FINALIST 2013

B2B AWARDS



Microsoft

HARTE HANKS Insight. Passion. Results.

Category number:	**23**
Category name:	**Best lead nurturing campaign**
Programme/initiative name:	**Invictus: connecting marketing & sales**
Agency:	**Harte-Hanks**
Brand or client:	**Microsoft UK (Enterprise)**
URL or microsite:	http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/enterprise
Word count:	**Summary 200**
	Main entry 996 excluding headings

Summary

Microsoft UK Enterprise initiated a lead nurturing campaign to address serious issues surrounding delivery of well qualified leads to co-selling partners.

The challenge:
High disengagement meant very few marketing generated opportunities were translating into sales-ready leads. The problem was compounded by a lengthy sales cycle (up to 15 months) and the diverse, complex range of products and services. Integration and collaboration with partners was also poor.

Solution:
A landmark shift in the criteria leads needed to meet prior to hand-off was instigated to overcome barriers preventing their effective progression.

The strategy focused on 'dynamic nurturing'. Development of an innovative new propensity-led approach provided strong foundations for activity. Then, intelligent telemarketing activity ensured leads were cultivated over the sales cycle until they met the newly defined sales-ready criteria.

Pain-points of existing procedures were accurately identified and conquered with a creative, tenacious approach. This facilitated better customer journeys and bridged gaps between Microsoft and co-selling partners.

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

(200 words)

i. About the client company

Microsoft UK's Enterprise division provides corporate IT solutions. Products and services include productivity tools, infrastructure platform technologies, business analytics solutions, datacentre technologies and communications & collaboration tools.

Customer investment in these solutions typically ranges from $50,000 – $150,000 USD (£33k - £100k) and there is a sales cycle of 9 - 15 months.

This entry focuses on lead nurturing prior to handover to co-selling partner organisations.

Microsoft uses the BANT mechanism for qualifying sales leads, where leads are assessed in terms of customers':

- Budget
- Authority
- Need
- Timescale

Microsoft's lead conversion spectrum considers leads to be qualified (warm) if they satisfy all four criteria.

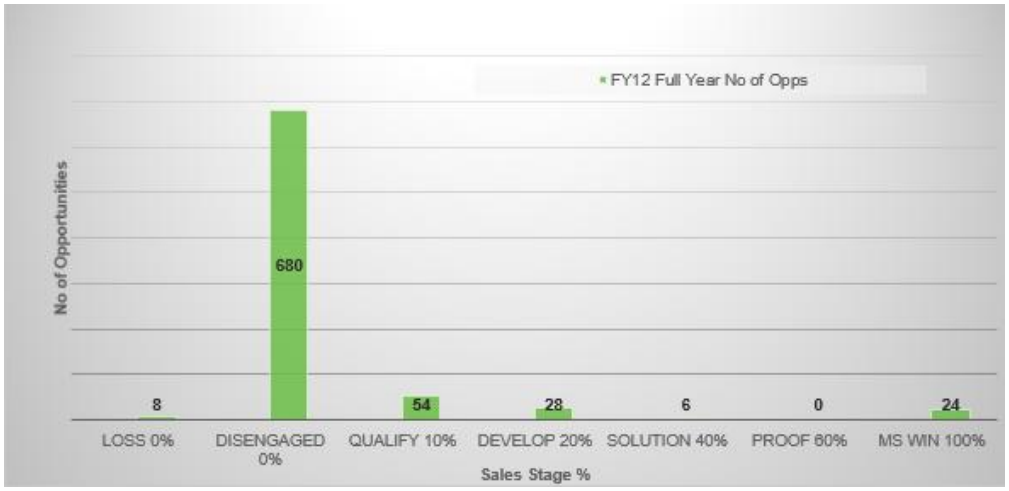
ii. Strategy – broader business objectives and how this activity relates

Historically, the Microsoft Enterprise Marketing Team failed to deliver accepted leads to sales teams and partners. An ad hoc, product group led approach to demand generation campaigns resulted in the same small set of contacts being hit frequently with disparate messages.

The return on marketing investment in previous years had been poor, as were customer journeys. Activity in Financial Year 2012 (FY12) was characterised by **disengagement**: 80% of marketing generated opportunities didn't convert into sales accepted leads.

Barriers to success include the complexity and diversity of products as well as the lengthy sales cycle.

Image 1: Summary of opportunity / lead progression in Financial Year 2012



The strategy for Financial Year 2013 (FY13) focused on overcoming these challenges. The aim was to reduce disengagement, progress more opportunities into sales accepted leads and achieve seamless transition between marketing and sales.

iii. Objectives of the campaign

- To deliver a $[*confidential*] pipeline of fully-qualified leads to partners within FY13
- To deliver a joined-up approach to demand generation customer communications that provides a better customer journey

A key strategic change was shifting the lead handover threshold. Traditionally, 'qualified' leads would have been considered sales-ready. In FY13, marketing retained ownership of qualified leads, nurturing them until they satisfied all four BANT criteria *and* were accepted by the partners.

The new strategy is rooted in propensity modelling. Sophisticated analytics underpin an intelligence-led approach to email marketing. Qualified opportunities are then nurtured via telemarketing follow-up activity until they are sales-ready.

A six-strong telemarketing team from Harte-Hanks nurtures leads and manages transition from 'qualified' to 'sales-ready'. The team, permanently operating in-house at Microsoft, also adds value by delivering enhanced connections between partners, pre-sale resources and product groups. Telemarketers are responsible for handing leads over at the right time in the right way to the right partners.

iv. The target audience

IT decision makers at firms with 250-5,000 employees.

