FINALIST 2014 B2B AWARDS

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account based marketing

Adding Value at VMware Through Sales and Marketing Integration

Category number: 14
Category name: Best integration of sales and marketing
Name of campaign or initiative: Adding Value at VMware Through Sales and Marketing Integration
Name of agency/practitioner: Momentum ABM

Word count: 795 (excluding summary and picture captions)

Please note: this submission is confidential and not for disclosure

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DRIVING TIGHTER ALIGNMENT BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING

Momentum helped VMware nurture longer-term strategic relationships and increase the value of deals through account-based marketing (ABM). This is a marketing framework that treats each customer as a 'segment of one' across the buying cycle.

VMware wanted to update its product-led selling practices with a more customer-led approach. This responds to market changes and positions its growing portfolio for a more business-orientated audience - promoting VMware's role from technology vendor to strategic partner.

Momentum helped VMware achieve its objectives through the use of ABM principles. These created a tighter interlock between sales and marketing teams, fostering a step change in engagement to make a significant impact across the buying cycle. We achieved this by:

- **Encouraging collaboration** – involving marketing teams in each step of the sales planning process.
- **Improving marketing execution** – using account-led insights to create highly relevant content assets and campaigns.
- **Proving the value** – through quantifiable metrics, e.g. deals closed, and by sharing our successes.

Client background

VMware is the leader in virtualization and cloud infrastructure solutions. Over 500,000 customers rely on VMware to help them transform the way they build, deliver and consume IT resources. The company is headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices throughout the world.

Strategic context

An account-based marketing (ABM) method

VMware uses ABM as a tool to support its sales processes with customer-level marketing strategies. This embodies the 'segment of one' principle, where select customers are considered as their own market and receive a highly customised approach.

From product focus to customer focus

Like almost all technology vendors, VMware's historic approach to its market was to sell products and services to IT decision makers. But as the business matured and its portfolio grew – and the market for cloud solutions exploded - this tactic became unsustainable.

The challenge was to raise the profile of VMware and promote a more strategic, business-led view of its capabilities. As an example, VMware wanted to promote its vision for the 'Software Defined Enterprise', which can transform how organisations deploy and consume computing resource.

Reaching both IT and business stakeholders

In an increasingly digital world, technology budgets are being driven more and more by business stakeholders. As a result, VMware needed to reshape its selling approach to reach non-IT audiences. This would demand a different type of dialogue, which talks less about technology and more about value - changing perceptions of VMware and promoting its role as a strategic business partner.

Aligning sales and marketing

As a result of the new market conditions, VMware embarked on a transformation of its sales and marketing approach. This would respond to the changing needs of both the customer and the business, resulting in much tighter integration between sales and marketing functions.

Account-based marketing at VMware

Objectives

VMware asked Momentum to help define and embed account-based marketing (ABM) practices. This would create a new marketing framework that treats each customer as a 'market of one' and aligns sales and marketing activities across the buying cycle.

The specific objectives were to help sales account owners to:

- Demonstrate greater business relevance to their customer.
- Stimulate longer-term relationships (looking towards a 12-18 months cycle rather than 3-6 months).
- Build more senior strategic relationships at a higher level within the account to enable a new approach to selling.

Our approach

The step change we wanted to facilitate for VMware was an entirely new engagement model between sales and marketing teams. This would shift marketing's role from implementer (for example of events or tactical campaigns) to one of proactive consultant across the end-to-end account lifecycle.

In addition, the approach would enable sales teams to step outside their comfort zone – of selling products to IT managers – to develop more sustainable and higher value relationships.

These changes were not achieved overnight, and instead became part of a mutual evolution of sales and marketing teams.

We achieved this in a number of ways:

Nurturing collaboration

- By embedding marketing teams in the account planning process from the outset – before any sales strategies were defined.
- By being with sales at each step of their sales cycle – which facilitated continuity of vision and enabled marketing to add more value.

Improving marketing execution

- By creating bespoke content assets that talked directly to the needs of individual accounts.
- By supporting sales milestones with customer-specific events or materials.
- By creating an ongoing approach to customer engagement, for example through the use of customer micro sites.
- By delighting sales people and customers with more creative ways to tell VMware's story – for example through the use of video.

Proving the value

- By quantifying the value of our approach – through metrics that included sales pipeline opportunities and deals closed.
- By sharing our successes across teams – encouraging new account owners to step forward and say, "I'd like some of that."
- By sharing our recognition from customers - who were pleased to see that VMware understood their business issues and had taken time to go the extra mile.

Example Deliverables

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential

Our results

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential

Target audience

Our account-based marketing framework has touched:

- Sales account owners in VMware.
- Marketing teams in VMware.
- Services & Support teams in VMware.

- Senior Management & executive stakeholders at VMware.
- Decision makers in VMware's high-value accounts.

Campaign timescales

Momentum launched Account Based Marketing into VMware in August 2012 and have since continued to expand the approach into countries across the EMEA region.

Client testimonial

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List of supporting material

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