

REFINING THE MESSAGE MAP ELEVATES CUSTOMER CONVERSATIONS

BACKGROUND

"The combination of acquisitions of new companies, new solutions and rapid organic growth necessitated the evolution of our messaging," said Heather Valentine, Senior Vice President Global Sales, Marketing, Consulting and Customer Success, Certara Software.

Certara, Inc. provides an integrated and proprietary end-to-end platform with biosimulation, regulatory science and market access solutions. Their platform, combined with a 1,100+ strong team of scientists and experts enable informed decision-making, higher R&D productivity, and improved patient outcomes. Certara, was formed in 2008 when Tripos International and Pharsight Corporation came together. Certara works across all therapeutic areas and innovative therapies, including immuno-oncology, rare disease, central nervous system, respiratory disease, gene therapy, and global health, providing translational solutions from discovery to patient access.

Certara Software (SW), a division within Certara, offers some of the most

advanced software solutions, decision support technologies and consulting services for optimizing drug development.

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THE SITUATION

As the business continues to evolve, Heather and her team recognized the need to refine the Certara SW messaging. "We need to elevate the conversation," explained Kristine Christie, Director of Software Marketing at Certara. "Today we are engaging with technical people within our customer and prospects, people such as biostatisticians, research scientists, medicinal chemists, and clinical pharmacologists. The expansion of our solutions provides an opportunity to communicate a one-partner, value-based message to

higher levels in the customer organization, to people such as the Vice President of R&D, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, Vice President of Research Laboratories, Vice President of Clinical Pharmacology, and so on."

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THE NEED

The company wanted the messaging to resonate with people responsible for accelerating the drug development life cycle, shortening drug development decisions, and speeding commercial market adoption.

There were several criteria around refining the messaging.

- It would need to serve as a crucial tool to support customer engagement across the buying journey, fend off competitors, and support content and sales enablement initiatives.

- It needed to elevate the conversation, while still resonating with all levels within the customer organization.
- It couldn't stray too far from the corporate and current story.
- It would need to support new product launches, demand generation efforts, and sales enablement.

THE DECISION

The team needed to decide whether it was possible to have an external partner facilitate the process. It couldn't be just any partner. This type of work takes strategic and product marketing experience along with domain expertise.

Heather and Kristine turned to VisionEdge Marketing, who had a proven track record within the company, had worked with people inside the organization, and with companies the organization serves. They also needed a partner that had an established and repeatable process.

"We envisioned that once the umbrella messaging was completed, we would need to revise the messaging across our solutions," added Heather. "While VisionEdge Marketing has the domain expertise and relationships, one of the key benefits was their well-defined message mapping process."

THE PROCESS

Once the work was initiated, VisionEdge Marketing and Kristine managed moving the organization through the process.

VisionEdge Marketing's message development process encompasses 5 key stages:

1. A review of existing messaging. This is a crucial first step. It is essential to understand the current messaging, how it is deployed, and received. For Certara, it was important to ensure the new messaging and existing messaging didn't create confusion.

2. A review of competitors' messaging. Certara like many companies face both internal and external competitors. Certara wanted messaging that clearly differentiated itself from the external competitors.

3. Interviews with internal leaders. Various members of the leadership team had valuable perspectives on the existing messaging, how well it worked, and what, if any, changes would be needed to elevate the Certara SW story.

4. A collaborative working session with key stakeholders from across the organization. Marketing wanted to ensure buy-in for the revised messaging from the start. For that to happen, key members from across the organization needed to be a part of the process. People from sales, product management, product marketing, training, corporate marketing, and other customer facing teams came together over a day and half to go through a collaborative message development process. The process helped hone the initial messages and counter messages in anticipation of

potential competitors' responses and customer objections.

5. Validation. Messaging doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's imperative that it is relevant, compelling to customers and other key stakeholders. Therefore, the final stage is to validate the messaging and to modify it, if necessary. Developing a good message map is an iterative process.

THE RESULTS

In less than 90 days, the message map was developed, and validation was underway. The map provided guidance for content development. It will be woven into all Certara SW messaging going forward and used in sales enablement materials and training. One of the most valuable results of the message mapping project was the opportunity for the entire team to be a part of the process and collaboration, which resulted in increased internal alignment.

In reviewing the process and results, Kristine recommends the following to any leader undertaking a similar initiative:

- Messaging is a core part of any business. Make the investment to do the work. It may seem like it will slow you down, but it will help speed things up because the internal team is working from the same "sheet of music."
- Develop a visual representation of the messaging so you can see how all of the initial claims and supporting proof create a comprehensive story.
- Think beyond your solutions. Take competitors and customers into account to prepare internal teams for real world conversations.

ABOUT VISIONEDGE MARKETING

VisionEdge Marketing has driven growth for 250+ B2B companies world-wide. As a trusted expert, we deliver processes, methodologies, and best practices designed to help you achieve your growth goals faster and with greater confidence. Our core capabilities in data-derived insights, strategy, customer-centricity, performance management and operational excellence, deliver results, close the gaps and up-skill your team. Founded in 1999, VisionEdge Marketing is headquartered in Austin, Texas.

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