

Direct Marketing Case Study, Sun Microsystems

Attracting developers to a new "Neighborhood" draws a 14.6% response rate

Sun Microsystems, a leading provider of enterprise hardware, software and services, was entering a new market with its new Solaris operating system — the x86 PC market. Sun wanted to convince its 2,600 iForce software development partners to take their existing Solaris OS applications developed for Sun's already successful enterprise SPARC workstation and modify them for the new x86 platform.

Although Sun traditionally relied on trade shows to cultivate its iForce partners, AgencyAxis would bring the trade show to the developers. A direct mail program, bolstered by a sweepstakes, would enable Sun to quickly reach its entire iForce universe while providing immediate awareness for Sun's new offering. AgencyAxis' contact strategy called for a single high-impact mailing to Sun's SPARC developers.

The "hook" would be the chance to win one of 10 customized systems — hardware, software and free engineering support — everything the winner needed to port their SPARC software to Sun's new Solaris x86 OS.

AgencyAxis built their direct marketing campaign around the theme "Welcome to the x86 Neighborhood" to emphasize Sun's entry into the new x86 arena. The outside mail package worked off this theme, encouraging developers to "Make the move to a new neighborhood." When opened, the message paid off with a full-size metal street sign that read "Solaris x86 Blvd." The materials were delivered in a custom-designed, oversized mailer for increased impact.

To enter the sweepstakes, respondents were sent to a special Sun website that captured their contact information. Visitors to the site were encouraged to download the Solaris OS for x86 software for a nominal fee of \$25. Since developers could use their own hardware, the software was key to starting the porting process. The site also linked them to a suite of special developer tools that would help them port their applications to the x86 platform.

The package paid off handsomely — with response rates in the neighborhood of 14%. The client also reported that "Solaris x86 Blvd" signs were spotted by Sun employees in the offices of two different developers — evidence that the campaign was helping Sun meet its awareness goals as well as its visitors to the promotional site goals for the campaign.

Summary: With communications initiatives of this type typically launched at trade shows by Sun, this direct mail campaign shortened the communication cycle — at a greatly reduced cost.

Results: The mailing generated a response of over 14% among Sun's 2,600 iForce development partners.



567 Sutter St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
Toll-free: 855-771-0509
Fax: 866-820-9391