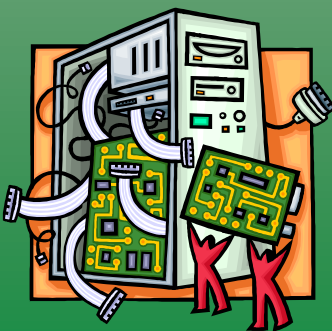


Message Development: The Vital First Step For Communications and Marketing

Case Study

A start-up firm had bootstrapped a growing business in the field of IT quality assurance. They needed to raise their profile in the marketplace through a systematic program of marketing communication and public relations. The firm contacted Graber Associates for advice and assistance in getting the program launched.



The project

Message development is the fundamental building block for any communications effort. Effective messages signal value and differentiate the organization from its competition.

To be effective, messages must meet several tests:

- They must be brief and forceful.
- They must be provable – in a competitive marketplace of ideas, messages require significant factual support. Vague general claims to being “the best” or “complete, end-to-end” or “aligning with your business objectives” invariably engender negative reactions and perceptions, especially among press and analysts, who are trained to be skeptical and questioning of everything.
- Most importantly, messages must address the needs, concerns, and initial perceptions of the audience.

The Process

Graber Associates interviewed executives from all of the organization’s present and former clients. The interviews were both structured and freewheeling; they followed a questionnaire designed specifically for this activity by Graber Associates, but they also allowed for unsolicited commentary and observations that the interviewees felt important. The interviews were also “anonymous.” That is, the speakers of the observations, both positive and negative, were not linked to their specific remarks in the report to the client. The discussions demonstrated what the market really thought about the company, its people, its way of operating, and the things it did best.

Output

We compiled and ranked our findings from the customers. These findings provided a wealth of intelligence in addition to the essences of the messages that we were seeking. We held a half-day brainstorming session at client headquarters, where we moderated a similar set of discussions with its executives and front-line professionals.

Our Services

Graber Associates offers a full slate of services and programs that help you reach your important constituencies:

Public Relations

- Message development
- Press and analyst relations
- News release programs
- Editorial placements
- Media and analyst briefings
- Client/Partner newsletter
- Company backgrounders

Marketing

- Messaging and positioning
- Trade show planning & support
- Announcement plans and strategy
- Press and analyst tours
- White papers
- Sales guides and slip sheets
- Speakers' bureau services and speechwriting
- Customer/partner newsletters

Research

- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Cash management analysis
- Market research
- Bank or vendor RFP's
- Marketing plans
- Implementation plans
- Marketplace analysis
- New market perspectives
- Competitive assessments



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We then presented all our findings, comparing and contrasting what we found on the outside with what we heard on the inside.

There were both consistencies and “disconnects” between what the company’s people believed and what the customers felt.

One aspect of how company and its people operated received consistently high marks from the customers. They cited this factor as the primary reason they would again do business with the company. But this same aspect had been deemed to be of secondary importance by company insiders. Our messaging exercise brought this important difference of opinion to light.

Result

We recommended, and received client buy-in, on three top-line messages with supporting proof points. These messages were then repeated consistently in all communications channels and woven through all of the company’s literature. Together we were able to eliminate the communications clutter and give everyone ample source material for an “elevator speech” about the company.

About Graber Associates LLC

Graber Associates is a public relations, marketing, and research firm that becomes part of your team to help you succeed. Founded in 2002, Graber Associates develops and implements public relations and marketing communications programs that generate revenue for businesses. We also provide research that allows our clients to make better informed decisions. Although we specialize in financial services and technology, our services cover a wide range of vertical markets.

We work hand-in-glove with you to develop public relations initiatives and execute marketing campaigns that are created with years of experience behind them. Your goals, objectives, and budget are integral parts of our working with you. As part of your team, we begin to think as you do and suggest ways to improve the process and achieve collective goals.

For More Information

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