

BUSINESS OBJECTS: PITCHING BEANS CAMPAIGN

The X-Factor For Acquisition, Retention And Brand Impression Is "Creative Glue"— In Marketing, Sticky Is Good.

When Business Objects came to us they were looking for a new and powerful way to reach out to the Planning Industry to market their enterprise business software solutions. Specific strategic goals for the campaign included:

- Generation of no less than 600 viable leads in their salesforce.com database.
- Demonstrate increase in Business Objects brand presence and top of mind awareness.
- Increase traffic to Business Objects Enterprise Performance Management site with a conversion goal of registration to watch a web-enabled product demonstration.

The challenge for the campaign centered around creating content more exciting than a balance sheet, a seemingly simple task but the reality was not without its own irony when talking to the financial industry.

Throughout our planning process we uncovered numerous discoveries stemming from often overlooked differences between the planning community, who were our primary target and those from the formal accounting discipline.

Within the financial community great stigma existed around conventions like: the world of finance is dry and boring, employing dry and boring people, that accounting is exclusively a hard science based largely on fact and not conjecture, and that the financial audience only responded to hard physical evidence in evaluating offerings like business software. The disruptive truths, however, painted a far different picture, informing the effort that became manifest in the truth that 'planners are people too' and the idea that planners have vibrant, often witty and creative personalities.

We gave shape to these discoveries in a poke at "Bean Counters" through the creation of the online parody mini-series, Pitching Beans.

Platforms and campaigns working together to convert interest into engagement.

Our primary goal in outreach is centralized around leveraging the modicum of entertainment built over a means to facilitate engagement, conversation, interaction, education and conversion. But the real foundation of our strategy lay in understanding the key motivators of financial industry decision makers. Our profiling and discovery with this unique audience informed every aspect of our effort to generate interest and awareness and convert it into a brand dialogue, conversion and even advocacy. We did this by overlaying our inbound advertising over the foundation of a platform that facilitated conversation and provided real utility to our audience.

Ownership Belongs With The Audience

While the inbound advertising efforts focused on the entertainment value by poking fun at social norms and stigmas, platform engagement was fostered by drawing on audiences natural interest in sharing their own stories and even participating in directing and informing the series itself. By allowing the audience to take ownership in the course and direction of the campaign we were able to further hone and adapt messages and conversion opportunities to align with where the audience was really at. But the real reward was that doing so fostered a sense of joint ownership and advocacy that could never have been generated in an analog brand monologue.

As the series progressed with a new webisode each week, even richer engagement became possible as viewers became fans and fans became advocates. Promotional opportunity to appear on set or even in an episode further fueled audience excitement and participation as well as opened a floodgate of new viewer originated episodic directions for the script and cast to propel the series forward.

Getting Personal With Edm

As viewers began to identify and connect with the cast, we were able to take our EDM campaign to an entirely new level by ghost writing the trigger email program directly from the fan's favorite cast member. Each cast member's personality, quirks and appeal was brought to life in an even deeper and more intimate manner through these personal interactions with their fans, affecting response, sharing, and advocacy.

Plotting A Path To Conversion

By enabling the direct relationship between the audience and the cast we were able to empower the cast to act as the gateway to conversion, by allowing them to become the voice of Business Objects software. We furthered this even to the point of scripting the use of Business Objects solutions creatively in the plot of individual episodes. This was all aimed at further breaking down the barrier to entry of the ultimate goal of selling business software. And, it worked.

Results

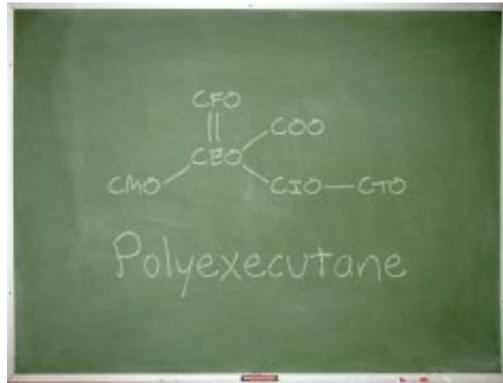
- Advertising efforts generated nearly a quarter million responses.
- Engagement reached 97%
- More than half of all viewers by the end of the campaign effort were return viewers.
- Over 3.7 million video views.
- 17,492 trigger emails were generated.
- 369 viewer stories were submitted.
- 37 viewer submitted stories informed scripts used during the campaign and two fans made cameo appearance in episodes.
- 11,290 leads were generated by the campaign into Business Object's salesforce.com database.
- Total acquisition cost per lead - \$26.57 compared with the previous quarters marketing efforts that spent \$243.19 a lead.
- 1,583 of the Pitching Beans campaign leads resulted in sales directly attributed to the campaign effort.

Branding An Online Mini-Series

A big part of our planning for success included

CASE MODEL

developing a brand behind the campaign that could bring it to life. The evolutionary process began with a desire to not only play with the social norms of the budgeting and planning community but at the stereotypes and dynamics of executive leadership and its often disruptive and conflicting role in the budgeting and planning process. We wanted to expose the stresses that existed both forming bonds and stretching them to the breaking point. The early manifestation of this took shape in the metaphor of the erroneous chemical compound, 'Polyexecutane'.



Further exploration with a continued focus on C-level corporate culture and its impact on the budgeting and planning process with the added twist of injecting a star cast as a catalyst to draw in the audience targeted Ryan Stiles of the Drew Carry Show and Who's Line Is It Anyway, culminating in the series brand proposal, C-Stiles. In the end we elected to focus more clearly on the stresses and different thinking between general accounting and budgeting/planning, bringing those

concepts into conflict, both in front of the executive leadership, thus more softly exposing their own dysfunction— but in this way also opening up the opportunity to paint a much wider swath of roles and characters within the corporate culture. The brand name's dual interpretive potential created a multi-pronged connection with the target audience. [Pitching Beans] 1. A proposal for the people of finance. 2. Dispensing with financial convention. The visual attributes as well created a clear connection with the financial and planning space through it tone and graphic language.

Edm

Using EDM to Initiate a Brand Dialogue

The heart that kick started and in many ways was enabled to propel the series' popularity and adoption, centered around the EDM effort. Because our audience, being b2b, was easily identified within specific organizations, targeted list buying provided the necessary means to initiate the campaign.



Personalization through the first person cast delivery of subsequent trigger email efforts created the necessary catalyst for exponential growth and even organic pick up, while providing audiences a means to respond and receive real personal reciprocation.

Platform

Building out a Platform to Support Engagement

The platform itself created a destination site campaign efforts could feed and engage the audience as well as perform the necessary function of supporting the conversion objectives for the campaign.



Receiving notifications was the first of a series of low barrier opt in opportunities the allowed the campaign to validate and foster engagement as well as create a construct for organic pick up.

Early secondary conversion objectives included a video presentation highlighting some of the most core values of Business Objects Enterprise Performance management solutions. This response vehicle, as with other components of the EDM campaign, tied into first person response and endorsement to the sales channel softening the smell-of-the-sell repellent of more traditional loud DM centric messages.

One of the most consistently vocalized areas of appeal for viewers was their personal connection

with individual cast members. Subsequently later phases of the campaign incorporated cast profiles, which ultimately evolved to become DND style trading cards and even sparked a whole series of promotional fan materials.



The most vibrant and rewarding interaction we received from viewers centered allowing them to take part ownership in the series by feeding their own script ideas and stories from their daily work experiences. This, also, provided an additional opt in to test against other opt in motivators.

