



CASE STUDY: **FALCON TRADE CORPORATION**

Turning a boutique into a leading trade finance name – Falcon Trade Corporation case study

Falcon Trade Corporation approached Moorgate in late 2006. The company was a successful trade services boutique with a turnover approaching \$1 billion. It also had a strong reputation in the Middle East, with offices in Saudi Arabia and Dubai. Yet it was little known in the London, where its main office was located, and in Asia, where it was in the process of opening offices.

Not only was Falcon little known, it had a branding unsuited to its size and nothing in the way of marketing collateral. However, any campaign needed to take into account the fact its role in the Middle East could potentially rival some of its banking partners. It was also a highly sophisticated message that required communication to a highly sophisticated audience.

Advertising was quickly considered unsuitable for the campaign – it being an expensive way to communicate only simple messages. Instead, Moorgate developed a critical path for Falcon that would allow it to express different messages

to different audiences in various regions without losing the complexity and sophistication of the messages.

Indeed, Falcon is a trade services provider to the global import and export community. It is adept at stepping in with innovative structured solutions where banks – particularly local banks in emerging markets – struggled (although the banks may not appreciate the intervention). The first task was therefore to build a website that reflected this, although it needed to cope with the sophistication of the message while being engaging, relevant and attractive. It also had to navigate the need to monitor the message to particular audiences.

Moorgate created a website with two levels of access. The Home Page and introductory pages dealt with generalities – not patronising its audience but offering no detailed explanation of Falcon’s methodology or outcomes. This page also invited interested parties to register, which would win them access to the second level of the website, which contained detailed information about the trade services offering and its advantages. It also contained a case study and deeper, credit-based information on Falcon.

The attractive design was transferred to an equally attractive brochure and (for counterparties and future potential investors) a coherent and attractive annual report. And with the collateral information organised, we could begin a major outreach programme for the company.

One element of the website was an “in the news” page – deliberately organised so that only published articles about Falcon would be included. We then set about filling that news page, via a news and thought leadership agenda that would – month by month – set out the Falcon story. Releases on recruitments, promotions, office openings, deals and even office moves were sent to key publications each month and the resulting article published on the website – with each news item focussing on how it supported the overall growth strategy of the company.

Another key area of the campaign was thought leadership. Falcon is an innovative provider of solutions to situations where others may fear to tread, and a strong way of communicating this was through our ghost-writing of commentaries for key finance publications – both in the UK and, more importantly, the local markets in which they operate. Islamic trade services, the move to open-account trading, the dependence of paper-based letters of credit in Asia – all were strong subjects for commentary articles that we wrote on behalf of both the London-based seniors and the local reps (placing articles in the local business press).

Indeed, the thought leadership element backed up strong relationship building with key editors that had been underway since the campaign started. This resulted in “punditry” that helped journalists complete articles with expert opinion on various subjects, and – more importantly – in some strong interview/profile pieces in key peer group publications that we were able to circulate to clients and potential clients, as well as potential future investors. Finally, we arranged speaking slots and panel

placements for key individuals – especially in the local markets – again, aiming to raise their profile as knowledge-led and innovative potential partners in trade services.

As well as thought leadership there was a “feel-good factor” with respect to the Falcon brand. This was aided by the company’s move to the Gherkin, which allowed us to hold events in the rooftop restaurant. Another event was arranged in partnership with a leading West End art gallery – again to aid the image of Falcon as a sophisticated and urbane partner. This image change was sealed in early 2009 with a total rebranding, which Moorgate project-managed from start to finish – reworking the website and brochures as well as all the company’s stationery. Our efforts were capped by the lobbying for key awards – namely the Best Trade Finance Boutique. In 2007 we won this award from Trade & Forfaiting Review, repeated again in 2008. And in 2009 we won the same award from Trade Finance, magazine – the industry’s leading publication.

“Falcon was a successful company that was continuing to grow and develop and therefore needed the appropriate way to communicate that to our very specific audiences,” says Will Nagle, Falcon’s CEO. “As our first endeavour in this marketplace, we did not want to commit to a large advertising campaign, which would have – anyway – been wrong for communicating our specialist offering. Instead, Moorgate worked to create a profile – both online and in print – both directly to audiences and via the media – that reflected perfectly the values and expertise we were trying to communicate.”