The Edge

The Edge is a monthly newsletter distributed to the approximately 2,300 professionals employed within Key PrivateBank and the Private Client Group, the retail brokerage arm of full-service investment firm, McDonald Investments Inc.

Since KeyCorp acquired McDonald Investments in 1998, the Private Client Group and Key PrivateBank - formerly competitors in many respects and currently operating under different compensation structures - have continued competing against each other to acquire and manage the assets of high-networth clients.

After joining KeyCorp in November 2000 as communications manager for these organization, which serve together as Key's high-net-worth line of business, I began evaluating their politics, cultural differences and competitive history. I developed *The Edge* in July and August and introduced the publication in September following KeyCorp's announcement that it would combine both units into one organization with a single sales force through an initiative spanning 2002.



The Edge is an educational forum and the first communication piece targeting sales professionals in both organizations - 700 Private Client Group investment consultants (stockbrokers) and 400 Key PrivateBank relationship managers. Its main purpose is to breakdown cultural differences and build a cohesive sales force capable of collaborating and putting clients first.

Sales professionals and support personnel who read *The Edge* learn about the broad range of talent and financial expertise across both organizations. Top performers advise of best practices, sales techniques and experiences that help their peers understand and appreciate what it takes to collaborate and achieve.

As the managing editor of *The Edge*, my role is to oversee the writing, production, distribution and effectiveness of the publication. Articles are written in a manner that helps build mutual respect, trust, and collaboration needed to achieve high performance.

For maximum credibility and appeal, care is taken to avoid espousing the corporate catch phrases and philosophies that are too often communicated by management. Rather, desired behaviors are conveyed within the context of individual and team experiences and endorsed through testimonials from a variety of perspectives relative to the featured success.

Interest in *The Edge* is maintained through the broad and diverse representation of sales professionals in markets throughout the country and the blending of their unique outlooks and approaches to achieving the highest level of performance.

To date, the publication's success is determined through a variety of measures. These include verbal and written feedback from the organizations' senior leaders, sales professionals who have confirmed that the publication includes the type of information they are looking for, and regional managers who recommend story ideas and express great appreciation for coverage. Contributors to the publication also receive feedback from peers throughout their line of business.

Upon receiving the first issue, the Key PrivateBank president distributed *The Edge* to KeyCorp's management committee, emphasizing collaborative sales efforts and conveying the publication's strategic value.

The line of business' sales support organizations, such as Financial Planning, Consulting Services and Retirement Services, have enjoyed receiving third-party endorsements in *The Edge* and are an important resource for uncovering successes tied to their efforts.



The Edge is also proving to be a valuable strategic external communication tool supporting the local marketing efforts of its contributors. Our Phoenix, Arizona investment team is including the November publication in its new business kits, and relationship manager, Marisa DiGiacomo, is sharing the October issue, which includes her profile, with her key contacts in Seattle, Washington.

Additionally, the publication's articles have the potential to generate publicity about KeyCorp when pitched to the trade press and each respective region's local media. Coordination and planning with KeyCorp's field Public Affairs team will help ensure these opportunities are fully evaluated and that communications are tailored to maximize chances for success.