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B2B Awards 2015 submission document

Category number: 13
Category name: Most commercially successful campaign
Campaign name: People Like You
Agency: April Six Ltd.
Client: VMware
Current total word count: 1177 words

Summary:

What do you do when your company's success in one audience sector is hampering your credibility in another? You work with April Six to turn your fortunes around.

The virtualization pioneers and cloud innovators VMware came to us with a tough brief, and even tougher targets.

100% of Fortune Global 100 companies rely on VMware to run their data centres. That's great, except small to mid-sized businesses (SMBs) and mid-sized enterprises therefore tend to assume that VMware software isn't affordable or appropriate for their smaller, less complex organisations.

VMware wanted to change this perception and focus in hard on demand generation in SMB and mid-enterprise markets in EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa).

Their goal was to deliver over $40 million in sales pipeline in just 18 months, at a 1:16 ROI. And they wanted to financially share the risk of the whole project with an agency partner as obsessed with commercial success as they were.

It was a tall commercial order, which April Six successfully delivered on, in spades: over target and three months ahead of deadline.

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PEOPLE LIKE YOU CHOOSE VMWARE



Main submission:

i. The client company plus products/services offered.
VMware is famous in the technology space as the world's leading virtualization and cloud infrastructure company. Their solutions empower organisations to innovate and thrive by virtualizing infrastructure – from the data centre to the cloud to mobile devices – streamlining IT operations, transforming cost and delivering services from any device, anytime, anywhere.

ii. Strategy – broader business objectives and how this activity relates.
VMware had become almost too famous for its own good in the large enterprise space. April Six was tasked with creating a campaign to persuade SMBs and mid-sized enterprises that VMware's portfolio of software solutions aren't just for huge multinationals with massive budgets, serious change programmes and armies of IT staff.

Our answer was the powerful, no-nonsense, peer-to-peer testimonial based 'People Like You' (PLY) campaign. PLY was built around the critical focus group learning that IT people are easily turned off by vendor marketing. They mistrust fluff and want to be spoken to in their own language by people who really get what life is like on the IT frontline.

The key objective of the broad PLY campaign was to communicate that VMware solutions are used by 'People Like You' in smaller, growing and ambitious organisations, looking to achieve ground-breaking performance with limited budgets and in-house IT expertise.

PLY formed the basis of VMware's entire global go-to-market strategy to SMB and mid-sized enterprise audiences and was launched at the start of 2013. In 2014 we were tasked with specifically focussing on demand generation across EMEA, generating Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) that could quickly be converted to revenue and bottomline impact.





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



iv. The target audience.
Our budget of $2.73m had to work across both small and mid-sized audiences, spanning customer and prospect segments, across 100+ countries.

Target audience was IT Decision Makers, primarily IT Managers and Directors, in companies with 1-5,000 employees.

VMware had approximately 1.89 million contacts available to target:

- 1.8 million in SMBs (Defined as 1-999 employee organisations)
- 90,000 in mid-sized enterprises (Defined as 1000-4,999 employee organisations)





v. Media or channels used.
In 2013 we had opted for a multi-tactic strategy running a total of 18 different, targeted and themed campaigns across media under the PLY banner. In 2014 we changed tack and took a much simpler approach.

We collaborated closely with VMware EMEA to develop a complete outbound and inbound lead generation programme for 2014, consolidating deep campaign anaylsis and rich best practice learning to really sweat every marketing dollar. Then sweat them all again.

We ran 4 different tailored programmes to hit our 4 audiences types, all executed through Eloqua...

1. The Virtualization Advisor: A 12-month complex email programme to our SMB prospect audience.

2. Blueprints for a Smarter Business: A 12-month complex email programme to our mid-sized enterprise prospect audience.

3. A smart email nurture programme: for SMB customers.

4. An accelerated, cross-sell email programme: for mid-sized enterprise customers.

These campaigns ran throughout the year in conjunction with an online media and content syndication programme designed to simultaneously drive inbound leads, creating an 'always-on' demand generation engine.

vi. Timescales of the campaign.
The first campaign went live in April 2014 and the last finished in March 2015. Both prospect programmes ran for 12 months, with the customer programs running along side them.

vii. Budgets.
We had a budget of $2.73m to cover both audience segments.

viii. Results – in whatever form is available.
These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.

We achieved these results by leveraging best practice insights into Eloqua marketing automation:

- Building in progressive profiling to handle poorer quality data and build contact profiles throughout campaign lifetime
- Designing social sign-in capabilities into the programme design, driving respondents to the campaign landing pages from social activity
- Including 'forward to a friend' functionality for peer sharing
- Incorporating smart lead scoring to determine when a prospect was ripe for sales engagement
- Aligning messaging and content to the key phases of the buyer journey
- Designing specific content and calls to action that really added value for the audience
- Applying best practices to lead generation emails and landing pages

ix. Client or senior management testimonial.

"The results that April Six delivered were truly astonishing. We quite simply couldn't have achieved campaign figures and ROI at anything like this level without the hard work, insight and expertise of the April Six team."

Tamara Scharf, Head of Digital and Demand Center EMEA, VMware

"Working with VMware EMEA this last year has been truly exhilarating. Having such clear and tough commercial goals alongside such a rigorous risk/reward contract has kept our team obsessively focused on results and ROI."

Sinead Woodley, Deputy MD, April Six

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Supporting material

2 x A2 boards showcasing creative.
Printed pack (complete).

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