



Phoenix Consulting Group

CASE STUDY: Partner Satisfaction Campaign

Situation:

Company had a fragmented partner strategy and organizational structure. Organizations with functional responsibility for partners resided in many different areas of the companies. There was no central organization to field inquiries for partners especially technology alliance partners who had no assigned partner management. When VARBusiness Magazine conducted their Annual Report Card Survey of partners, it was not surprising that the company's partner program ranked eighth out of eight candidates in the industry category.

Solution:

The company had recently realized that a strong, competitive partner program was the strategic avenue to fuel the next ramp of growth for the company. Substantial new investments in staffing, programs, and infrastructure were made in the partner organization which was unified under a single functional organization. However, there was still skepticism in the partner community as to the commitment of the company to a partnering business model.

The partner marketing organization (led by the current principal of Phoenix Consulting Group) carefully logged all incoming calls and categorized the nature of the inquiry. This data collected over the course of six weeks was used to demonstrate the need for a Partner Response Center to handle inquiries and the skills needed to effectively support the nearly 1500 technology partners. Partner Response reps were hired, trained and brought on line to handle the incoming calls and own problem resolution.

Next the partner marketing organization examined in detail the findings and survey data collected by VARBusiness to determine the source of dissatisfaction from the partner community. Several items came to the fore. First by far was 'ease of doing business'. Since this is not easily interpreted into actionable objectives, the management of the organization began a call down program to contact each partner which had ranked the company in the last quartile in this category. This call down in itself went a long way in improving partner perceptions of the company, since they were personally contacted by a senior manager of the company. The call down revealed that one of the major obstacles to ease of doing business was that there was no single point of contact for partners to direct questions, inquiries, etc. "No human to talk to". Many were surprised and unaware that the company had recently instituted a Partner Response Center even though it had been announced in partner newsletter.

Partner Marketing designed a 'high touch' campaign directed at the partner community by creating a number of communications pieces that prominently highlighted the Partner Response Center (PRC) and carried the message that the company was directly addressing the issues in 'ease of doing business'.

- Post Card Mailing announcing PRC
- Prominent posting on the Partner websites
- Recognition/thank you gift to partners with Partner Response Center number engraved
- Quick reference Rolodex card with PRC and other partner contact information
- PRC number listed on all partner collateral, partner press releases,

Results:

The following year, the company's ranking in the VARBusiness rankings rose to second in the field of contenders.