



HP in the Cloud - From Convolutated to Converged

Burson Marsteller and Hewlett-Packard, Jan 1,2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Marketing Business-To-Business — Other (Categories Not Elsewhere Defined)

Though a recognized technology leader for years, Hewlett-Packard (HP) received little recognition as a cloud leader due to confusion about how its products and services merged into a comprehensive portfolio. To address these concerns, HP consolidated its cloud offerings into the “HP Converged Cloud” portfolio and launched its vision for the future of cloud in April 2012. With a targeted, integrated, global communications campaign, in less than a year, HP and Burson-Marsteller (B-M) succeeded in showcasing HP’s strategic cloud vision, strong leadership, and positive customer reception, while contributing to \$3.9 billion in cloud revenue.

Marketing business to business includes programs designed to introduce new products, or promote existing products or services to a business audience.

Full Text: **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

HP has provided solid cloud hardware, software and services for years, but it received little recognition as a cloud leader due to confusion about how the products and services merged into a comprehensive portfolio. Having suffered from frequent executive turnover, lackluster financial performance, and criticism around its cloud strategy, HP needed to communicate a clear corporate vision and execute a strong cloud strategy to maintain its competitive edge. To address these concerns, HP consolidated its cloud offerings into the “HP Converged Cloud” portfolio and launched its vision for the future of cloud in April 2012. The strategy was built on the idea that organizations should have the choice to use a variety of models (traditional, managed, private or public cloud environments) when transitioning to cloud, known in the industry as a “hybrid delivery model.”

HP and Burson-Marsteller (B-M) developed a targeted, integrated, global campaign that involved message creation, global coordination, tailored media outreach, as well as employee and sales engagement. In less than a year, the team succeeded in building awareness of HP’s Converged Cloud, showcasing HP’s strategic cloud vision, strong leadership, and positive customer reception. Since April 2012, the campaign generated nearly 4,000 pieces of coverage globally, contributing to \$3.9 billion in cloud revenue.

RESEARCH

To kick start the campaign, the team conducted primary research and solicited feedback from industry analysts and media.

Primary research – HP commissioned a survey of top business and technology executives to determine sentiments toward adoption and usage of cloud services. The survey supported HP’s hypothesis that the future of cloud is a hybrid delivery model.

Analyst message testing – HP also conducted extensive message testing sessions with

top-tier industry analysts to obtain detailed feedback on the overall positioning and messaging of its new cloud strategy.

Media perception analysis – Through formal and informal conversations with media across technology trades and business press, the team received extensive feedback that HP's previous approach to cloud computing was convoluted and confusing. Media expressed a desire to hear a simple, overarching cloud strategy from HP.

PLANNING

Based on the results of the research, it was evident that that the company's cloud approach was confusing, complex, and lacked a common tie to bind its diverse offerings into a simple portfolio. With HP Converged Cloud, HP's products and services were consolidated into a common architecture, intended to greatly simplify adoption and growth of cloud computing. While the objective of the umbrella portfolio was simplicity, the concept itself was highly technical. Therefore, clear, consistent messaging and communication across the globe was crucial to ensuring the success of the campaign.

To educate internal and external stakeholders on HP's new cloud strategy, the team developed a rolling-thunder campaign:

Phase one – In April 2012, HP consolidated its pan-HP cloud portfolio under HP Converged Cloud.

Phase two – In June 2012, HP rolled out significant expansions of its strategy in conjunction with its largest customer event in the United States, HP Discover in Las Vegas.

Phase three – In December 2012, the team continued momentum with further product introductions and enhancements in conjunction with its largest customer event in EMEA, HP Discover in Frankfurt.

Ongoing – The team also secured ongoing proactive media opportunities on cloud-related topics, set up on-site briefings at major cloud events, and responded to ad-hoc inbound media inquiries.

