



Illustration by Jeff Kale for The Partner Channel

No COMPLAINTS Here

Marketing Resources for Microsoft Dynamics Partners

 Cheryl Strege

As a marketer who works with Microsoft Dynamics® Partners, I can honestly say I've never been able to complain about a shortage of marketing services, tools, or resources when working with Microsoft. (Of course, I can complain about other things like the cold weather, my aching back, my dismal 401(K), but not about marketing.) No doubt there is something for everyone, from "turnkey" type options – if you're short on time and manpower – to a wide variety of self-service options for those organizations that have the desire to personalize and customize their marketing messages for various audiences.

The list contained in this article is by no means inclusive of all the possible marketing resources. For the purposes of keeping this content to an "article" and not the size of the *Microsoft Dynamics Marketing Guide for Partners*, I've chosen to focus on a few educational and marketing services that will help you maximize your limited budget and get your campaigns into market faster. (For additional resources, check out the sites at the end of the article.)

Educational Opportunities

Microsoft Dynamics Principles of Marketing

Launched in November, this series of web-based seminars (developed and presented by yours truly) is designed to help Partners construct and fine-tune their plans for driving demand for Microsoft Dynamics solutions. Each module provides a wealth of guidance as well as resources, strategic ideas, and key action items to help you jump-start your marketing efforts. Divided into 11 easily consumable, on-demand modules ranging in length from 30 to 90 minutes, the series can be reviewed when it's most convenient to you and in the order that best meets your scheduling needs.

Partner Learning Center

The redesigned Partner Learning Center (formerly MS Readiness) is now much more user friendly, especially to those of us who do not focus on a certain product but on a skill. Once I set up my preferences (marketing), the site automatically serves up the content most relevant to my role. What a great timesaver when I'm looking for a par-

ticular marketing or business topic! And if you're like me and you "occasionally" miss a webcast you've registered for, it used to be very cumbersome to go back and find the link again to view the on-demand version. But with the addition of "My Training," I don't have to search for it. It's all displayed right there when I log into the site!

Partner Business Network

This (relatively) new site for Microsoft Partners was created, and is hosted by, the MarketingProfs, LLC. I find it to be loaded with interesting articles, web seminars, Best Practices, "Dear Experts" questions, and much more. The content is timely (The Definitive Guide to Business-to-Business Marketing in a Recession), new (How to Use Social Media for Search Engine Optimization), and in great quantity. You can subscribe to their "Get to the Point" electronic newsletter for a quick marketing tip delivered to your inbox.

Marketing Services

Microsoft Partner Events

Known by the acronym MPE, the site pro-

vides Partners with resources to execute and host events. There are a LOT of tools on this site, but my favorites are:

- » Event registration and management tools (Click-to-Attend) for planning, building, and executing events such as the Momentum/Jump Start webcast events. Be sure to take advantage of this FREE opportunity to add monthly webcasts to your marketing calendar. It's a great way to offer relevant content to your prospects and customers, and Microsoft is rolling out a brand new set of industry specific topics (retail, automotive, construction, and more) to attract prospect attendance.
- » Partner Tradeshow Booth Rental – use the Microsoft Dynamics-branded tradeshow booth when you want to capitalize on the “recognition factor” of Microsoft. There are 11 themes to choose from when ordering the booth (CRM, Business Solutions, Supply Chain, Healthcare, and more). PLUS... you can even customize an entire panel of the booth with your company logo, Certified Partner logo, tagline, and contact information, which really makes the booth look like your own.
- » The Microsoft Dynamics Ready-to-Go Campaign site is a part turnkey, part self-service direct marketing site that includes direct mail components (list, letter, postcard), Microsoft PowerPoint® decks, messaging guides, web banners, case studies, and much more. And not only can you find marketing materials on the site that you can download and customize on your own, but you can also use Microsoft to execute your Ready-to-Go mailer by contracting for the printing and mailing services right on the Web site. This is a good option for Partners who have limited time to create and execute marketing campaigns but want to ensure they're building awareness in their geography.
- » The Case Reference Builder might be one of those little known tools on the Ready-to-Go site, but it's definitely one of my favorite services. In essence, it's a tool to help you build customer case studies. (And we all know happy customers are one of our most effective sales and marketing tools.) The Case Reference Builder helps you capitalize on your success with a template that helps you capture the

Important Links to Bookmark

Microsoft Dynamics Marketing Professional Community:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/>

Microsoft Dynamics Principles of Marketing:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/marketreadiness/MsDyPrinciplesMktgWebSem.htm>

Partner Learning Center:

<https://training.partner.microsoft.com/plc/home.aspx?site=global&lang=en>

Ready-to-Go:

<https://partner.microsoft.com/US/ready-togo>

Ready-to-Go Marketing Help Desk:

<http://www.mspartnerdirect.com/mktg/help/>

Case Reference Builder:

<http://www.mspartnerdirect.com/action/microsoft/site/catalog/piece/PieceView?pieceID=273&sourceCampaignID=279>

Microsoft Partner Events:

www.microsoftpartnerevents.com

Jump Start Webcast Series:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/marketreadiness/JumpStart.htm>

Tradeshow Booth Program:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/lead-generation/tradeshow/tradeshow.htm>

Best Practice Case Studies:

Distinction in Marketing Award-winning Campaigns:<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/resources/marketingcreativeresources/BestPractices.htm>

Vertical Through-Partner Multi-touch Customer Campaigns:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/marketing/campaigns/vertical>

Global Compete Campaign:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/marketing/campaigns/prospect/compete>

Microsoft Dynamics Marketing Guide for Partners:

<https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/communities/marketing/resources/marketingcreativeresources/resourceguidev2.htm>

Partner Business Network:

<http://mspartners.marketingprofs.com/>

The Partner Channel:

www.thepartnerchannel.com

The Partner Marketing Group:

www.thepartnermarketinggroup.com

customer story quickly and in a compelling and professional format to help you close additional sales. Simply complete the steps in the tool, and you will receive a high-quality PDF at no charge, or you can request printed copies right from the Web site. (I can tell you that I paid more for reprints of a case study at Office Depot than what it would have cost on the Microsoft site.)

As we approach 2009, I hope you've had a chance to draft your marketing plan for the upcoming year. Remember to utilize the

Microsoft services to supplement your marketing strategies where appropriate, and leverage the little and no-cost tactics (like the Jump Start webcasts and the Case Reference Builder) to fill any gaps in your plan. Best wishes on a successful 2009! 🌟

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