

Skillsoft Retention Campaign

CATEGORY NUMBER:	**CATEGORY 2**
CATEGORY NAME:	**BEST USE OF DIRECT MAIL**
CAMPAIGN NAME:	**CLIENT RETENTION CAMPAIGN**
AGENCY:	**GASP**
CLIENT:	**SKILLSOFT**

Summary word count:	*200*
Main word count:	*1000*

SUMMARY

With the UK elearning market plateauing in recent years it's become increasingly important for Skillsoft to focus on customer retention.

THESE DETAILS WERE PROVIDED TO JUDGES IN THE ORIGINAL SUBMISSION BUT ARE COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE AND THEREFORE CONFIDENTIAL

Our approach was to develop a focused communication strategy empowering Skillsoft to take control of the customer conversation. The solution wasn't about glamorous creative but a structured, measurable 8-week re-engagement programme to get Skillsoft back in the customers' line of sight.

The objective was to re-connect Skillsoft to these accounts, creating opportunities for meaningful discussions around account health and securing at least £50,000 worth of renewals. On successful completion, the campaign would become a mainstream process for future risk accounts.

Nine of the ten companies responded to the campaign, six accounts will renew in 2014.

The combined renewal value stands at **£503,285** delivering over **5,000% ROI.**

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ABOUT SKILLSOFT

Founded in 1998, Skillsoft provides cloud-based learning solutions for their clients worldwide, which range from global enterprises, government and education organisations to mid-sized and small businesses.

Skillsoft serves over 6,000 customers and more than 19,000,000 learners worldwide.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- A plateau in new business growth and the squeeze on HR budgets increases the pressure on sales targets
- Recent investment in new technologies (new Learning Management System and IT Virtual Labs) needs to deliver a return
- Huge investment of time during the 3-18 month average sales cycle plus the 6 month implementation process needs to be offset against longer contractual agreements and reduced expiries



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CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

- Re-connect Skillsoft with customers at risk of expiry by the end of 2014 and start meaningful discussions around account health
- Secure £50,000 in contract renewal value (via one or multiple deals)
- Create a process framework that could be used again and again by Skillsoft for future ‘at risk’ accounts

STRATEGY

Ten risk accounts were identified, with a combined renewal value of £665,557. Our strategy was to contact every stakeholder involved in the initial contract signing as they have a vested interest in the success of the investment.

The campaign would remind them of this investment and challenge them to make better use of it. Reinforcing Skillsoft’s industry USP’s and it’s success with like-minded organisations. Re-framing the expiry as a loss for the customer rather than for Skillsoft.

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THE TARGET AUDIENCE

The 'at risk' report list is triggered by an assortment of metrics:

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From this report, deeper investigations validated suitability and ten customers were identified for the pilot programme.

Gasp then worked with the individual Sales and Learning Consultant teams responsible for each account to build out individual communication plans noting the following intelligence:

- Each customer was at a different stage of their programme and has different requirements/challenges
- They would be motivated by competitors/known brands working well with Skillsoft
- They would be responsive to pro-activity – suggestions of specific changes to their programme to improve results
- They needed increased validation of Skillsoft's strengths as a vendor – sharing of relevant assets such as white papers, blogs, video etc.

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MEDIA & CHANNELS

Structured, provocative messaging and meticulous engagement was key to the campaign's success. Skillsoft would be controlling the follow up, as they were the ones the client needed to engage with, not us.

So we opted for a simple mix of tactics – attention grabbing and clever direct mail, email, phone calls and asset sharing. Rolled out over a structured 8-week programme. All linked in to Salesforce to capture responses and enrich the existing customer profile data.

Our specific tactic programme is detailed below:

8 week re-engagement timeline

Regional Director phase — *Learning Consultant phase*

INVESTIGATION
3 WEEKS

- Identify customers at risk
- Asses relevancy
- Identify areas for improvement
- Identify competitors/ relevant brands working with Skillsoft
- Create asset collections.

DIRECT MAIL
1 WEEK

Personalised letter sent to 18 contacts in 10 'at risk' companies.

"Are you wasting an opportunity to optimise your investment with Skillsoft?"

