful assessment Sabre88 determined that the Roanoke office and GSA in general, were applying an outdated approach to an increasingly sophisticated problem. Sabre88 proposed employing a staff with a financial analyst skillset as opposed to the



incumbent staff that had primarily a telecommunications skillset. They also proposed a new stronger lead position and some structural changes to the team to enhance accountability and foster a goal oriented environment.

- Sabre88 moved senior staff into leadership positions
- Reorganized the division of labor amongst all employees
- New and innovative measures that mapped to the GSAs requirements more succinctly were adopted which lead to a renewed motivation and vigor with the existing Roanoke staff
- Financial analytical skills were made the top priority in training underperforming staff and in hiring practices.
- Staff were required to join weekly telephone conference meetings with the chairman and CEO, in order to track progress as these changes were implemented to adjust to unanticipated complications
- All accomplishments were accounted for with employees receiving verbal, written and monetary rewards for their successes
- Chairman and CEO, Robert Cottingham consistently made quarterly visits to the branch to personally address any employee concerns.

Consequently, Sabre88 was able to assemble a team which was better equipped to undertake the current needs of the branch and foster an environment which encouraged the highest level of accountability.

Future Direction / Long-Term Focus

While the culture change implemented at Sabre88 through the Roanoke Solution has seen overwhelming success, the organization continues to remain focused on finding ways to remain current with the contemporary challenges and improve workflow efficiency at all levels. Recently, Sabre88 has applied online performance review software so that employee professional goals and objectives are tracked and reviewed on a quarterly basis in conjunction with their traditional annual reviews. The model serves as an example of Sabre88’s ability to remain agile in a variety of environments.

Results / Conclusion

As a result, Sabre88 personnel were able to see drastic turnaround in the production at the Roanoke branch. Now Roanoke contributes to a model for best practices in the management of customer billing and financial reconciliation for GSA nationwide. Their initiatives have lead to a successful transformation taking place with an additional team since the spring of 2013 in Atlanta performing similar tasks.

Atlanta Production, Quarter 2

Past Dues Resolved	\$ 231,442.14
Various Forms of Credit Received	\$ 55,801.04
Inventory Reconciliation	\$ 7,176.27
Total Production Index	\$ 294,419.45