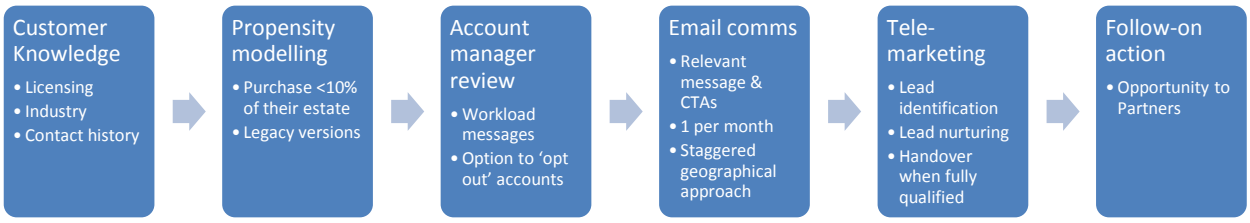
A core issue associated with this audience is defining the level of technical detail required by different people at different stages of the cycle.

v. Media, channels or techniques used

Activity involves email marketing and telemarketing follow-up to progress leads from cold to warm, ready for handover to partners.

Sophisticated analytics inform a monthly schedule of communications rooted in customer knowledge and propensity modelling. Tailored messages are landed via email to named contacts within target accounts.

Image 2: The Invictus demand generation engine



Accounts are only targeted if they have a propensity to be interested in the relevant product group allocated to their region for any given month.

Image 3: FY13 calendar for propensity-led email communications

Territory Grouping	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Anglia & The Midlands	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform
London	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions
North East & Scotland	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud
North West	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle
South East	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity
South West	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics
Territory Grouping	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Anglia & The Midlands	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics
London	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform
North East & Scotland	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions
North West	Productivity	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud
South East	Business Analytics	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle
South West	Application Platform	Business Solutions	Private Cloud	Flexible Workstyle	Productivity

Monthly emails are followed-up by the Harte-Hanks telemarketing team. Agents are tightly integrated with Microsoft and have access to all internal company systems which provides a rich view of accounts. This helps to inform calling and ensures accounts aren't called if there is a customer service issue or recent contact has been made.

The aim is to provide 'dynamic nurturing' via outbound calling that draws on all available resources and knowledge, whilst responding to customers' evolving needs. Harte-Hanks' nexTouch Call Management solution has been integrated with Microsoft CRM systems to enhance this. It synchronises and strengthens the process by placing relevant knowledge at telemarketers' fingertips. **This helps the team respond fluidly to the challenge of providing the right level of technical information for different decision makers.**

Once leads have been progressed from qualified to sales ready, the agency oversees hand-off to ensure a smooth transition.

Harte-Hanks' activity includes:

- Establishing better collaboration and integration between Microsoft and partners
- Involving internal subject matter experts for technical expertise if required
- Offering customers a choice of partners
- Ensuring leads are fully accepted by partners
- Working with partner business consultants to accelerate handover velocity

vi. Timescale of the campaign

July 2012 to June 2013. Harte-Hanks selected in July 2012. Team of six telemarketing agents recruited and trained August 2012. First 'Invictus' communications landed in mid-September and follow-up calling began soon after. Reporting analysis is ongoing.

vii. Budgets:

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

viii. Results:

Full information was provided to judges in the original submission but financial details are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.

Objective	Results to date
To deliver $[*confidential*] of fully qualified pipeline to partners within FY13	**$[*confidential*] fully qualified pipeline delivered within first 7 months** ✓ Ten-fold improvement in ROI on previous year (2.4x to 22x) ✓ 579% increase in **value** of opportunities so far
To deliver a joined-up approach to demand generation customer communications that provides a better customer journey	**343% increase in fully-qualified, sales accepted leads** • 257 in FY13 to date (58 in total for FY12) Additional measures of success so far this year: ✓ 231 qualified opportunities handed off to partners ✓ 1,138 value conversations with decision makers ✓ 440 positive customer testimonials ✓ 73% reduction in disengagement

Success is primarily measured in terms of the value of fully qualified leads generated. Due to the length of the sales cycle it is too soon to measure actual completed sales generated by this activity.

ix. Client testimonials

Before we appointed Harte-Hanks for lead nurturing, the disconnect between marketing generated opportunities and sales accepted leads seemed insurmountable. However, the team has worked intelligently and tenaciously to bridge the gaps and ensure leads are managed proficiently throughout the cycle. They have proven that they can generate demand across a diverse and complex set of technical solutions. The quantity of fully qualified leads has surpassed all previous records and the lead quality has been highly commended by our partners. What's more, the handover process is carefully orchestrated to ensure it runs smoothly and that customers experience a seamless transition.

Lynn Moates, Corporate Accounts Marketing, Microsoft UK

x. Appendix

- **Partner verbatims following the Invictus campaign**

Partner verbatims:

*"Content and Code have received leads from both **Gordon** and **Neelam** and the leads look really good. The quality of the information passed on has been fantastic, and they've both been a pleasure to work with so far. I can really see this working"*

Rosie Donoghue | Content and Code Ltd

*"I am really pleased with the communication from **Dan** so far. He has been excellent at setting it up for us to get in front of qualified prospects. So far we've had one appointment and closed one piece of business which is a great ratio. Through time when the volume of leads coming to us increases it will make a real difference to the Microsoft revenue we influence"*

Robert Hutchison | Exactive

"The quality of the opportunities that we have received so far from Invictus has been excellent. Please give us more! "

Caroline Harvey | Trinity Expert Systems

*"**Dan** has passed over some excellent information and has been very forthcoming and helpful to work with. The leads have been relevant (in terms of size of company we would work with and opportunities within these companies). It's down to me now to try and close these leads for Microsoft via Ultima."*

James Fleming | Ultima Business