To ensure successful regional and local execution, the global HP and B-M teams participated in the campaign development. By utilizing SharePoint, hosting weekly coordination calls and providing daily email updates, the team ensured flawless execution of the campaign and demonstrated best practice sharing to drive coverage across all regions, including the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ).

The campaign objectives were to:

- Change perceptions about HP's cloud strategy through the creation and delivery of clear, globally consistent messaging about HP Converged Cloud.
- Educate target customers (enterprise Chief Information Officers and IT managers), media, bloggers, industry analysts and employees about HP Converged Cloud through a high volume of media coverage, social media buzz and analyst discussion with strong key message penetration.
- Elevate HP's global reputation in the cloud space by showing progress in bringing the HP Converged Cloud strategy to market.
- And thus, generate revenue and grow customer base from increased sales of cloud products and services under the HP Converged Cloud portfolio.

EXECUTION

The PR team leveraged a variety of communication platforms to communicate HP's cloud strategy and portfolio across diverse global audiences.

Message development and global roll-out – The PR team developed targeted messaging that emphasized HP’s consolidated cloud strategy and vision around the future of cloud computing, including the company’s emphasis on hybrid cloud delivery. To ensure consistency of messaging across the regions, the team also created a spokesperson training program for over 400 employees and spokespeople worldwide.

Targeted global outreach – Over the course of the campaign, the team conducted aggressive media outreach, securing more than 450 phone or face-to-face briefings. The team also reached out to industry analysts, securing 843 distinct analyst briefings and mentions in 15 analyst reports.

Customer and industry events – The PR team utilized the company’s bi-annual customer events (HP Discover) to host press conferences, media roundtables, customer panels and to conduct on-site briefings with over 80 reporters per event. To stimulate the company’s thought leadership, HP executives also participated in industry events, such as the OpenStack conference and Cloud Expo West, where the PR team arranged educational deep-dives into HP’s cloud strategy and technology capabilities.

Exclusive product access – To provide in-depth knowledge about key components of the HP Converged Cloud portfolio and further drive in-depth technical stories, select reporters, such as Doug Dineley, *InfoWorld*, were given access to HP’s public cloud services while in private or public beta.

Employee communications – To ensure all HP employees were apprised of HP’s Converged Cloud strategy, HP released educational videos and internal memos detailing changes in the strategy and how it would affect employees.

Sales communications – HP’s sales force was fully briefed in advance of each phase to ensure consistent communication of the benefits of HP Converged Cloud and offerings to the company’s customer base.

Social media activity – In close collaboration with HP’s social media team, B-M:

- Developed and consistently tweeted key cloud milestones, which proved instrumental in generating over 16,000 tweets and re-tweets over the course of the campaign.
- Engaged in a real-time Twitter program to monitor and address any media or analyst commentary from the HP Discover events.
- Released blogs in conjunction with and between launches to provide additional details around HP’s cloud vision.

EVALUATION

Since launching the HP Converged Cloud campaign in April 2012, HP’s profile within the cloud space has risen considerably. In just eight months, the campaign:

- Contributed to \$3.9 billion in revenue from cloud.
- Assisted in growing HP’s customer base around key cloud products. The flagship product, HP CloudSystem, saw 100 percent y/y growth in 2012 powering over 850 clouds in 75 countries. HP now manages over 200 enterprise clouds, has over 55 service provider partners (CloudAgile) and over 145 educational facilities (Cloud Centers of Excellence) worldwide.
- Garnered nearly 4,000 articles globally – including 1,000 original articles, executive profiles and features in top-tier business and trade media publications including *Bloomberg*, *All Things D*, *New York Times* and *IDG*.
- Generated over 2,250 Converged Cloud articles in the Americas, almost 900 in EMEA and more than 850 in APJ.
- Achieved up to 90 percent key message penetration in media coverage for the initial launch.

- Reached between 4 and 7 million stakeholders through social media for each announcement.
- Changed the perception of HP's cloud strategy as evident from the analyst and editorial quotes in media coverage as well as feedback from customers.

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