

Micro Focus Unlocks the Value of Marketing



Micro Focus, Inc. is a company that understands how to unlock the value of legacy assets. Its software enables organizations to reuse and extend the life of legacy applications written in the COBOL source language. For Micro Focus' customers, making the most of their existing enterprise systems results in reduced costs, increased agility, and minimal risk.

The same can now be said for Micro Focus' global marketing organization, thanks to an aggressive plan to reinvent its processes and galvanize the worldwide team. According to Alan Holdship, vice president of North American Marketing for Micro Focus, "When I looked over the landscape of marketing, I realized that, in spite of our efforts, we were an island within the company. We had not figured out how to leverage the

skills of Sales or Product Management. Therefore, we were not firing on all cylinders."

He adds, "At the same time, given that we are a global marketing organization, with people in Germany, Japan, Italy, BeNeLux, the Nordic region, France, Britain, Australia, and the U.S., we didn't have a sense of being one worldwide unit. We were presenting ourselves as several companies—not just in our messaging, but the processes by which we were working and communicating. There was no single method to take an initial thought and work it through until we created a specific result, so our efforts were scattered and inconsistent. Micro Focus was determined to present itself as a global company. So it was important for the marketing organization to present our solutions to worldwide customers with one face and one message, with a consistency that would run across the globe."

Beyond that, the marketing organization didn't have a clear picture of how it contributed to the company's success. It needed to establish a clear reason for being, a role that deserved the respect of the rest of the organization. "We realized that credibility comes from metrics," says Holdship, "and we didn't have a way to measure our marketing programs. We couldn't learn from anything we did wrong or benefit from the things we did successfully, and we couldn't report our successes to our stakeholders."

Answering the call

Toward that end, Holdship went in search of a professional training program that would help Micro Focus begin to unlock the value of marketing. "I wanted to make sure that everyone around the world got the same, fundamental education



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Case Study

about marketing and how it works. Our goal was to get everyone in one room, call in the best people we could find, and have them give us the insights we needed to succeed.”

The solution was Pragmatic Marketing® and its Effective Marketing Programs™ seminar. “I was impressed with the Pragmatic Marketing Framework and with the professionalism of the organization,” he says. “I recognized many things within the program content that we needed in our marketing organization.”

Holdship brought 27 people together for a planning meeting, including all of the members of his worldwide marketing team and representatives from his advertising and PR agencies. The week started with the two-day Effective Marketing Programs seminar, and continued after the seminar as everyone worked on plans to implement the new ideas. “The goal was to bind the group together with specific skill sets and processes that we could all use and benefit from. Pragmatic Marketing offered that. They provided the insight into the role of marketing and how it works with other parts of the company, along with best practices for delivering effective marketing programs to our customers—both internal and external.”

For Holdship, one of the critical elements behind the success of the session was the skill of the instructor. “Adele connected with people. Her skill is steeped in this massive knowledge and experience; she’s been there and done just about everything. But she took all of that experience, adapted it to our unique situation, and applied it at the right level—to the point where she stretched our people to learn, but not where she lost them.

She gave us insights into where we could take this in the long term, as well as what we could do next week to make a difference.”

Breaking down the barriers

One of the first things the team learned was how to prevent Marketing from being an island within the company—a very protective and defensive island. “As a group, we came to the realization that marketing was not exclusively up to us,” Holdship emphasizes. “We realized we had help around the company. For example, Product Management plays a major and necessary role in marketing. Without them, we cannot be successful. Without us, they cannot be successful. Intuitively, you know that. It’s not nuclear physics. And it was the same with Sales. But to see it on someone else’s slide presentation—a well-respected, neutral organization—was an eye-opener for everybody.”

He continues, “We learned that there are people within our company who not only wanted to help, but essentially were supposed to be part of the marketing process. And that helped us cut through fears and conjectures such as, ‘If we go to them, they will tell us what to do.’ Instead, we could view it as, ‘If we go to them, they will help us do our jobs better.’ That was a big plus. In fact, the biggest single benefit of the training was breaking down the barriers that stopped Marketing from communicating with Product Management and Sales.”

One company. One marketing team.

Another valuable lesson from the Pragmatic Marketing training was that there are best practices and structures to follow for effective marketing programs. “As a global marketing team, we can all benefit from

following the same processes and workflow—from idea all the way to delivery. With everyone on the same page, we get increased consistency of brand identity across different cultures. Today, Micro Focus is truly a global company, a much more integrated company. As a result, the company is positioned to be more successful and increase its revenue.”

An added bonus of the training session was the team building that occurred. “Over two days, we came together as a unit under the auspices of this professional training. We came away with a sense that we were all in this together—regardless of language or culture or market size,” remembers Holdship. “The team-building part was not planned. But in a pleasantly surprising and very beneficial way, it drew the group closer together. Now, the marketing organization functions as a productive team, rather than as individuals working in different directions. And we can see elements of the Effective Marketing Programs seminar in everything we do now.”

Response-to-revenue metrics

A critical aspect of the training was the impetus to measure results. “Before the training, we had no credible metric with which to measure marketing—whether good, bad, or indifferent,” explains Holdship. “Pragmatic gave us the idea to measure and showed us the value of that. It was the stimulus we needed to develop our marketing metrics and tools like our lead generation engine, our communications engine, and what we call our ‘response-to-revenue process.’ Today, we can track every single program, from a small online demo to a major direct marketing event. We can actually do closed-loop marketing—which was just a dream at the time we went to the Pragmatic training.”



The ability to measure every marketing program and make changes based on real data means the marketing organization can predict success with much greater accuracy. “We know how our programs are contributing to the company’s goals. I can now stand up in a company meeting and say, ‘We are going to generate X number of responses, and those responses are going to be worth Y amount of revenue.’ Senior management knows what return they’re getting on their investment in marketing, and how we’re contributing to the company’s overall success. There is a growing sense that Marketing is an integral part of the company and the way it acts and moves and thinks.”

The ability to measure accurately and predict results reliably has also led to a quantum leap in the credibility and respect the marketing organization now has with Sales. “Marketing has gained respect through credibility and results. The sales force now *expects* Marketing to be part of the discussion and *expects* Marketing to deliver. They don’t demand anything from us any more. Now they come to us with a problem and ask us to find the best solution. We have raised the bar. And we have gained enormous faith in ourselves.”

The turning point

Holdship is quick to point out that the changes did not take place overnight. It is a continuous process and takes many, many months. And the process went through periods of ups and downs. “But I can always look back to the Pragmatic Marketing training as the starting point of all these things, because that’s when we came together as a team and heard about all these great things we could do. The seminar was the pivotal moment in how we changed the marketing organization. It was the cornerstone, the beginning of the new Micro Focus marketing.”

He concludes, “After that, it was up to our people to execute and drive it home. There were no surprises—we could just get on with it. And we did. We still have a lot of work to do, but we’ve made significant progress. Now we have the tools, the processes, the skills, and the support of the company to produce the right results with confidence.”

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