

CASE STUDY

Udata – being heard above the roar

BACKGROUND

When Mantis started working with Udata infrastructure in 2011, it was the first time that the company had invested in a planned Public Relations campaign. Founded in 2003, Udata operates in a highly complex market where large competitors are well established.

Back in 2010, the Government set out its strategy for ensuring that all public sector entities are linked by their own broadband provisioning, known as Public Service Networks (PSN), so Udata found itself at the heart of a big theme for government technology.

By focusing exclusively on the needs of the public sector, Udata outperformed the entire PSN market since its inception in 2010. Boasting key account wins of Essex County Council, Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) and a plethora of other key named accounts, Udata had become firmly associated with PSN and punched well above its weight in terms of media exposure.

The combined media and influencer engagement programme played a major part in supporting Udata's business growth, which culminated in an £80m sell to Capita in 2014.

STRATEGY

Mantis devised a PR strategy for the business that would help make the Udata name synonymous with PSN and public sector network supply. Telling the company's story through the positive experiences of its customers, identifying key government individuals and ensuring they were all aware of Udata and developing thought leadership content provided the platform on which the company could increase its profile and set its perception as an agile, flexible organisation, which was different to the likes of BT, Virgin and Vodafone – but that could also deliver projects at scale.

CAMPAIGN

From the outset, Udata's PR campaign was off to a flying start. The Mantis Discovery Workshop highlighted news and a series of thought leadership articles that ensured the Mantis team was up and running very early on.

ROUNDING ON SUCCESS

Six months into the campaign, Udata was ready to up the 'anti' in its PR outreach. PSN's were being delivered across the country; networks were being consolidated and costs were being saved. But the real driver of PSN was to enable government transformation through shared services – this was not happening. We encouraged Udata to pick up the mantra and, thought a roundtable debate, explore with key individuals and groups as to why this was not the case. Delegates included the PSN local government transition lead for the Cabinet Office; an infrastructure manager and IT from two NHS trusts; the head of Kent PSN (one of the countries earliest PSN success stories) and journalists from Government Computing and Health Service Journal.



DIRECT GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

The team was quick to identify key individuals within the PSN working group at Cabinet Office and used their negotiation skills to facilitate regular bi-monthly meetings with the individuals directly responsible for the PSN agenda across Government. This resulted in a briefing on Updata by Francis Maude MP to David Cameron, highlighting Updata as a true British success story.

A TIMELY HEALTH CHECK FOR PSN

Establishing great momentum in the local government space, not wanting the programme to become stale, Mantis encouraged Updata to turn its attention to healthcare and raising the issue of the lack of adoption of PSN across the healthcare space. Mantis scheduled and hosted a second roundtable debate with delegates including: CIO NHS Wales; NHS Connecting for Health; Staffordshire Council; Gloucestershire NHS Trust and EHI and Government Computing. Great coverage was achieved across the attending media titles, but it also provided the perfect platform for Updata to network with key influencers in the NHS and prospective customers.

Timescales: 2011-mid 2014

Budget: £168,000

Outside of the two roundtables, the team worked day to day generating content; interviewing customers; setting media interviews and influencer meetings, so much so that Updata became wholly synonymous with the PSN agenda and a profile and perception usually the privy of only the largest organisations.

Key outputs:

- 26 corporate and customer announcements
- 24 thought leadership articles
- 2 media and industry roundtables
- 6 Cabinet office meetings, resulting in briefing to Francis Maude MP

Press articles:

- 2011-2014 – 192 total, averaging 16 per month

Key titles:

- Government Computing
- Computer Weekly
- Computer World UK
- PublicTechnology.net
- Government Technology

Vic Baldorino, founder and former director of Updata commented: “We were confident that Mantis would be a wise investment for us – for quite some time, they were our only outward facing marketing resource. However, we were surprised at the pace at which they were up to speed, the volume of coverage they were able to generate, and the rapid rise in our profile and brand awareness.

We were a small organisation that was regularly being spoken about in government circles as a success story; we were being heard well above the roar of the traditional network providers and Mantis helped us differentiate ourselves and further establish our credibility in the market.

The press coverage secured could be directly attributable to several multi million pound contracts and I am certain the work they did contributed significantly to our ultimate valuation by our acquiring company, Capita. Mantis delivers results beyond expectations.”

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