



Motivating the HP internal sales force to eclipse Sun

Customer Profile

Customer Hewlett-Packard

Challenge Inspire the HP internal sales force to seek and win UNIX sales deals in competitive situations with Sun Microsystems so as to block Sun's bid for a greater UNIX market share, while at the same time increasing HP's own share.

Target Audience HP European sales force (later extended worldwide).

Solution "HP Sun Block", an incentive program that motivated HP internal sales representatives to compete for UNIX deals and provided them with all the tools necessary for success.

- Results**
- HP internal sales staff were highly motivated to win competitive deals from Sun Microsystems.
 - HP was able to maintain its share of the European UNIX market throughout the timeframe of the program — despite intensive sales efforts by Sun.
 - The program proved so successful that it was extended worldwide and became the basis for a similar storage campaign aimed against EMC.

In the late 1990s, Sun Microsystems launched an aggressive attack on the UNIX market to try to establish itself as the industry's server of choice. Hewlett-Packard, one of the world's leading global suppliers of IT-related products, technologies and services, was equally determined to prevent Sun from making inroads into its market share.

HP already had a strong position built upon a loyal customer base and a reputation for leading technology, but there was concern that Sun's push could entice some users away from HP products.

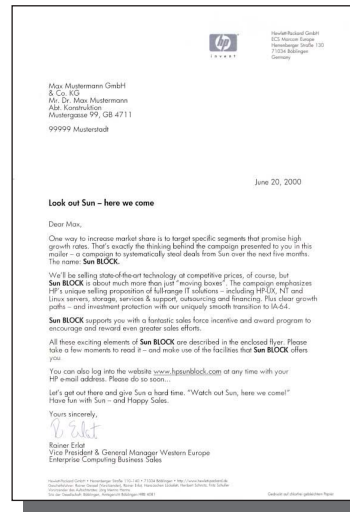
Naturally, HP European management wanted to prevent this. HP Europe decided to initiate a hard-hitting competitive campaign that would not only counter Sun's thrust — but would also extend its own share of the UNIX server market. The key to success lay in motivating the internal HP sales force to actively seek — and win — deals over Sun. To do it, HP hired MaCS to create a program that would both inspire the sales force and give them the tools needed to win deals in highly competitive situations.





Kickoff incentive. The package contained an inexpensive pair of sunglasses with a tag urging the reader to register for the program. The first 500 people to register received a pair of original Ray-Ban sunglasses.

HP "Sun Block" mailer enticed HP sales representatives to register at a dedicated website and win great rewards for their sales efforts. Subsequent mailers reinforced the benefits of the program both for HP and for the individual sales representative.



Kickoff cover letter



Teaser postcard sent before the official launch of the program and the kickoff package.

Turning “Sun block” into a “frequent flyer” program

To inspire HP’s sales force, MaCS created an incentive program that enabled sales representatives to earn points for “stealing” Sun’s business. The website, entitled “Sun Block”, played upon two timely themes — blocking Sun’s entrance in the European UNIX market, and the total solar eclipse in Europe in 1999. MaCS leveraged its decade-long relationship with HP by repurposing some existing creative elements from another highly successful, nine-month end-user campaign completed the previous year.

The “Sun Block” campaign’s central element was a website where sales representatives could earn credit points for “stealing” deals from Sun and for being active on the website. Similar to airline “frequent flyer” programs, points awarded under the scheme could be traded for incentive prizes. Some of the incentives included hot air balloon rides, romantic dinners, golf weekends, and dream vacations to exotic destinations, as well as hi-fi, video and digital camera equipment. Legal and tax regulations concerning such programs vary from country to country within Europe.

MaCS’ knowledge of these restrictions ensured country-specific incentives met local requirements. MaCS structured the website so that when the program eventually ran worldwide, the incentives were released to individual sales representatives on a national basis, giving the sales representative the impression the reward was issued from his direct management.

A fast, effective decision chain for emerging opportunities

Awareness for the HP internal sales force “Sun Block” program was generated through a series of teaser mailers that announced the launch and drove sales representatives to automatically register at the website and report the details of each deal (including such critical features as the size of the deal and details on decisive elements that clinched it). Keeping track of the details helped sales representatives share knowledge that resulted in winning more deals. Other sales and marketing tools on the website included case studies, win/loss analysis — plus access to a rapid decision chain. If sales representatives identified a strategic opportunity, they could be assured of bringing it quickly to the attention of top management and to request any necessary support.

Incentives for users, information for managers

During registration, sales representatives provided details about their regional manager, who then confirmed the registration request. During the campaign, the regional manager received all data on the performance of their team and — to ensure control was maintained over the process — approved deals entered as part of the program.

The “Sun Block” website provided administration tools so that managers could quickly and easily administer the program. Other features on the website included a ranking of sales representatives according to the highest points attained within their teams, as well as by country and region. Later, as the program developed, worldwide rankings became available. In addition, the website included all processes for selecting and ordering prizes, as well as for shipment and handling.

MaCS developed the entire concept for the program and designed and created the “Sun Block” website. This included creating, printing and delivering the initial teaser post card, as well as all subsequent direct mails. MaCS also generated posters for the program and maintained the entire deal registration website on behalf of HP.

“Through their knowledge of our needs, MaCS presented a concept that was quite different from what we originally envisaged but one which proved utterly effective.

After being launched to great success in Europe, the ‘Sun Block’ campaign was rolled-out worldwide.”

Baerbel Kawitzke
Customer & Channel Communications Manager
HP Enterprise Systems Group Europe
Middle East, Africa

“Sun Block” program adopted worldwide

HP’s European sales force overwhelmingly embraced “Sun Block” and the program was instrumental to HP Europe’s ability to deflect Sun Microsystems’ grab for a greater market share. In fact, the program proved so effective that it came to the attention of HP corporate management, who decided to implement and fund the program on a worldwide basis.

As a direct result of “Sun Block,” HP European UNIX sales remained constant throughout the period of the program — despite the intensity of Sun’s sales efforts. Before the program finished at the end of 2000, HP’s European sales figures had again begun to rise within the UNIX market. According to industry figures, by November 2002, HP had actually eclipsed Sun Microsystems and become #1 in the worldwide UNIX market. The “Sun Block” program later served as a template for a similar storage program targeted against EMC.

About MaCS

Founded in 1994, MaCS is a full-service B2B marketing communications and PR agency with extensive experience in the European market. MaCS specializes in lead-generation programs, sales tools, and public relations activities for the high-tech industry. Our clients include global and European IT companies, as well as American companies commencing or developing business in Europe.

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