

AAM-MAA (3B – Niche Building Campaign)

Name	Michelle Golden
Title	President
Organization	Golden Marketing, Inc. (firm is Stanfield & O'Dell)
Street Address	12300 Old Tesson Road
Address 2 (optional)	Suite 100-F
City, State ZIP	St. Louis, MO 63128
Phone	314.416.1201
Fax	314.754.8365
E-mail	michelle@goldenmarketinginc.com

Objectives:

Stanfield & O'Dell (S&O), our client, engaged us to build a specific practice area—they selected their already established Christian Ministry practice as their target area of growth. A few key reasons support their choice to grow this practice area: 1) the desire for growth at a pace the firm can realistically and continuously staff well, 2) to build upon an already strong representative client list, 3) early steps toward partner succession of this national practice, and 4) it's work that the firm enjoys!

S&O's new client goal is actually quite small because the ministries they're pursuing are very large. Over the next five years, **the firm seeks to land just three of their "top 25" ministry prospects**. Since the buying cycle for such large entities is slow, the expectation is that the first one will take at least 24 months to win over.

Stanfield & O'Dell desires to be recognized nationally for their ministry expertise and their integrity.

Strategies:

S&O already has an impressive large ministry clientele (e.g. Oral Roberts, Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn, etc.). This is a strong start, but getting the word out about capabilities for serving evangelists requires a bigger **PRESENCE!**

In such a focused niche area, **credibility is key**. To achieve our goal, positioning would involve:

1. Establishing a way to **demonstrate** credibility.
2. Making evidence of credibility readily available in order to encourage "word of mouth" marketing.
3. Leveraging the evidence (both push and pull marketing) to build a reputation among unknown influential people while also proactively contacting desired clients and directing them to this evidence.
4. Ultimately get a personal meeting with their top 25 prospects to eventually be entrusted as their advisor or auditor.

STEP 1 – Credibility & Continuous Presence

What better way, we thought, than to **"own" the ministry-accounting space on the Internet!** A blog would provide a means to repeatedly reach referral sources and ministry business personnel.

To engage the ministry community regarding operational and fiscal concerns, we helped Stanfield & O'Dell create and launch **theministryblog.com**.

1. Websites and blogs of ministries and related organizations were studied thoroughly to align blog's identity with them, not a CPA firm.

2. Blog's name and purpose were defined early.
3. Client-centric banner conveys integrity (particularly through financial transparency) and communicates understanding of ministries' worldly missions.
4. Education and advice provided by us to future bloggers.
5. Content backlog initiated six months pre-launch so blog would be useful upon unveiling.
6. Co-developed by firm's IT person, us (banner and guidance), and a third-party for some coding.

STEP 2 – Launch Campaign to Promote Firm

A multi-faceted approach promoted the firm to targeted prospects, current clients and identified referral sources.

1. Nine months pre-launch, ACT! was purchased to manage contacts throughout this endeavor. Team members were trained to document activities of all types.
2. A mailing campaign announced the new blog effective Feb 1, 2007 with an oversized (11.25" x 5.75") postcard to 434 contacts. To be pertinent to referral sources as well as ministries, the postcard bore the universal message that the firm makes it "**easier** for ministries to minister."
3. A second postcard was mailed to prospects only with a message indicating the firm can relate to ministries – that the firm makes it "easier to do what **you're called** to do."
4. A third mailing to top prospects, only, was a blue, satin-lined box tied with an orange ribbon (the firm's colors) with a hand-written note enclosed. Each box held a classy crystal globe paperweight—the same as shown in the blog's banner—engraved with the blog's URL.
5. Introductory telephone calls were made to each gift recipient by an S&O partner. More follow-up is underway.
6. Meeting prospects, networking, and exhibiting at major conference for visibility. Advertising in conference program and passing out extra postcard announcements helped get the word out even more.

End Result:

The Ministry Blog is the first multi-partner, CPA-produced niche-specific blog in existence. Positive results are observed both within and outside of the firm.

Internal:

- Enthusiasm, commitment, and cooperation brought team members together.
- Firm demonstrated commitment for this practice's succession plan when the junior partner was trusted to lead this niche development project.
- Support for the plan—especially blog!—showed the partners are open to innovative ideas.
- The plan resulted in formalizing the firm's first industry practice group.
- The lead partner added more supporting initiatives to her plan since launch—she's extra inspired to market!

External:

- The firm's specialization and passion for ministry work is evident. With clear evidence of expertise, S&O's credibility has increased.
- Increased S&O's visibility throughout their target market—the U.S.
- Achieved "push marketing" by sparking interest that drove blog traffic.
- Achieved "pull marketing" through relevant content that boosts SEO and attracts readers. In just three months, S&O ranks high on many relevant search terms!

- Though unrealistic to expect landing a prospect this soon, S&O just obtained a new client from their second tier of prospects—a large church was impressed with their blog as was the recently mailed-to referral source that connected them.

1st – 3rd Page in Google or MSN (on 4/19/2007):

(search term - rank)

- the cpa journal and FAS116 - #1
- what type of organization needs 1099 form - #1
- 501(c)3 ministry determination - #2
- is a ministry a church on ss4 form - #2
- IRS 37 Churches Political Activity - #2
- pastor rights for filing federal income tax - #2
- Rick warren + federal transparency - #2
- Reporting housing allowance - #2
- incorporated churches - financial reporting schedule - #3
- minister irs 2007 - #4
- church pastor taxable wages - #5
- Oklahoma Sales Tax Exempt archives churches - #5
- Minister 1099 - #4
- view church 501c application - #6
- church benevolence payments - #6
- tax exempt charity 27 month after formation - #6
- benevolence + irs - #6
- subsequent event - #6
- 2006 form 1023 - #7
- pastors exempt from social security - #7
- income tax exemption for pastors and ministers - #9
- are love offerings considered taxable income? - #9
- Organization Not Filing Form 1023 Within 27 Months of Formation - #9
- tax reporting church benevolence - #9
- pastor's clothing allowance - #9
- tax exemption form 2006 for minister - #9
- love offering to pastor is it tax deductible - #11 and #12
- type I subsequent event - #13 and #14
- form 1023 2007 church - #16
- ministry irs - #22

Cost: \$10,868

Firm size: Less than \$15 million in annual revenue