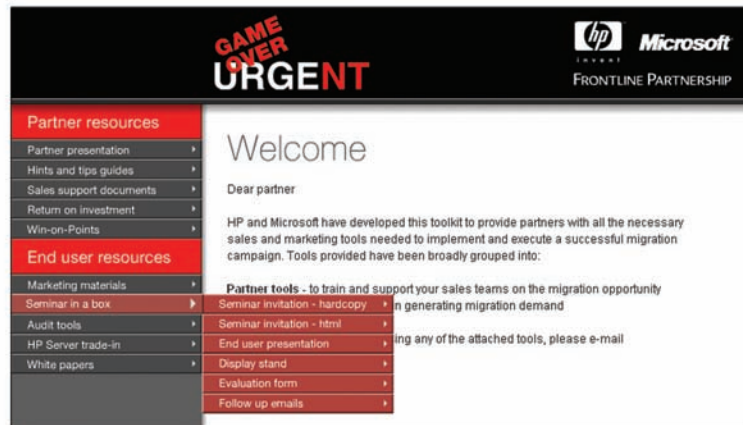


Effective through-channel marketing

How Outbound's UrgeNT4 campaign involved 100 partners and generated a three-figure return on investment for Microsoft and HP.

"An excellent example of an integrated NT4 migration campaign package for partners & customers from the UK team"

Microsoft, EMEA



Microsoft



A key challenge for vendors is how best to work with resellers to influence the buying decisions of their customers. With many resellers having limited in-house marketing resources, or simply reluctant to invest in marketing, how can a vendor instigate a successful, cost effective campaign?

When Microsoft and Hewlett Packard (HP) were looking for a way of driving end users to migrate from Microsoft® Windows® NT Server to Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Outbound's unique combination of channel knowledge and creative excellence made it the obvious partner.

Rising to the challenge, Outbound developed a comprehensive, hard-hitting toolkit to enable HP's resellers - or Business Partners - to develop their own sales and marketing campaigns around migration from NT4 to Windows Server 2003. The campaign was run from March 2004 to highlight the end of support for NT4 from 31 December 2004, and encourage customers to upgrade their server hardware.

The result? A three-figure return on investment for Microsoft and HP, and goodwill from resellers who were impressed with the ease and effectiveness of using the toolkit

The problem

Most of the big vendors accept that marketing is not always a top priority for resellers, either because of time or financial restraints. However, many of the vendor toolkits provided to assist resellers are sadly lacking in direction, imagination and content, often being little more than slightly adapted vendor marketing collateral.

In the case of Microsoft, the end of support date for NT4 had been communicated to end users, but many still had not migrated to a newer version. There was a danger of this having a knock-on effect for the Microsoft revenue stream, and its end users if they were left exposed when official support ended.

To change this, a hard-hitting campaign was needed to convey sense of urgency. With limited in-house marketing resources, many HP Business Partners would not have run a campaign on this subject, or those that had would have relied on vendor funding.

The solution

HP tasked Outbound with devising a bespoke campaign to enable the channel to promote NT4 migration, thus generating new sales of HP hardware and the Microsoft Windows Server 2003. Outbound responded by creating a best-in-class online sales and marketing toolkit for Business Partners.

Outbound achieved this by:

- Reviewing a range of existing toolkits from Microsoft, HP and other vendors
- Applying its extensive knowledge of the channel to assess their marketing capabilities and limitations
- Applying its substantial IT product knowledge to create high-impact messaging and collateral, co-branded with the reseller's logo, contact information and pricing - free of charge to Business Partners
- Using its creative skills to produce a wide range of effective marketing tools

The Outbound campaign provided partners with sales resources designed to train and motivate their own sales forces. The campaign package provided the Business Partners with a comprehensive sales and marketing toolkit, featuring all the promotional material they needed. This included direct mail, HTML emails, telesales script, a seminar in a box, presentations, cheat sheets and follow up emails. Outbound's guidance and strong design messaging made it much easier for the resellers to run an effective campaign by choosing the materials most effective for them and their customers.

The outcome

Over 100 different Business Partners used all or part of the Outbound toolkit to run a marketing campaign. Outbound follow up this activity with telemarketing, getting participating resellers to report on sales and progress. The reseller feedback was very positive. HP got a three-figure return on investment, and the project was extended and adapted from 1 January 2005 to promote the fact that NT support had ended.

Following the success of the campaign, HP commissioned Outbound to employ a similar model for a new project focusing on migration from Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5. This also generated a three-figure return on investment.

Microsoft and HP benefits:

- A three-figure return on investment
- Excellent take-up by resellers - 100 ran branded sales and marketing campaigns
- Generated goodwill in the channel by delivering a useful tool
- The website and content has since been used by HP & Microsoft in the Netherlands, Canada and the US

Reseller benefits:

- Increased sales
- High-quality branded collateral associating them with one of the best known brands in the world
- No time and money spent on design
- The campaign was simple to use and free of charge

"The CDs are super!! Love the creative and content...well done."

PartnerReach Manager HP, US

"Yet again another piece of excellent marketing, this was one of the most appreciated subjects from our customer base."

Vitec Communications

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