

WELCOME

EXHIBIT

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CASE STUDY

# Proactively Find & Win Convention Business For Your City



The Knowland solution empowers my salespeople to proactively engage at a deeper level with the right prospects, rather than just be order-takers.

-STEVE PIERSON, DIRECTOR OF CONVENTION SALES

## The Challenge

As with any Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), the Greater Birmingham CVB sales team competes with similar sized cities all over the US to attract and win group and convention business. The main challenge facing the sales team is to ensure that Birmingham is not only considered for shorter term "in the year, for the year" opportunities by planners, but also for events that may be booked in subsequent years.

The Birmingham sales team needed a better way to reach out proactively to the right planners and knew it could not afford to sit back and wait for meeting planners to contact to them.

Steve Pierson, the Director of Convention Sales understands that the typical outbound "cold call" is not effective without a deep understanding of the meeting planner's behaviors, needs and motivations. A seasoned veteran of convention sales, Steve knew the typical cities he competed with but he also realized that he could be missing significant pieces of potential business from other cities.

### CVB PROFILE

Meeting planners can expect exceptional service from the Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau. Welcoming over 4.4 million overnights annually, and with its attractions, lodging and dining fueling its reputation, Birmingham is an attractive, affordable meeting host. Meeting planners enjoy the impressive inventory of over 140 hotels along with 350,000 square feet of exhibition space at the Convention Complex.

## The Strategy

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Having used the [Knowland solution](#) at previous hotels before joining the CVB, Courtney Ingersoll, the National Sales Manager, knew it was the ideal solution they needed to give them an edge. Considered a "power-user" of Knowland, Courtney shares her Knowland prospecting strategies with her sales team, and this has enabled the team to uncover "hidden gems" to pursue. With access to group information going back several years, the sales team can focus on the right groups for Birmingham, some of which they would not have known about or considered, without the Knowland solution.

Said Courtney, "Before I call a prospect, I know who the group is, how many people met, and why I think it's a good fit for Birmingham. Knowland is my single source of sizes, capacities, frequencies and historical patterns." Meeting planners get a lot of emails and phone calls, and are inclined to engage with those who have done their homework.

Since the CVB has deployed Knowland, there is no question it is now an integral part of their workflow. Coupled with the Knowland TAP Report, which provides forward-looking data, the CVB now has two potent solutions. The TAP report helps them determine what their need periods are, and the Knowland solution helps them target what groups to reach out to, to fill those periods.



## The Results

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The sales team is now able to engage with meeting planners at a much deeper level than they otherwise would, armed with relevant, actualized data and often before the RFP goes out. Hotels are pleased that the Greater Birmingham CVB is a better partner and helps them with strategic pricing decisions based on what the CVB is seeing from Knowland and their TAP Report data. For example, if the CVB can determine that similar cities are solidly booked during a time period a group is considering Birmingham, hotels can use that information to rationalize the level of concessions and incentives, and therefore achieve a higher economic impact. In some instances, the sales team has leveraged Knowland to pursue certain types of events over others based on the group's historical patterns. As Courtney observed, "we focus on winnable business we would not have otherwise known about without our Knowland research."

Recently the sales team pursued a national auto parts chain account that has not met in Birmingham on a large scale to solicit their business. The group was impressed that the CVB was able to proactively show that they understood their needs and is now considering Birmingham for a future event. As Courtney put it, "Meeting planners want to be understood, without necessarily having to repeat themselves to every person who is reaching out to them."

Thanks to the Knowland and TAP Report solutions, the Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau has the Knowland Advantage!