

CATEGORY: FIELD MARKETING
 CLASS: CUSTOMIZED SALES COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

CMM Group

- Services organization focused around messaging refinement and implementation
- Improved messaging will drive greater tool and collateral usage by sales, and incremental prospect impact
- CMM can be a content builder as well as a strategic partner for organizations that require it
- Long-term effectiveness of CMM will be driven by selecting and implementing a CSC platform

Customer Message Management, LLC (CMM Group) is a consulting and implementation services vendor that helps organizations improve the effectiveness of their marketing messages and consequently, marketing’s impact on sales. CMM’s methodology – known as Customer Message Management (CMM) – is delivered as a book, a two-day training session or a 12-week consulting engagement.

CMM begins a consulting engagement with a series of meetings (attended by CMM, and relevant sales and marketing participants) to identify a client’s target market, key decisionmakers, business issues and value propositions. Using CMM tools and worksheets, the team develops key marketing messages which are then written and edited internally or by a CMM writer if needed, and validated with key internal staff, channel partners and select customers.

CMM then assesses the customer’s relevant sales tools, maps optimal communications for every stage of the buying cycle, and develops a sample of new tools. Once this work is completed and approved by the client, the new marketing messages are integrated and presented to the customer’s sales and marketing staffs. When completed, new tools and collateral are released through a content portal or customized sales communications (CSC) tool, depending on the customer’s preference. All relevant staff are trained on the proper use of the marketing messages, sales tools and resulting collateral, including what content is the most effective for certain target markets or buying cycle stages.

The last phase of an engagement includes necessary training for field personnel, as well as the creation of a framework to con-

tinually improve marketing content and sales collateral. CMM recommends that customers create a mechanism to gather sales feedback from the field regarding the effectiveness and relevance of its marketing content. In addition, CMM works with customers to develop a strategy for targeting the most appropriate content in marketing communications and event marketing, as well as for internal uses such as training new sales hires.

The price of CMM’s 12-week consulting engagement can range from \$75,000 to \$125,000 depending on the project’s complexity, and includes content authoring if required. The two-day training session costs \$15,000; the price of CMM’s book is \$34.95. The primary difference between the three options (besides the price) is the amount of facilitation CMM provides; as an example, the 12-week engagement includes a series of guided workshops that cover message creation, delivery and integration of the project results into the customer’s sales and marketing process.

STRENGTHS

Demand creation efforts falter when they are built around poorly targeted marketing messages and positioning. CMM helps organizations to honestly evaluate the quality of their marketing efforts, to determine what existing messages and content are effective, and to pinpoint any gaps. We particularly like CMM’s approach to using a customer’s buying cycle as the basis for creating messaging and tools; these cycles should always be the foundation for prioritizing any content creation or refinement efforts. If you don’t have the talent in house to build out your content, you can use CMM’s content resources to build new tools and templates.

VENDOR AT-A-GLANCE: CMM GROUP

CONTACT INFORMATION	CLIENT ROSTER	OPERATIONS
N52 W16041 Bette Drive Menomonee Falls, WI 5305 (262) 251-3726 info@customermessage.com www.customermessage.com	AmerisourceBergen AT&T Caterpillar Hewlett-Packard Kronos Royal Bank of Canada	Revenue: \$1MM-\$10MM Employees: 7 International Presence: Canada, Europe Key Industries Served: Financial Services, High Technology, Manufacturing, Professional Services

Another key strength is in the affiliations that CMM Group has forged with two of the leaders – Pragmatech and SAVO Group – in the customized sales communications (CSC) space. As we have discussed in a number of previous briefs, including “The Need for Customized Sales Communications,” CSC platforms provide a toolset and appropriate strategies to categorize, tailor and manage customer messaging to buying process stages. By using an organization such as CMM, customers that choose to implement a CSC tool can compress the implementation cycle and maximize their technology investment.

In addition, CMM Group brings sales and marketing together in its facilitated workshops to reconcile their needs with the most effective messaging for communicating value to prospects and customers. By creating open dialogue between the two functions, CMM bridges the gap between underutilized marketing content and the materials that sales needs to communicate effectively. While a CMM project is targeted at marketing, it can only be successful with the full cooperation of sales.

WEAKNESSES

While using the book or workshop are economical options to implementing CMM’s methodology, if you do require the consulting services option (in organizations that do not feel comfortable trying to implement on their own, or with extreme sales and marketing coordination issues), a six-figure cost may be prohibitive.

If you do choose to spend the money on a wider-scale engagement, you must make sure that both your marketing and sales teams are on board with the decision, and are willing to work together. CMM Group engagements are most effective with

the joint participation of sales and marketing – working with only one or the other will perpetuate any dysfunctional processes that are already in place. We also recommend having executive-level sponsorship in place to guarantee the cooperation of both sales and marketing before any CMM engagement.

Finally, despite the benefits of choosing CMM to create more relevant messaging, its long-term effectiveness will likely be limited without adopting a CSC solution. Trying to solve strategic issues will be a waste without solving issues around delivery, and continuing to use email or a Web portal/corporate intranet to distribute new content and collateral often results in sales continuing to ignore or underutilize it. All of the major CSC solutions enable the use of guided and decision-tree interfaces, which allow sales reps to access the most appropriate content based on individual opportunities. In addition, the organization can leverage and control the consistency of its core messages created with CMM Group’s help, while supporting a salesperson’s ability to customize the content as needed.

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THE SIRIUS DECISION

Creating and distributing targeted, effective marketing messages and sales tools continues to be a source of friction between sales and marketing for many organizations. If you lack the internal horsepower to change this dynamic, CMM Group’s consulting services can be useful. With a hands-on approach, CMM Group focuses on creating a sales and marketing partnership, as well as rebuilding the pipeline of marketing content. Think about an engagement with CMM not only in and of itself, but how its results will be enabled with a delivery platform; only then will you be able to solve the content problems that plague your organization.