



**SAFE-T-COVER®**

From SEO Frustration...To Market Share,  
Thought Leadership, Leads & Revenue

### **Safe-T-Cover**

**Durable Goods Sales to Construction  
Trades**



# Case Study

## Safety - Hiding before your eyes

Like so many fascinating industrial applications, backflow prevention is one that you probably don't even know about, much less think about, unless it's part of your job. But the idea is simple and important - once water is supplied to a building by a city or town, it's purity is no longer controlled, and therefore it can't be safely returned to the municipal system.

In other words it can't flow back out of the building into the city supply - and that's prevented by a backflow prevention valve. Local convention, regulations, environmental considerations, cost and aesthetics all impact the installation location of these valves.

In Nashville, TN it's been common to install them outside and above grade, so it's natural that a company which builds covers to protect and hide them would start and grow in that market.

Hydrocowl, Inc., which does business as Safe-T-Cover™, is a privately held company that was founded in 1988, and purchased by its current owner in the mid 90s.



## The Challenges: Predictable vs. Passive Growth

Early in 2015 owner Gerald Pruitt recruited long-time friend, church mate and construction industry veteran Craig Carmon to join the company as president. Gerald was eager to focus his engineering energy on product development and to rely on Craig's sales and marketing background to grow the business.

The business was already healthy and profitable Craig's mission was clear - like many manufacturing company owners, Gerald wanted stable, scalable growth. He had little interest in frantic efforts to satisfy demand rapidly outpacing production.

Craig identified opportunities for improvement in various areas which included facilities, manufacturing & supply chain, inventory and sales & marketing. The latter category included:

1. The product category is casually known in the industry by a competitor's brand name - HotBox™ - which belongs to an international conglomerate with nearly \$4 billion in annual revenue
2. An enclosure is typically a very small element of a much larger mechanical bid - it is a single line item for contractors and supply houses that doesn't get much attention

### About Safe-T-Cover

Annual sales: <\$10MM USD

Employees: approx 30

Target Industries: Construction, Specialty Equipment

Typical sales: \$1,000-15,000

Location: Nashville, TN



3. Valve covers are treated as a check-the-box-item and there's limited awareness of evolving best practice and the significant related implications to health & safety of individuals and property
4. Prevalence of use varies significantly by region
5. The traditional rep model was slowing as top agency founders retired
6. Order flow & production planning were generally passive - waiting for orders to appear in the fax machine left the company vulnerable
7. Traditional SEO efforts weren't moving the needle
8. While unique features made Safe-T-Cover's enclosures ideal for various other industrial applications, they weren't getting traction in those areas

"I've spent a career in sales and marketing in the construction industry" says Craig Carmon. "But I've traditionally sold high value projects, and relied on carefully nurtured relationships. The Safe-T-Cover sales and marketing challenge was different. We needed to educate the market on big theoretical issues; to overcome commoditization of our core products; and to reach new markets."

"I understood the reach of the internet would be critical to both economy and feasibility in achieving this, and we wanted to build the capability ourselves. That's what I've done my whole career - build things. But I knew we would need outside help to coach and advise, and everywhere I looked I found marketers who seemed to know the theory, but had no understanding of industrial business, manufacturing and sales channel."

## ***The Approach: Combine 'Old' & 'New' School***

Craig's online research into industrial digital marketing for manufacturers brought him to Ed Marsh's website and prompted Craig to download a guide. That started a casual dialog over a number of months, and finally an in person visit when Ed was in Nashville for other business.

Like leaders of many industrial manufacturing companies for which direct and channel sales had meant minimal marketing emphasis and budget - often just printed data sheets, a trade show or two and some magazine ads - Craig wrestled with the decision at length.

Some months later Ed was back in Nashville, and an initial project was underway.

The first several months focused on building a foundational understanding of the Safe-T-Cover team, buyers, current website capability, company strategy, product specifics and identification of early action steps. It was important to validate Craig's cautious commitment with some early wins. So in November 2015 HubSpot marketing automation was quickly implemented and a downloadable guide created which would target the attractive market for industrial applications beyond covering backflow valves.

### **Success was immediate.**

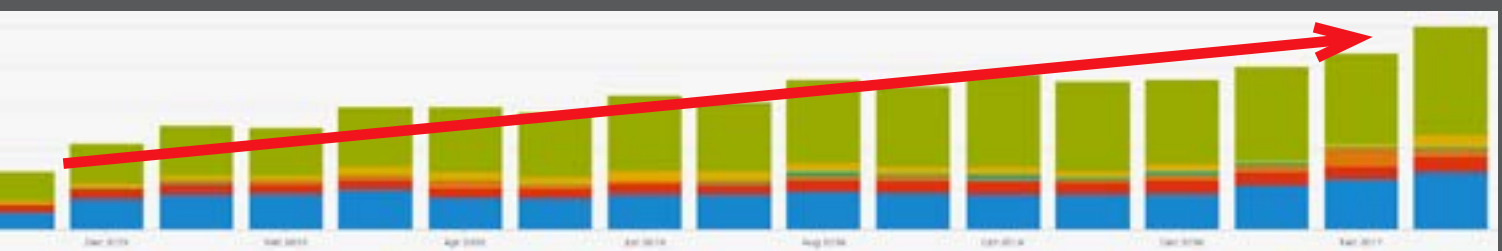
New prospects began to quickly discover Safe-T-Cover, and learn about their unique product and service capabilities. More quote requests resulted quickly in incremental new orders. While Craig worked in parallel to optimize manufacturing, inventory and other facets of the business, the internet marketing work charged ahead.



