



Client

NetApp

Services delivered

Case studies

Copywriting

Newsletters

PR

Event management

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Chris Gale
Marketing Manager
Northern Europe
Network Appliance

Turning a £40k cost into £1m ROI

Today Network Attached Storage (NAS) is an established technology, but when we started working with NetApp in Northern Europe it was seen as ‘disruptive’.

NetApp came to the market with an interesting proposition - a storage system that used a lot less space and energy, offering higher reliability and lower complexity than those already in use.

NetApp products are very impressive, but they struggled to get press coverage against competition from lower priced and more established players, who were able to benefit from their market strength and provide yet another challenge to the fledgling business.

We recognised that NetApp equipment enjoyed a strong business case, had the benefit of an established footprint in the US and that indefinable ‘something’ that gives a company a buzz.

No Authority

What it lacked in the UK was an authoritative position that could both inform press coverage and be recognised by customers.

Our first activity was to build a bank of customer collateral, generating case studies to demonstrate the breadth of their customer base and capabilities. This involved working with companies throughout Europe and Scandinavia, and gave a powerful platform of both customer references and interesting press material.

Our second task was to build a position of authority in the eyes of the media, and this called for a very creative approach.

One of the key elements of this was to position the company’s staff as experts in their subjects.

While the company’s technologies were very complex, the user saw none of it - the product was as simple to use as a toaster - so we had to strike a fine balance, as the apparent simplicity was one of the key sales benefits.

Make mine a large one

We agreed with NetApp that to really come into the market with a strong press impact they needed to put on a special press event, but we also didn’t have a big budget.

Our suggestion, after much research, was to fly a small party of the press from each European country to Scotland, and enjoy two nights in a country house hotel overlooking the River Spey, right in the middle of the Scotch Malt Whisky Trail.





By choosing such an out of the way location, the cost of getting each journalist to the hotel, putting them up in very comfortable surroundings, and laying on a full programme of business and social activity, worked out at less than £800 per head - which offered extremely good value.

Despite images to the contrary, it's quite hard to entice journalists out of their offices to cover a story, so getting 40 of them out for two days to join NetApp was quite a feat.

No doubt the attraction of two days in the heart of Scotch Whisky country played a small part, but without a guarantee of at least five or six good stories no journalist could justify this time away, regardless of how much alcohol was on offer!

We made sure there was plenty to write about by building a programme that included:

- Breaking news exclusives
- Analysts' view of storage roadmap
- Interviews with key customers
- Technical briefings
- Exclusive access to technology leaders
- Analyst access and interviews

The trip was extremely successful. The journalists formed excellent relationships with the NetApp personnel, and came away with a raft of good stories.

NetApp's press coverage went from strength to strength - for a period of six months the company enjoyed over 50% share of voice in its sector - not bad for a company just one sixth the size of the market leader. Two years after the trip, the key media still saw NetApp as a prime source of informed comment on technical news relating to the storage industry.

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