

MICROSOFT'S "MARKETING GUIDE FOR PARTNERS"

THE CHALLENGE

Microsoft's U.S. Partner Group was spending a large amount of their budget developing and distributing an abundance of marketing materials for their partners. It was not clear, however, if the partners found these materials to be valuable, or if the partners were using the materials as part of their marketing efforts. To find out if the information was making the right connection, they needed research. Microsoft wanted to understand which marketing materials were valuable and useful, by soliciting feedback from their field team and partners.

WHY EXTRA MILE MARKETING?

Microsoft looked to Extra Mile Marketing, a company that has worked with over 6,000 Microsoft Partners, to undertake this research project. After Extra Mile administered the study and evaluated the information, we made a recommendation. The research showed that partners couldn't digest these monster-sized marketing materials filled mostly with theory. The partners didn't understand how to apply the theory to their business. Extra Mile proposed developing a "Marketing Guide for Partners," consisting of individual How-To guides covering topics the partners needed the most. This format would be easy for the partners to digest and Microsoft loved the concept.

THE SOLUTION

The "Marketing Guide for Partners" was developed as a practical step-by-step guide, showing partners how to effectively market their companies. The Extra Mile team crafted a clear template of how each guide should be built, and started with 9 individual guides based on priorities from the partner research. After completing the guides, we engaged a professional design firm to help perfect the layout, and working with Microsoft's legal department, we successfully cleared the guide for final print and distribution.

The first "Marketing Guide for Partners" was released in 2005, and is still used by Microsoft partners today. Extra Mile was asked to maintain and update the document, which is in its 3rd version, consisting of 176 pages with 14 additional how-to marketing guides.

The feedback was amazing. Partners and field staff love it – the guide has easy to navigate topics, each with clear step-by-step instructions. Senior management at Microsoft was very pleased to see such a well-crafted guide completed in such a reasonable amount of time. Extensively used and referenced, it has become the de facto marketing guide for Microsoft Partners.

Extra Mile demonstrated expertise with our ability to listen closely to the audience, and formulate actionable ideas using that input. Microsoft received a world-class document without the burden and expense of managing the project. The Marketing Guide for Partners is still requested and used today, a homage to its permanence.

"I just wanted to say that I think this publication is a **FANTASTIC** compilation of marketing material and advice for all areas of our technology marketing needs. Thank you Microsoft and the rest of you that also got this together and out to us. Well done."

Allen Miller, MCP, A+
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