Marketing development for a B2B equipment manufacturer

From random enquiries to 21 qualified a month.

A €12.4m maker of stainless-steel equipment for the food industry stopped selling tanks and started selling measurably lower cleaning costs.

€3.1m of orders from new customers in 12 months | **14% → 31%** quote win rate

Armes: target customer selection, offer and guarantee design, lead sources, sales process, training

Customers don't buy a tank. They buy shorter cleaning and less water. Now we measure it before we quote.

Client
Process equipment manufacturer, €12.4m, 78 employees

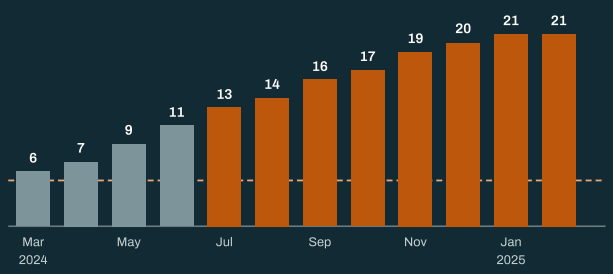
Trigger
Plant utilisation down to 72%

Scope
4 months of set-up, 12 months measured

Armes' role
Strategy, offer, system, training

Qualified enquiries per month

dashed: average before the project (6); monthly from March 2024



21
qualified enquiries a month, up from 6

31%
of quotes become orders, up from 14%

+9%
higher price for a comparable scope of supply

–€80k
less spent on trade fairs a year

The situation

Good equipment, sold by chance.

The company builds process tanks, clean-in-place (CIP) systems and conveyor lines for the food industry. 65% of sales are exports.

After the 2021–2022 investment wave, plant utilisation fell to 72% in 2023. Two sales engineers wrote 180 quotes a year and only 14% became orders. Customers compared nothing but price against Italian manufacturers.

The owner wanted more marketing. Armes proposed to change **who** we sell to and **what** we sell first, and only then **how** we reach buyers.

What wasn't working

Everyone was a target
From bakeries to breweries. The message spoke to no one.

They sold a product
A custom tank the buyer compares on price alone.

One source of enquiries
Three trade fairs a year for €140k, silence in between.

A quote for everyone
Even with no budget and no decision-maker.

Step 1: target customers

One customer group instead of the whole food industry.

We chose mid-sized dairies and cheese makers with €5–80m revenue in Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. There are 640 of them. We chose them on four criteria.

Real pain

Cleaning takes 3–4 hours a day. Water, chemicals and energy for CIP cost €120–300k a year.

Money to fix it

Margins are stable, an upgrade pays back in under two years and banks are happy to finance it.

Easy to find

Public plant registers, dairy associations and clear decision-makers: technical director and production manager.

A growing need

Water and energy prices and retailers' resource-use demands rise every year.

Step 2: the offer

The CIP 30 programme: lower consumption, not a new tank.

We built the offer around value to the buyer. Value rises when the outcome is bigger and more certain, and when the buyer waits less and puts in less effort.

Desired outcome

increased

Before: "a quality tank". Now: **30% less water and chemicals** and one hour less cleaning a day.

Likelihood of success

increased

Measurement before the quote, three measured references and a **savings guarantee**.

Time to result

reduced

Installed in a **48-hour weekend shutdown**. Savings visible in week one.

Buyer effort

reduced

Turnkey: design, validation and **IFS documentation**. The buyer manages nothing.

Programme component	What the buyer gets	Value
One-day CIP measurement	Water, chemicals, energy and time in euros, report within 5 days	€3,500
Turnkey CIP upgrade	Tanks, valves, controls and cleaning recipes based on the measurement	quoted
Weekend installation	No lost production, done in 48 hours	€9,000
Validation and documentation	IFS and HACCP records, audit-ready	€6,000
12 months of monitoring	Remote consumption tracking, monthly savings report	€7,200
Added value at no extra charge		**€25,700**

Savings guarantee

20%

If water and chemical use does not fall by at least **20%** against the baseline within six months, the system is re-tuned free of charge and the buyer gets **10% of the price** back.

The guarantee applies only after a measurement, so the company knows what it promises. In 12 months it was never claimed.

Project prices are on average 9% higher than before for comparable equipment. Buyers compare savings, not tank prices. The programme has a name so that sales staff, partners and customers can pass it on.

Step 3: four lead sources and referrals

A free measurement opens the door; the quote comes after.

There are four ways to reach buyers: contact people who know you, contact people who don't, publish content and pay for ads. All four lead to the same first step: a CIP measurement that shows the buyer what cleaning really costs.

Source	What we did	Conversations	Measurements	Orders
Known contacts warm outreach	420 contacts from 10 years of fairs and quotes. A personal message offering a measurement, then a call. No pitch, just a question about cleaning.	64	22	4
New contacts cold outreach	640 dairies, 2 decision-makers each. A LinkedIn, email and phone sequence. A new junior hire makes 60 touches a day.	71	24	4
Content free	A monthly before-and-after with measured numbers, short installation videos, posts by the technical director. A cleaning-cost calculator on the website.	29	10	2
Ads €1,500 a month	LinkedIn ads for the calculator, aimed at dairy technical directors, plus retargeting of visitors.	14	5	0
Referrals customers, partners	Customers who refer another dairy get an extra year of monitoring. Two dairy technologists as commissioned partners.	8	3	1
Total, 12 months		**186**	**64**	**11**

Trade fairs: from three to one, with pre-booked meetings. A quote is written only after a measurement and only when budget and decision-maker are known. Everything is tracked in the CRM, from first contact to order.

Result after 12 months

11 new customers and €3.1m of orders.

Armes selected the target customers, designed the CIP 30 programme and guarantee with management, wrote the messages for all four sources, set up the sales process in the CRM and trained the engineers and the new hire. Outreach, measurements and quotes were run by the company's team.

What was hard. For the first six weeks only 2% replied to cold outreach. Replies rose to 9% once we stopped writing about equipment and started writing about measured cleaning losses. The engineers resisted the guarantee at first, which is why it applies only after a measurement.

12× gross margin on new orders (31%) against €82,000 spent on marketing and the new hire.

From contact to order

1,060	186	64	35	11
contacts reached	conversations	CIP measurements	quotes	orders

12.4 → 14.6	72 → 88%	€280k
€m revenue, first year after the project	plant utilisation	average order, up from €210k

"We used to send quotes to everyone. Now we only quote where we have measured what they can save, and there we win almost one in three." **Sales director**

Want a steady flow of enquiries from the right buyers?

Igor Prosenik igor.prosenik@armes.si armes.si