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A Disciplined Approach to  
an Exploding Market:  
How TAB Canada Focused and Expanded



TAB Canada had a massive market opportunity, but wasn't sure which markets to target with its limited sales and fulfillment resources. TAB wanted to develop a plan to approach the market strategically. Engaging Mezzanine helped TAB understand the most lucrative industries to target and how to approach them. The process moved TAB up the experience curve, providing valuable insight on customer pains and messaging that would resonate with new prospects.

### **The Client: TAB Canada, business supplies and services industry**

*“Mezzanine was extremely professional, delivered great information quickly, and was worth every penny. Their work has allowed us to be much more strategic and more efficient with our marketing,”*

*Ross Nepean,  
VP Marketing,  
TAB Canada*

TAB is a global player in the rapidly expanding records management industry, with offices in Canada, the US, Europe and Australia. TAB helps companies to organize, access and manage their critical business information. Through industry leading consulting services and best-in-class filing system products, TAB increases customers' organizational efficiency, reduces risk and controls the costs associated with records management.

### **The Situation: A Market Opportunity**

The records management industry had exploded in the wake of increasing legislation and regulation (eg Sarbanes-Oxley), along with increasing complexity in managing paper and electronic records. A number of high profile cases involving substantial penalties for ineffective record keeping had taken this area of business out of the file room and into the governance spotlight. TAB was benefiting from this industry expansion, but needed a plan on how to practically approach the market. What industries had the most acute needs? Which companies were budgeting in that area? Who were the decision-makers in this rapidly evolving field, and under whose portfolios did records management typically fall? What were the primary pains for these industry sectors and decision makers, and how could their needs most effectively be addressed?

TAB wanted more than an identification of the industries that the company should target. They wanted a complete approach on how to get to these industries as well. For this level of detail and strategy, they needed to work with a company with strong research and strategic expertise but who would also offer practical implementation plans – without the price tag of a Big 4 firm. “We needed a high-quality, not a high-priced, solution,” said Ross Nepean, TAB’s vice president of marketing.

## Introducing Mezzanine

TAB went to its online marketing agency for a recommendation, and the agency immediately suggested Mezzanine. Mezzanine had been doing vertical market assessments, helping companies identify which industries to target and how, for over six years. It had experience with both growth companies and enterprise organizations.

## The Vertical Sales and Marketing Planning Process

“The vertical sales and marketing planning process starts by establishing where companies currently do well,” explained Lisa Shepherd, president of Mezzanine. “We analyze the sales data to measure the current success and traction in particular verticals. We also interview sales people to identify where they perceive opportunities and how they have been successful, or unsuccessful, in particular verticals. We then assess a long-list of verticals that hold promise for the client. The long list is usually a combination of verticals where the organization currently does well, some where the team feels there is opportunity but they have not had the right tools to penetrate, and finally some that are new to the organization. We are able to suggest new verticals based on our experience working with other firms across multiple industries.



“We then gather secondary data to give a 30,000 foot view of the opportunities across verticals. We’ve built a research database that allows us to quickly gather the economic and statistical data needed to screen a long-list of opportunities.

## Primary Research

“The most important part of the process is the primary research that happens next. Once we have narrowed the long-list to a targeted number of verticals, we begin the process of interviewing executives in the target industries. We know how to get through to the B2B decision makers who have the insight that sales and marketing leaders need. These interviews get at the pain points, the buying processes and the perceptions of competitors that we need to develop an effective sales and marketing plan for the vertical, and to understand the key success factors for the client in particular verticals.”

### TAB's Project

The TAB project kicked off in early September and was completed by December. Secondary research took two weeks and primary research took six weeks, followed by two weeks of synthesis and analysis, and then sales and marketing planning for three weeks. Nepean was presented with the findings within three months of the start date.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how actionable the recommendations were,” said Nepean. “It literally was a toolkit: the language we needed to relate to the target industries, their primary pains, how to find them, who within organizations to talk to and what they were thinking about.”

“Our methodology pinpoints the critical information that clients need and provides a deep understanding of them and their industry quickly,” said Shepherd. “We know what we need to know, and we know how to get up to speed quickly.”

### The Results

“We changed our sales force structure based on working with Mezzanine. Our reps are so much better informed when they go into accounts,” said Nepean. “The information that Mezzanine outlined allowed us to deeply understand how buying cycles and decision-making work in a variety of industries – and to collectively set a standard of information within vertical accounts. It’s been invaluable.”

## The results were fourfold:

- Increase in rep productivity and revenue: “The process helped us increase sales per salesperson by 35% within the year.” Reps were able to be productive within the target industries much faster than previously.
- Better educated sales force: The market assessment provided an overview of the current state of the industries, key drivers, titles that would have purchasing and influencing roles, key pains and standard language for the industry.
- Measurable sales strategy aligned to verticals with most to spend and greatest need: Mezzanine identified the industries that needed TAB’s services most, and were the most inclined and able to invest.
- Improved return on marketing investment: Enabled TAB to focus their marketing investment on collateral and advertising strategically rather than scattershot.

*“I would definitely call it a high performance result.”*

*Ross Nepean*

### Key Stats

35% increase in revenue per rep in first year  
10 weeks of research  
3 months from engagement to implementation

### Results

Increased revenue per rep – immediately  
Focused sales and marketing spend  
Better informed and educated reps  
Pains and motivators for executives in key verticals

## ABOUT THE MEZZANINE GROUP

Have you ever had theater tickets on the mezzanine level? It's a great view – far enough back to see the stage completely, and close enough to see all the details. That's why we're called the Mezzanine Group. We are a growth services firm that provides market intelligence, marketing planning and outsourced marketing management to help companies gain a clear view of their opportunities and pursue them effectively. Over the last 10 years, we have helped some of the most exciting growth companies in the world (like RIM, Capital One, Philips as well as early stage and mid-sized firms) assess their opportunities, plan their marketing, and implement effectively. We understand growth because we've lived it – Mezzanine was named one of the fastest growing companies by PROFIT Magazine 2005 - 2008. For more information, visit [www.themezzaninegroup.com](http://www.themezzaninegroup.com) or call 1.888.413.3911 (in the GTA, 416 598 4684).

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