



CHALLENGE

- Promote new unified brand
- Convey brand vision
- Reach industry decision makers

SOLUTION

- Five White Papers
- Five PowerPoint Decks
- Three Flash Demos

RESULTS

- On-time, on-budget delivery
- High quality deliverables
- Compelling, polished content
- Audience-specific messaging

BENEFITS AT-A-GLANCE

- Developed solid plan to execute client strategy
- Created most effective tools possible
- Compelling, audience-appropriate messages
- Re-established client market leadership

"THE WORK PROWESS DID WAS A GOOD "BEST PRACTICE" FOR HOW THESE SHOULD BE DONE."

- SYSTEM CENTER SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER

Microsoft® System Center

MICROSOFT SYSTEM CENTER UNIFIED BRAND: MARKETING KIT LEADS TO AN EFFECTIVE LAUNCH

Business Situation

Over the years, corporate networks have grown dramatically in size and complexity. The need to manage these growing IT assets has given rise to a sizeable category of enterprise software—systems management software. As a leader in enterprise software, Microsoft has met this growing market need by continually expanding its systems management software line. As a result of this continual growth, the number of systems management solutions that Microsoft offers is now a sizable number. Well-established management products like Microsoft Operations Manager and Systems Management Server were joined by newer Microsoft offerings like Data Protection Manager. However, successfully bringing these products to market generated redundant marketing costs, watered down the marketing impact of any one of the products, and produced potentially conflicting messages regarding systems management best practices. In short, Microsoft had begun to suffer from "brand sprawl" within its family of enterprise IT management solutions.

In 2006, Microsoft decided to address this problem and so made the strategic decision to consolidate these myriad brands under one umbrella, Microsoft System Center. To gain exposure for this new branding, Microsoft initiated a global campaign to spread this new unified brand, and its associated messaging, to the market. The overarching goal of this campaign was to educate industry decision makers, such as IT managers and administrators, about the product family, and the greater value of all of these products when seen together as a comprehensive systems management toolset. To help prepare content for executing on this marketing plan, Microsoft enlisted Prowess Consulting.

Why Prowess?

Prowess has been a long-standing partner with Microsoft, developing compelling content for the marketing, sales, and adoption of a wide variety of Microsoft products. In particular, Prowess has a great deal of experience with Microsoft's enterprise IT products. This track record made Prowess a very solid choice for the System Center team's content needs.

This previous experience also enabled Prowess to offer the System Center team a deep knowledge of the types of content that would create the greatest impact for this brand launch. The history of supporting successful product launches over the years made Prowess an experienced partner for aiding in the development of the "bill of materials" for the System Center brand launch.

The System Center team valued the skill and reputation Prowess has in the industry, and were confident that some of the best people available were on the job. Prior to working on System Center demos, Prowess also wrote the scripts for Flash demos that complemented the SQL Server 2005, Exchange Server 2007, and Windows Vista and Microsoft Office deliverables. These Flash demos, basically short animated movies that show the viewer the features and benefits of Systems Center products, were used as part of the advertising campaign surrounding the Systems Center family debut, and were posted on Microsoft's Web site and distributed electronically.

Solution

Prowess met with a senior product marketing manager on the System Center team to discuss strategies for the project. Based on Microsoft's goals and budget, Prowess made several suggestions and helped Microsoft decide on the best course of action. In the end, Prowess and Microsoft arrived at set of deliverables consisting of five white papers, five PowerPoint slide decks, and three Flash demonstrations to supplement the marketing campaign.

The white papers and slide decks were intended to complement each other, detailing the mutual, reinforcing benefits of bringing all products of the Systems Center family of management tools to bear on specific workload scenarios: Microsoft SQL Server, Exchange Server, Windows Vista and the 2007 Microsoft Office system, Active Directory, and line-of-business applications.

Prowess also planned to produce animated, voiced-over demonstrations in Adobe Flash for the SQL Server 2005, Exchange Server 2007, and Windows Vista/Microsoft Office workload use cases. These three demos were to go beyond white papers and slide decks to vividly illustrate the benefits of Systems Center products working together to the viewer.

Implementation

Prowess assigned a team of senior technical writers, editors, designers, and engineers to produce the project. For previous content development projects of this nature, Prowess employed a process that began with research. Because they needed to produce information about a wide variety of products, the Prowess team started by gathering information from Microsoft product experts. Prowess' sound project management methodology was instrumental in coordinating so many different individuals, as many of them belonged to different groups across the Microsoft organization. However, this network of Microsoft resources was not the final stop in the research process. The Prowess team also relied on their extensive network of field resources: seasoned IT professionals who enabled Prowess to bring a real-world authenticity to all content development projects.

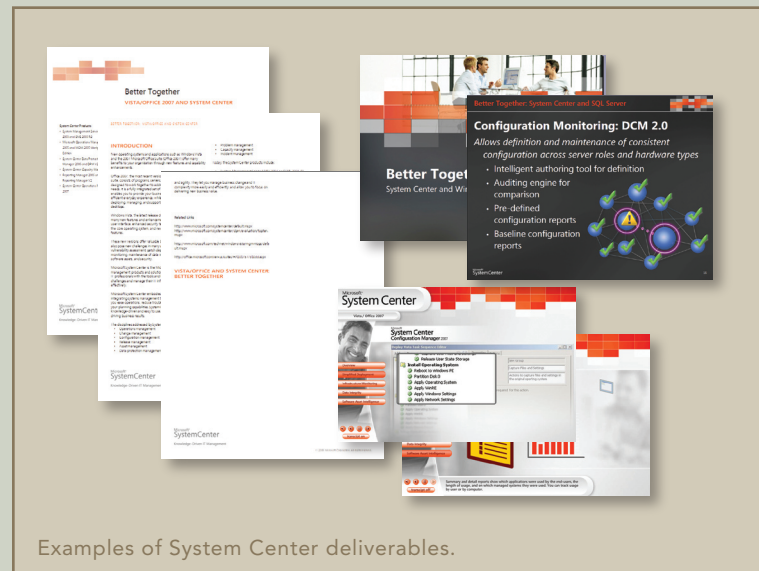
The next step in the Prowess process was development. All the research was brought to bear in drafting the deliverables. Coordinating this process required the team to remain agile, as implementing the System Center unified message between the many different products in the family meant responding to a wide range of release dates, updates, patches, documentation, and events. This step integrated a continual review process and editing process, ensuring that quality remained high, even as flexibility remained constant, and that messaging remained appropriately targeted toward both technical and business audiences.

Prowess' technical competency, flexibility, and dedication to quality allowed the System Center team to feel confident that these critical deliverables were in good hands.

Value Results

As a result of this successful project, Prowess was able to deliver a powerful set of deliverables to the System Center team that would help them to promote the new System Center unified brand. The negative effects of "brand sprawl" could now be effectively countered, resulting in more effective overall messaging, better reflecting Microsoft's leadership position and comprehensive systems management vision.

Prowess delivered exactly what the customer wanted. In the end, the customer was so satisfied with the work Prowess produced that he established a set of "best practices" for future Flash projects based on the Prowess development model. He also recommended Prowess to several colleagues.



Examples of System Center deliverables.



PROWESS

PHONE: 206.443.1117

EMAIL: info@prowessconsulting.com

900 FIRST AVE SOUTH, SUITE 201, SEATTLE WA, 98134

For more information on the products and solutions mentioned in this case study:

www.prowessconsulting.com

<http://www.microsoft.com/systemcenter/about/default.aspx>