PHASE 1 FOLLOW UP
2 WEEKS

Email follow up and telemarketing.

Push reintroduction to the Skillsoft Learning Consultant.

PHASE 2 FOLLOW UP
4 WEEKS

Learning Consultant weekly follow up and asset sharing.

Links to:
- Video Content
- White Papers
- Case Studies
- Infographics
- Data Sheets

Measured in Salesforce.

FINAL ACTION
1 WEEK

GM/Sales VP resignation of account.

Letter to relevant contact acknowledging attempts to contact and expected contract cancellation.

Renewal discussions expected to take 3-6 months

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Direct Mail

A provocative and unforgettable piece of direct mail was sent (recorded delivery) to all stakeholders. A personalised letter was crumpled up and suspended in a clear perspex box compelling the recipient to open and read it. The crumpled paper visually conveyed the idea of waste and the tone of the copy was designed to create 'constructive tension'. Emphasising the client's wasted investment with Skillsoft and challenging them to fix it.

Sent from the Regional Director, the letter had been escalated internally from their usual Sales/Learning Consultant contact to add gravitas. The call to action was to re-connect with their Learning Consultant to get their programme back on track.

The Regional Director would then personally follow up over the next 2 weeks with plain text emails and phone calls to try to establish contact.



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Skillsoft

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Provocative introduction

Competitor/like-minded brand relationship

USP of Skillsoft - "86% of what is learned..."

Personalised changes to the specific account

Reintroduction of Learning Consultant

Confident close

Personalised sign-off

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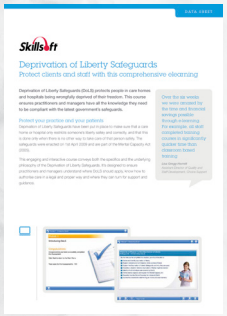


Follow up Email and Asset Sharing

Whilst the Directors' involvement was critical, so too was the Learning Consultants'. As product specialists, it was important that customers did not lose sight of the value added by their Learning Consultant and the significant part they play in the success of their programme.

On a weekly basis, they would share relevant assets with the customer from the collection of Data Sheets, White Papers, Case Studies, Infographics, Blogs and Videos agreed in the targeting phase. All communications and responses were recorded in Salesforce to build on the existing customer profile data.

Crucially the Director and Learning Consultant would copy all communications to one another. Maintaining a united front with the customer, with the sole purpose of initiating a response.



Data Sheet



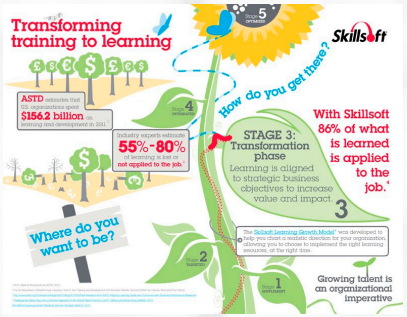
White Paper



Case Study



Implementation Video



Infographic

Letter to Close

The final step would be a letter from the Skillsoft EMEA General Manager or Sales VP. It would set out the efforts that had been made, and inform the key decision maker that unless contacted and informed otherwise, Skillsoft would expect the account to expire by said date.

It was important that we gave the campaign a specific end point to ensure focus during the 8-week re-engagement phase.

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TIMESCALES

The pilot campaign ran from November 2013 to March 2014.

Meetings/renewals secured from January onwards.

BUDGETS

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RESULTS

Nine of the ten companies responded to the campaign.

In some instances more than one stakeholder requested a meeting to discuss. Six accounts will renew in 2014. One account signed a new 4-year contract early.

The combined renewal value stands at **£503,285** delivering over **5,000% ROI.**

*Discussions continue with the other three that responded.

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"Client retention is a real challenge for us right now. As a global company we have a US based loyalty team who usually handle this type of activity but we knew, with new business on the decline, that we needed to up our game and take control of this ourselves. We are thrilled with the campaign and the very real return it has delivered us. It was easy to grasp and implement but the focus and support on the follow up was a real clincher for us. We now have a proven formula to help with client retention and we expect this activity to become embedded in our client communications for 2014."

Sarah Jones, Marketing Manager, Skillsoft EMEA

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