

Case Study: Imation

Background

Imation was founded in 1996, when 3M Corporation spun off its data storage and imaging business units. For about 20 years, Imation had four core product technology areas: secure storage, scalable storage, wireless/connectivity, and magnetic tapes. For years, under the Imation, Memorex, TDK Life on Record and XtremeMac brands, Imation was a global market share leader in sales of CD-R and DVD media, as well as consumer electronics, headphones and accessories.



Today, the company is named Glassbridge Enterprises, and focuses on investment and asset management. Glassbridge Enterprises sold the Imation brand name to Korean company O-Jin Corporation Co., Ltd. in 2017.

Situation

In the early 2010s, Imation's consumer-oriented brands and products were becoming obsolete as newer technologies flooded the market. To keep the business profitable and moving forward as a whole, executives shook up Imation's core technology areas. Among the decisions made: Imation bought Nexsan, a well-reputed provider of enterprise data storage systems, to take its decades of storage-related experience to a whole new level and give the company a strong foothold in the B2B/enterprise market.

After the acquisition, Imation needed to execute a major strategic shift, especially with regard to marketing. It needed to:

- Promote and build equity in the Nexsan name and its specific storage brands
- Generate a wide variety of content and disseminate those assets broadly to validate the products in the market and enable its sales force to close deals
- Bring advantageous new products and value-added features to market
- Develop/refine corporate and product positioning and key messages, so that sales efforts could succeed and market share could be gained in the hyper-competitive enterprise data storage marketplace
- Advise Imation executives and Nexsan business unit leaders and staff in new ways, regarding new decisions and business situations

Imation/Glassbridge later sold Nexsan, but for several years the Nexsan business unit was a key asset in the Imation portfolio.



Game Changer Communications

The Game Changer

Imation hired Game Changer Communications in early 2014. The firm was Imation's agency of record for two years, tasked with leading all Nexsan marketing and communications efforts as well as handling the majority of Imation's corporate communications.

The program included the following activity:

- Comprehensive baseline benchmarking and analysis of Imation's relative position with regard to media coverage frequency and quality, share of voice, message pull-through and more, and how those metrics compare to its primary competition
- Developing, drafting and refining a comprehensive message platform for Nexsan and its primary product lines
- Devising and executing a comprehensive content marketing and management strategy, which has included blogging, case study development, issuing news releases, sharing and engaging in social media and more
- Assisting with marketing strategy and execution around products and offerings developed between the Nexsan unit and other core Imation businesses
- Handling all media relations preparation, outreach, follow-up, monitoring, reporting, etc.
- Providing primary support for Imation's channel marketing efforts
- Building and executing a comprehensive analyst relations program – specifically analyst tours, proactive monthly communications, quarterly briefings, paid assets and other meetings when possible
- Providing PR support and execution for Imation's presence at major industry events

Results

With Game Changer Communications on board, Imation realized tremendous results from its baseline metrics at the start of 2014 through 2015:

- A combined "total points" measurement of visibility and media coverage quantity and quality increased more than 3x over those two years
- Nexsan averaged 10-15% share of voice over those two years in the enterprise data storage market – a major improvement over previous years
- Nexsan realized tremendous growth in its two primary social media communities
 - More than 50% growth on Twitter, to more than 3,000 followers
 - 3x growth on Facebook, from 952 likes to almost 2,800
- Organic third-party mentions of Nexsan (analyst reports, influencer posts, etc.) rose to 18 in 2014 and 25 in 2015, proving that there was growing buzz around the company
- A blog was launched, with 64 and 66 posts published in 2014 and 2015, respectively

On the macro level, Nexsan became a profitable and growing business – exactly what Imation needed it to be. It remained that way until the latter half of the 2010s, when new ownership began to move Imation toward what it is today.



Game Changer Communications

In Their Words

“Game Changer Communications was able to make an immediate impact on our communications strategy with limited involvement from our team. Jason Sprenger began delivering content, analytics and strategic advice in a very short timeframe. We experienced a dramatic increase in our awareness within a single quarter, and were able to demonstrate our return on investment almost immediately.”

--Anna Jordon, Global Marketing Manager