

Case Study: FICO

Background

FICO (NYSE: FICO), headquartered in San Jose, is the world's leading provider of analytics software, solutions and services that transform the way organizations understand their customers and



optimize business processes around them. Using FICO solutions, businesses in more than 120 countries do everything from protecting 2.6 billion payment cards from fraud, to helping people get credit, to ensuring that millions of airplanes and rental cars are in the right place at the right time. FICO also developed and delivers the ubiquitous FICO Score – the leading credit rating for consumers. For more information, visit www.fico.com.

Situation

By 2010, FICO already had been a worldwide organization for some time, with stock trading around \$21 a share and its famous products being sold everywhere. Its main objectives: to grow its leadership position in analytics, and to continue to deliver strong shareholder returns. Marketing was comprised of matrixed field, industry, product marketing and communications teams. Also, because department executives were former PR professionals, marketing was a key strategic player in the overall business with an outsized voice at the leadership table.

In 2010, the company saw an opportunity to increase its visibility and stimulate lead and demand generation throughout its largest operating region: North America. As a result, it invested in strategic communications, and needed the right people to lead and drive the effort.

The Game Changer

FICO hired Jason Sprenger in the middle of 2010 to lead its North American PR efforts and its worldwide retail-oriented activities. Over his tenure, he built and managed a team (including two PR agencies based in San Francisco and New York), and directed a wide range of activities including:

- Leading and supporting all strategic communications for B2B products in North America
- Executing all media relations to general business outlets, verticals, consumer press, etc.
- Launching new products as they entered the market. This meant coordinating with marketing and engineering teams to: craft comprehensive messaging, draft and publish all collateral, integrate/train the sales team, conduct thorough outreach to media and analysts; planning supporting events when applicable; and other activities
- Serving as a primary spokesperson for the FICO Score and the company as a whole



Game Changer Communications

- Integrating digital/social media into FICO World (the company's flagship annual conference) for the first time
- Renovating the company's website, and designing/debuting a robust newsroom and content library
- Improving relationships with media in key markets, including FICO HQ (Minneapolis)
- Media training and directly counseling executives, including the CEO
- Providing PR support and execution for FICO's presence at major industry events

Results

In less than two years, Sprenger and his team accomplished much, including:

- Growing North American PR activity/results/brand prominence by nearly 3x within fiscal year 2011, contributing to company-wide PR growth of 2.5x in same time period
- Successfully integrating social media into FICO World, and setting baseline metrics for usage, communities and engagement
- Significantly improving relationships with local media, which led to more/better coverage
- Reducing contract vendor expenses through negotiations and competitive bid processes; resulted in a 67% savings to FICO over three years

With Sprenger on board, FICO grew as a company and improved its position in the market. It was another of many significant corporate acceleration programs Sprenger has led in his career. Furthermore - at the time Sprenger departed FICO, its stock was trading around \$45 per share – more than double what it was worth two years before.

In Their Words

“Jason's an enthusiastic PR practitioner who eagerly embraces new ideas and approaches, takes on new challenges and does consistently good work. His responsiveness and integrity have helped him build strong relationships – which he leverages to good effect for the company. Jason's strong personal initiative, public relations know-how and professionalism make him an important and valuable member of the team.”

--Stephen Astle, Vice President of Marketing, FICO

“Jason is a PR expert. He has good instincts on how to handle difficult situations when they arise. He is a great collaborator who makes it easy for people to work with him because of his strong communications and positive attitude. FICO is a complex business, and this never daunted Jason — he got to the gist of what we do and found ways to make it clear and compelling.”

--Darcy Sullivan, Senior Director of PR, FICO

“Jason Sprenger is an experienced PR professional who is effective at navigating across business units, geographies and time zones. He is a fast learner, ramping up quickly for new



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challenges, no matter how technical or complex. Even when faced with roadblocks and setbacks, Jason is able to deliver results.”

--Elisabeth Hershman, Vice President, IQ 360 (one of two agencies on Sprenger's PR team)