



## High Impact and Measurable Marketing Campaigns for the IT Industry

### Business Services Marketing

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**Mark Curtis**  
CEO

### BIO:

A founder of three successful marketing agencies. Mark's social media agency, enter:new media was one of the earliest to offer community management (2005) and Facebook application development (2007). The agency has worked for many of the top brands in fashion and entertainment including Versace, Tod's, Kenneth Cole, Urban Outfitters, Lord & Taylor, American Eagle, Piperlime, Under Armour, Vogue, Real Simple, MTV, VH1, A&E Television Network, AMC Network, MLS Soccer, and the NBA.

Mark also serves as the President of enter:marketing. With a strong partnership and management team, enter:marketing is the established leader in channel marketing, lead generation, events and gamification. Founded in Mark's apartment in 2004, enter:marketing now has more than 50 employees with offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and South America.

Prior to enter:new media and enter:marketing, Mark held creative, strategic and management positions in both agencies and on corporate teams.

### About enter:marketing:

enter:marketing is a Marketing agency headquartered in NYC with offices in San Francisco, Chicago and Colombia. Our agency specializes in client demand generation campaigns, virtual and in-person tech events, and strategic social media campaigns. We work with several of the largest IT companies in the country and take pride in a positive culture with a fun team of dedicated professionals.

Key services include live and interactive virtual events, video production, integrated social media campaigns, brand reinforcement, demand generation, gamification and lead cultivation initiatives in the IT industry. Our company works with international leading equipment manufacturers, software solution developers and re-sellers to identify near-term sales opportunities and nurture long-term pipeline opportunities. The enter:marketing approach to IT Marketing is designed to maximize the value of every dollar you invest in creating sales and engagement opportunities.

### Specialties

IT Marketing, Lead Generation and Cultivation, Integrated Social Media Marketing, Demand Generation

**Interview conducted by:  
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor  
CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO:** Mr. Curtis, what is the approach at enter:marketing?

**Mr. Curtis:** Our agency started about 10 years ago trying to solve a very particular problem that faced channel marketing within the technology industry. The way that funds were distributed to value-added resellers for major technology firms like HP, EMC and Citrix left the manufacturers very unhappy with their ability to influence those funds in a way that would drive sales. Also, for their channel sales partners, they did not have any way of effectively using or tracking the transactional impact of those marketing funds. We have been very focused for the last decade in trying to solve that problem have been very successful in providing manufactures with high impact and measurable marketing programs.

**CEOCFO:** How did you originally work at solving it, and how are you doing so today?

**Mr. Curtis:** Originally, what we did was go to the channel partners and tell them that they qualified for all these Market Development Funds (MDF) from all the different vendors that they resell. And, because these channel partners had very few dedicated internal marketing resources, if any at all, they were doing a poor job at consistently leveraging this support. We would go on retainer with them and offset the costs, of not only our services, but all

the hard-cost of execution, completely through the MDF funds, and basically give them a professional marketing team at zero out-of-pocket cost to them.

That gave us the ability to work across all of the different types of programs that we could possibly touch to drive a real, measurable impact for these resellers, as well as their vendor partners. That presented a challenge to enter:marketing. The programs were very high touch with many moving parts, and we were on retainer for doing a whole host of things. As a result, it enabled us to start tracking toward best hits – things that, consistently across all of our clients, started working on a repeatable level that we could then package up and offer to the marketplace at scale. We use those far-ranging retainer relationships almost like an R&D lab. We are able to discover productizable solutions that we could bring to market at scale.

Now, we are very much focused on these scalable, repeatable, very much dependable and predictable solutions that we have auditioned and worked out the kinks on retainer-based relationships. We focus on developing new products to enhance our existing toolkit, which brings new levels of engagement within sales and marketing – software solutions that motivate the entire business ecosystem. As a result, we are now able to bring these solutions to manufacturers and channel partners across the country, and across the globe.

**CEO CFO:** Who is your typical client?  
**Mr. Curtis:** We have two main clients. One of them is the technology solution providers that work regionally, and they are focused on solving problems for businesses. They are vendor agnostic, so they will look at a company, possibly with growth issues related to a data center or how they handle business continuity. They will be able to bring in more holistic solutions from a little bit of HP, a little bit Cisco, and a little bit of EMC, and be able to work that altogether. They

then have funds available to them from HP, EMC and Cisco to help promote their specific solutions that pull through the products of these various vendors. We work directly for these guys and help them drive more sales through that MBI.

Conversely, the EMCs and HPs of the world love us because we are very effective at being able to convert those marketing dollars into measurable transactions for them. We will execute marketing programs on their behalf to support their channel partners. And, once they see success with one partner, they will introduce us to the other channel partners they work with across their different divisions and markets.

**CEO CFO:** Are there many companies providing a service similar to yours?

**Mr. Curtis:** There are competitors in different flavors. There are small

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agencies that will offer very high-touch services, and there are off-the-shelf software solutions that touch on some of the things that we do. There are some direct marketing teams as well that touch on some things that we do, and telemarketing groups. We are really the only group that brings all of those pieces together to provide the type of ROI that we deliver consistently. There are many companies that play in this space and different pieces and parts, but we have a very unique way that we put all of those endpoints together, and the results to support our reputation. Our clients rely on us to deliver on what we promise, and trust that they can count on us when planning their marketing.

**CEO CFO:** When you are first talking with a potential client, do they understand the difference in enter:marketing immediately or is there a typical light bulb moment?

