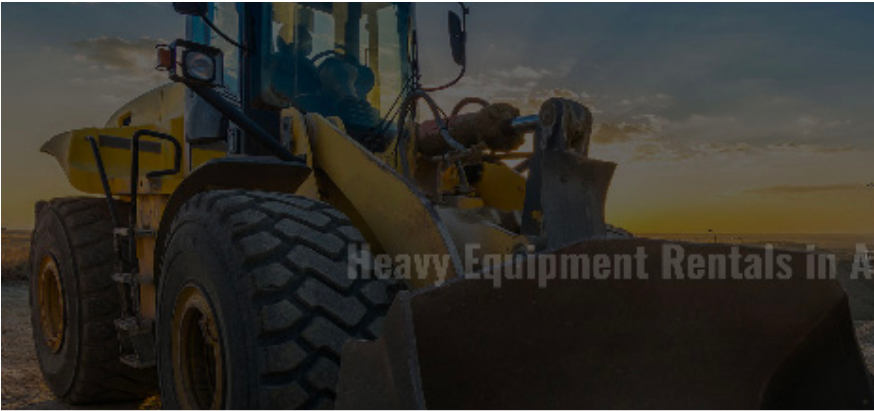


Plains Equipment Rentals



Value proposition

Customer experience

Differentiation

Commodities

Heavy equipment

When hundreds of companies in an area do the same thing, differentiation has to come from the customer experience

Overview

Plains Equipment Rental came to North Then West when company leadership understood that while they had exclusive dealer rights for a subset of the equipment they rent, they struggled to explain why their wheel loaders were any better than the hundred other companies who rent similar equipment – especially because positioning themselves as the lowest-cost solution wasn't a sustainable solution.

Process

1. Discovery – What makes Plains Equipment Rentals special?

Having never spent time getting intimate with the different types of wheel loaders (outside of reading picture books for interested children), North Then West began by learning how different machines have different uses—and where a single machine has the versatility to perform multiple functions. This knowledge, in addition to learning more about the secondary market for recent-

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model loaders, turned out to be important for the direction of the value proposition design.

From there, North Then West conducted interviews with multiple customers who had different kinds of needs. Customers ranged from farms that needed machines narrow enough to maneuver between rows of crops to companies who operate mainly in the winter to remove snow from gigantic parking lots. At the same time, we did an extensive review of the company's sales materials, with a particular focus on the website and assessing how it could be improved.

2. Sentiment analysis – Pulling together the most relevant and important information

The information North Then West gathered, as well as multiple conversations with Plains' ownership, led to conclusions that where they often tried to compete on price, such a strategy could easily be undercut by larger rental companies that had the time and deep pockets to outlast a small company like Plains. Therefore, we needed to look at other factors that could differentiate Plains, such as quick response times and transparent contracts being important factors in customer decision-making. We also discovered that renting heavy machinery often takes a more old-school approach: conversion is almost always more successful with a phone call than through an e-commerce transaction. This doesn't mean that an online presence isn't important; when done well it's still critical for providing product information at the top levels of the sales funnel and taking a big role in lead generation.

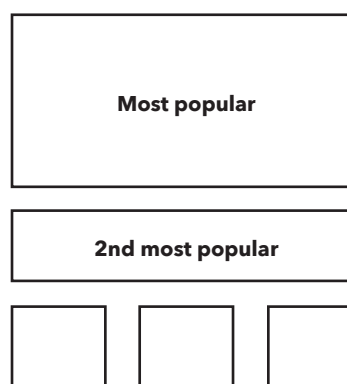
3. Value proposition design – The big differentiator

Through multiple discussions, competitive analyses, and understanding customer needs, North Then West designed a value proposition that focused on providing a rental experience that went beyond transactional. This meant regular check-ins, free delivery throughout western Canada, an emphasis on long-term rentals that keep machines rented on a regular basis while providing value for the customer (which was maintaining the current business plan), and quick turnaround times when repairs are needed.

4. User experience recommendations – Sharing the value

In addition to providing the value proposition, North Then West also provided a blueprint for improving Plains' web presence. The redevelopment will be done piecemeal, but important recommendations included:

- Displaying the value proposition and showing it in action
- Prioritizing the most-rented equipment over smaller, less important machinery
- Displaying seasonally based equipment near each other with better descriptions to show what can and should be rented when
- Offering more avenues to start the rental process from the site to streamline phone conversations.



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Result

Since implementation of the value proposition, Plains Equipment Rentals has made numerous strides in its growth and how the company presents itself. This includes having enough revenue to hire new employees, implementing a new tagline and logo design as part of a more formal branding effort, and continuing to refine the ways they provide their positive customer experience.



*How can North Then West help your company refocus your value proposition to become customer centric? Reach out to us!
Contact joel@norththenwest.com or call 825-436-2035*