The Safe-T-Cover team opted to engage in intervals - absorbing coaching, strategy and tactical suggestions and then pausing to consolidate lessons learned; then repeating the process. (Illustrated in alternating growth and plateaus below.) In the 18 months between November 15 and April 17 the work has yielded the following accomplishments:

- Tied strategy to digital tactics
- Thorough understanding of buyer concerns through qualitative research
- Developed channel sales co-marketing programs that drive business and enrich channel ties
- Created editorial calendar guidelines focused on search rankings - broadened and improved critical product and application keyword rankings by 630% (in top 3) and 260% in top 10
- Creating genuine thought leadership content (webinars, videos, slideshare decks and downloadable guide) on trends in valve location and reasons for exterior above grade installation - this is leading to entire municipalities implementing new standard details and guidance for new construction, and numerous incremental sales
- Substantial increase in inquiries, quotes and sales of “custom” manufactured enclosures for industrial equipment (e.g. compressors, pumps and generators)
- Once it was clear that technical limitations of the existing 3 year old website were limiting success, a site refresh and migration project was undertaken in early 2017, launching ahead of schedule and on budget. The new site leverages the capabilities of the HubSpot COS.

## Program Growth Since Pilot Project Kickoff



## Outcomes:

**360%**  
**Increase  
in organic  
search traffic**

**586**  
**New Leads**

**6**  
**Record Sales  
Months**

**25%**  
**Sales Growth in '16**  
*(as program was just rolling out)*

**20%**  
**Sales Growth in  
Q1 '17**

The **individual prospect insights** that are available through marketing automation allow Craig and his sales team to take a very traditional, old school, personal approach to selling prospects. "Without asking, we can almost tell what information they need to do their jobs more efficiently, and that lets us be a helpful resource to them rather than just a hard pushing sales rep. I really look forward to talking with prospects knowing that I'll have ideas to help them." concludes Craig.

***"I trusted Ed & his team, but I'm an old school guy. I needed to see proof - with our product, in our industry and with our buyers. I have, and I'm a believer! I strongly recommend Ed as a strategy advisor and revenue growth consultant. His industrial sales & management experience supports his digital marketing insights. He delivers results."***

**Craig Carmon, President, Safe-T-Cover**





# Lessons Learned

It's easy to say "People in our industry don't use the internet." Except it's wrong. Even in industrial manufacturing the internet is the starting point for 93% of purchases. So manufacturers not only need a presence, but a strategically envisioned and well executed tactical plan.

SMBs can compete against the F100 more effectively and economically than any time in history.

There are powerful insights to support traditional industrial sales that can be captured and gleaned from digital marketing initiatives.

Industrial digital marketing is like a flywheel - building it takes effort, and momentum is somewhat sustaining. However, as the plateaus in results which corresponded with pauses in consulting illustrate, this fast evolving discipline requires continuous improvement and adjustment to drive increasing results.

Internal marketing teams, even in companies that traditionally haven't don't much marketing, can be very successful in implementing a program with assistance. It doesn't require outsourcing to an agency.

## More Info for Manufacturers

### Manufacturing Revenue Growth

31 page step-by-step guide to industrial content marketing



### Executives Guide to Finance of Content Marketing

Cost, investment, value & return on today's digital marketing



### 7 Major Risks of B2B Social Media

So social media isn't for industrial manufacturers? Wrong!



### Turning Marketing Automation into a Sales Tool

It's only a shiny gadget if you keep it to marketing!

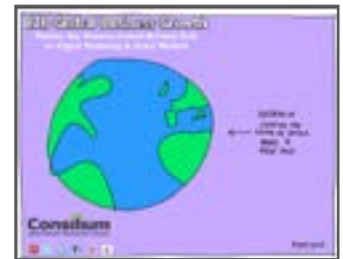
### 17 Tips to Optimize B2B Industrial Trade Shows

You've got to be there...make the investment count!



### Turning Domestic Digital Marketing into Global Sales

De-risk exporting through market intelligence and lead gen



with so many **B2B sales & marketing "experts"**...some much needed **revenue growth wisdom**

## About Ed Marsh



*Ed Marsh* is a consultant, independent director, board advisor and B2B industrial revenue growth expert.

A former Army Airborne Ranger and graduate of Johns Hopkins, he has owned businesses and carried sales & distribution P&L in the industrial manufacturing space.

He's Export Advisor to American Express & a HubSpot partner.

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