**Mr. Curtis:** There is. It will come up often. Often times they will have heard

of us and our reputation, and will ask us, if we are like a certain vendor they've used, but with a twist. It is very incumbent upon us to help them understand the value of that twist. One of the great things is that we have so many great success stories and clients who really understand the difference and are very loyal to us. That referral network drives us.

**CEO CFO:** What do you understand about the process that perhaps others do not?

**Mr. Curtis:** There are two key things, and it is really a blend. The first piece of what we really understand is when to bring in technology solutions and innovation, and assess the need for technology to automate to be able to open up new data-based solutions that provide new capabilities that enable marketing to perform better.

Our commitment to the technology layer of our solution is really critical. Too many technology-focused marketers in our space make the mistake of trying to automate everything and provide a complete technology solution. There are no shortcuts. There is no automation that will actually make sure that once you have set an appointment, a sales person will actually show up at that appointment, know exactly what he or she needs to talk about, and be armed with what he or she needs to be able to close that sale.

That is what sets us apart. There is very much a blend of the human element and a lot of the very unglamorous sending of calendar invites and reminders and handholding that will always have to be done in order to connect that last mile of opportunity to actual conversion and transactional impact. It is that combination of knowing when to bring in the technology and innovation, and when to keep the human element involvement to be able to ensure that we are getting the results we need.

**CEO CFO:** What is Branderati? How does that fit in with enter:marketing?

**Mr. Curtis:** Branderati is a very separate company. We at enter:marketing are increasingly involved in the application of social media to lead generation and how IT projects are sold, as well as how people learn about technology. One of the things that I recognized was that there are certain challenges in social media that are not specific to the technology industry. As brands continue to build scale within their social media communities, within that large, undifferentiated group of hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of fans, there are those within that community that are highly over indexed in both passion for a brand, as well as their social influence. These influential individuals have the ability to be really effective brand ambassadors.

It made sense to me to start a second, completely unrelated initiative. Much of it was born out of the market that we had identified in our social media work. We figured out a way to attack the challenge of enabling brands to recruit, engage and measure the impact of their brand ambassadors.

It definitely meets needs for us within the technology vertical; however, Branderati clients are tech, consumer, fashion, beauty, insurance and finance companies. We are a vertical agnostic solution, so it is a very different type of company, and it is very much a software-based solution. The identification of the market need came from the work that we were doing at enter:marketing, but it is a very different business.

**CEO CFO:** You have several offices including one in Colombia. Why there?

**Mr. Curtis:** Initially, we needed to expand our coverage from just our ability to execute within North America, but to execute within South America as well. The way a lot of our technology vendors are organized, the Americas are often grouped together, just like Europe is often grouped together and Asia. When we started looking at how to expand our

business without necessarily going into new verticals, geography is one of those levers.

Our number one first geography expansion was to be able to handle all of the different cultural and language differences that are comprised within the South American market. When you start looking at that, you have a couple different options. One of them is Miami, as was Brazil. Traditionally, companies look at Venezuela, but that really was not an option for us. We had not considered Colombia at first, but when we started putting out feelers into the different markets, we ended up making a personal connection in Colombia that just made a lot of sense for us.

What we have been able to do is build a team at a very cost-competitive standpoint that offers a tremendous amount of advantages compared to outsourcing to any Asian country or India. They are culturally a lot more aligned to the Americas, they are on a very similar time zone, and they see a lot of the same television. A lot of our employees down there have spent considerable amounts of time in the states, so it is very easy for us to communicate with them and hop down to physically see them. They are also very effective for us in terms of cultural and language sensitivities working with teams driving marketing from the States. Colombia is a little bit of a hidden treasure. It is a wonderful place to go for vacation, the quality of life is great, and the people are amazing. Often when I say I am going on a business trip down to Colombia, people are surprised.

**CEO CFO:** How is business these days?

**Mr. Curtis:** It is really great. We are very excited about our expansion opportunities. The growth that we are experiencing, not only within our core solutions, but some of our emerging solutions as well, especially around gamification and social media, is really groundbreaking. Our new gamification platform is driving 3x, 5x,

even 10x increases in business activity and outcomes.

To a certain degree, having my visibility in terms of being the CEO of both a social media software company and a tech-marketing-focused services company benefits both. One of the big benefits is that we are able to be very aggressive leading the market in social media and gamification. The ROI for this, built on top of our core focus of driving revenue generating transactions for clients, and being able to do so in a predictable way, is proving to be the right mix.

It is that combination of "oh, this is a shiny new toy," and "I can still drive measurable, transactional impact out of what we are bringing to the table." If it is just the shiny toy, there is a lot of interest, but at the end of the day, they are still going to ask where the ROI is. Our ability to bring both of those things really paints a very bright future for us. We are looking at some very aggressive growth plans over the next 24 to 36 months.

**CEO CFO:** Why should the business pay attention to enter:marketing today?

**Mr. Curtis:** We are very well poised to be an undisputed leader in our vertical. What we do is a very specialized field, but there is a tremendous amount of money in what we are doing from a market standpoint. We have the ability to really establish ourselves and are quickly doing so as the leader. From an exit strategy, when you are looking at any major company looking to make a significant investment to add this vertical to their wheel house, the build versus buy scenario would make us an extremely attractive option. It is not just from an industry and brand equity standpoint, but the combination of software and service that makes us unique and creates a tremendous amount of value for this company. A lot of the major players in the space are going to want be watching us pretty closely.



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