

Research Solution: Thought Leadership,
Media Relations, Demand Generation

Research Scope: 450 senior business executives
across 10 countries and 6 industry sectors

Research Methodology: Online Survey



successfactors™
BUSINESS EXECUTION SOFTWARE

SuccessFactors targets the next economy

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This was a complex project in terms of what we were trying to achieve. We needed stimulating and informative content that would be engaging to a broad audience – from senior C-Level boardroom executives to middle management HR, and line of business heads. Fortunately I had a team at Vanson Bourne that I had confidence in


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Sarah Lloyd Parry,
Marketing Manager, UK & Ireland, SuccessFactors

A tough marketing ask

In September 2009, SuccessFactors redefined the traditional people management market with the launch of a new category of software, known as “Business Execution”. SuccessFactors’ Business Execution Suite enables organisations to align their people with their strategy, and to more effectively manage people performance to ensure strategy execution and results. The ability to help CEOs transform business productivity meant SuccessFactors needed to communicate with a wider set of stakeholders in the market, ranging from the boardroom to the HR Department.

“We offer much more than people performance management software,” said Sarah Lloyd Parry, UK & Ireland Marketing Manager for SuccessFactors. “Business Execution software delivers a step change in business transformation. It empowers organisations to drive better performance whilst ensuring alignment and execution of the company goals to drive better business results every day. I needed an effective means of communicating this externally to different levels of management audiences, and demonstrating HR’s strategic place at the boardroom table.”



The company's need for market education and insight across multiple countries, coupled with a number of strategic acquisitions to differentiate SuccessFactors and further solidify its Business Execution software suite made the tough task a complex challenge.

Within this context, Sarah knew that the company needed a marketing program that would create dialogue and improve awareness of some of the fundamental changes that can be made with its business execution software. Sarah first approached Vanson Bourne for ideas and following productive early conversations

asked Vanson Bourne for its help to craft and deliver a credible research base for an effective marketing communications campaign.

"This was obviously going to be quite a task. We had a lot to do, but we first needed to simplify it down. We needed a strong theme with credible evidence, and perhaps something a little controversial to create a bit of a debate and raise the profile of HR. Vanson Bourne did a brilliant job in making sense of what we wanted to achieve. They helped flesh out ideas and put the questions together with our objectives and theme firmly in mind."

Led to comprehensive answers

A research framework was then created based on interviews with senior decision makers in any department of enterprise-level organisations other than human resources. Target organisations had 3,000 or more employees and business sectors targeted included financial services, manufacturing, retail/distribution/transportation, travel/leisure/entertainment, consumer services/FMCG and technology/communications/utilities.

In addition to the objective of creating a platform for dialogue with a broader target audience, Sarah wanted the research and ensuing campaign to highlight the similarities and differences in large enterprises between countries. 450 interviews were conducted across USA, Western Europe (France, Germany, Netherlands and the UK), Nordic region (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) and Asia Pacific (Australia, India).

"I wanted to see if there were any patterns in the results between countries, but also deliver good research content to my marketing colleagues - particularly in light of our recent acquisitions of Cubetree and Inform."

With a tight timeframe for the research fieldwork met, Vanson Bourne then delivered the research results to SuccessFactors in three key phases. First, the research results were delivered through a data summary and presentation to Sarah and the project team. Then a framework was established for the direction of the research report and the report delivered. Finally, a presentation was created for use at local country sales and marketing events.

"It was a very rewarding strategic piece of research. The resulting content enabled us to pull together the right communications and tools to launch an effective and engaging campaign."

And a content-based campaign

SuccessFactors then worked with Gilroy, an integrated marketing communications agency, to develop a campaign that would bring the research content 'to life' enabling the company's target audience to easily understand how SuccessFactors' Business Execution

proposition could make a difference to their business.

The campaign created with Gilroy comprised a number of online and offline elements including an executive whitepaper, web, social media >>>



>>> PR, direct mail, email, podcasts and a series of executive round table and dinner events. At the centre of this campaign was a simple but highly effective message to create curiosity with the target audience. “*What Next?*” focused on identifying who would be the winners and losers in the ‘*Next Economy*’ as a result of the turbulent economic conditions. The Vanson Bourne research report, “*The link between strategic alignment and staff productivity*” alongside a joint SuccessFactors / Accenture whitepaper “*Who will win in the next economy?*”

were then positioned as the two core pieces of content for the campaign.

Finally, to create impact and engagement with the target audience, Gilroy and Vanson Bourne worked together to create an interactive tool for the ‘*Next Economy*’ website based on a ‘*light*’ version of the research survey. This enabled visitors to benchmark themselves against the research findings and provided them with

That successfully engaged a broad audience

The comprehensive and integrated nature of the campaign created significant results. SuccessFactors have had almost 2,000 unique visitors to the campaign website to date with a 28% conversion rate for engagement which includes over 180 respondents utilising the benchmarking tool. The campaign content has also reached 76 countries, delivered 28 pieces of media coverage including the Financial Times in the UK and Sky News in Australia and over 400 downloads of the whitepaper or research report. Interestingly, 50% of the response to the campaign has come from SMBs.

“This was a real surprise to me because of who we interviewed for the research, namely executives in large enterprises. However, it

seems SMB executives were interested in what large enterprises are saying and doing. It also shows that if you have the right content and it’s written well, that it can appeal to all and I think that makes this a very big success story for us.”

In addition, the SuccessFactors’ partnership with Accenture, on the whitepaper and the first executive round table, proved so successful it has since led to further support from the executive sponsor at Accenture for additional round tables in Europe. However, most importantly the research based campaign has created a significant business opportunity and influenced the business pipeline.

About SuccessFactors

SuccessFactors is the leading provider of cloud-based Business Execution Software, which delivers business alignment, team execution, people performance, and learning management solutions to organisations of all sizes across more than 60 industries. With approximately 15 million subscription seats globally, we strive to delight our customers by delivering innovative solutions, content and analytics, process expertise and best practices insights from serving our broad and diverse customer base. Today, we have more than 3,500 customers in more than 168 countries using our application suite in 34 languages. For additional information, visit SuccessFactors at www.successfactors.com and www.the-next-economy.com

About Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne creates and delivers compelling, relevant content for technology brands to own and use in high value media relations, demand generation and thought leadership marketing campaigns.

We couple our specialist technology research expertise with our years of experience in helping technology brands communicate with their markets. The result is well-crafted, independent and robust content, for B2B and B2C marketing programmes. More information can be found at www.vansonbourne.com.