

Unicast Communications Corp., a New York City-based Internet start-up, had introduced a groundbreaking product that creates and monitors complex “rich media” advertising campaigns on the Web. The company’s technology was the first to bring movie-quality ads to the Internet.

The Unicast team was convinced they had a solution that would revolutionize consumers’ Web experience while providing significant benefits to advertisers and Web sites alike. Yet prospects’ enthusiasm for the company’s solution wasn’t turning into sales. Unicast needed to understand why it was not achieving the results it expected and how it could better reach its goals.

Turning Vision into a Solid Market Position *An Action Report – Unicast Communications Corp.*

The time was ripe. Industry insiders were excited about the growth opportunity for Internet advertising and were looking for a technology that could offer a better return on investment while providing the consumer with a more engaging online experience than traditional banner ads.

“We knew we had cutting-edge technology and a solution that could provide compelling value,” explains Allie Shaw, Unicast vice president of marketing. “We needed to understand the resistance we encountered when we tried to turn this excitement into adoption, revenues, and a solid market position.”

Unicast engaged Connor Bates to determine the reasons for this resistance and to identify concrete actions that could overcome it and unblock revenues.

Lessons Learned

“There was a serious gap between our expectations and those of our customers”

Linda Brackett, principal of Connor Bates, conducted direct, in-depth interviews with the Unicast team as well as senior business and technology executives at leading Web sites, advertising agencies, ad networks, and advertisers. High-level discussions with companies such as Yahoo!, DoubleClick, and Modem Media. Poppie Tyson revealed underlying industry resistance to introducing new, unproven technologies in the rich media category. In this industry, there is no margin for error.

“This is a very complicated market as the Internet is constantly changing and re-inventing itself” explains Dick Hopple, Unicast Chairman and CEO. “We weren’t sure whether an outside consulting firm could understand our challenges well enough to offer value. Linda grasped the market’s idiosyncrasies as well as customer issues and attitudes, and was able to make additional strategic recommendations that went beyond our expectations.”



"Linda uncovered the market perceptions and attitudes behind our slow conversion and adoption rates. Her unique talent for generating clear and concise insights into customer behavior allowed us to re-enter the marketplace with a product and a message that resonates with and better meets the needs of our customers."

*—Dick Hopple,
Chairman and CEO*

"Connor Bates' ability to translate findings into long-term projections allows us to stay ahead of the market and continue to meet our customers' needs and our corporate goals."

*—Allie Shaw,
Vice President of Marketing*

Concrete Results

"Unicast is better equipped to achieve its customer reach and financial goals"

Connor Bates clarified both the challenges and the opportunity that Unicast needed to address in this fast-moving market. It helped Unicast focus on customers, launching initiatives to address the specific needs, sensitivities and persuasive benefits for each market segment.

"Through our work with Connor Bates, we understood that we had a disconnect with our customers. We were placing too much emphasis on the technology, and not enough on the customer," says Shaw. "They helped us redefine the product and bring our solution to market successfully."

Since Connor Bates' customer analysis and concrete recommendations for action, Unicast has:

- redefined its market-development strategy,
- repackaged its technology and services into a customer-focused solution,
- renamed and relaunched the solution as "The SUPERSTITIAL™,"
- identified the most likely and logical prospects and partners, and strategically focused its efforts on this group as opposed to the entire customer universe.

"Connor Bates helped us develop a highly focused market strategy which led to a re-launch of our solution and the signing of important new clients, including CBD SportsLine, Mplayer.com, macys.com, and Universal Pictures," says Shaw. "The success our customers have achieved with SUPERSTITIALs has far exceeded everyone's expectations."

Today, the rate of new customer adoption is accelerating. In less than six months, Unicast generated so much momentum that the advertising trade media quickly adopted the company's brand to describe a new category of online rich media advertising.



Connor Bates, Inc.

*Bridging growth strategies
with execution*

Connor Bates is a hands-on consulting firm that collaborates with business-technology executives to assess market opportunities, set clear strategic direction, and bridge strategy with execution during critical stages of growth. The firm provides strategic go-to-market planning, proprietary research, executive coaching and program-development services designed to facilitate action tied to corporate goals and resources.