

Callan Consulting

Inktomi: Market Validation



I n k t o m i ®

“Ed brought a variety of strengths to the project. He is a strategic thinker able to execute on a tactical level, and he delivered high-quality results on time and on budget. Finally, he is an excellent presenter of ideas and as a result was instrumental in helping us make some important business decisions.”

Miles Kelly, Director of Marketing, Inktomi

Background

In the Spring of 2002, Inktomi was one of the leading providers of Internet search software; however, revenue from its traditional base of customers – search engines and service providers – was in serious decline. In response, Inktomi was in the midst of launching a strategic new effort to sell content networking products to the enterprise.

Business Problem

A relative newcomer selling to the enterprise, Inktomi needed to better understand the market on a variety of levels, and was preparing a broad market research effort to help answer some of its questions. As part of this effort, Inktomi needed someone to interview executive-level decision makers in six targeted vertical industries.

Solution

Inktomi selected Ed Callan to design and execute this portion of the research. Starting only with the list of Fortune 1000 enterprises and contact information from the Hoovers database, over a six-week period Ed was able to enlist the participation of and complete interviews with VP- and director-level decision makers in over thirty major corporations in the selected vertical markets.

During the interviews, Ed operated off an interview guide developed jointly by him and Inktomi; however, he used his discretion to probe into other areas that arose during the course of the conversation.

As a senior-level executive familiar with Inktomi’s value proposition and capable of conversing as a peer with the senior decision makers, these forays enabled Ed to touch upon areas which were ultimately critical to the outcome of the research, but which might have been missed by a junior-level interviewer strictly adhering to the script.

Results

Based on the interviews, Ed was able to characterize the market on a number of different levels, including:

- Current IT spending priorities
- Decision makers and their hot buttons
- Level of interest in a variety of product areas being considered by Inktomi
- Vendor evaluation process
- Current and planned platforms
- Awareness of and openness to Inktomi as a technology vendor

Ed provided weekly detailed write-ups of completed interviews, an interim snapshot of the results, and at the conclusion of the interviews an in-person presentation to Inktomi’s senior management team. The timing and nature of the findings were opportune and were critical to Inktomi’s ultimate decision to exit the content networking business and refocus its efforts on its core Web search and enterprise retrieval areas.

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