



Advocacy programme transformed by Wise & Zeal to achieve **600% boost** in public stories

Imaginative. Collaborative. Trusted. They're just three of the words this leading technology company uses when describing the re-engineering of their customer advocacy programme by Wise & Zeal. The programme transformation and subsequent managed service delivers high-quality, multi-format, publicly named customer stories about leading global brands and helping the technology client deliver endorsement-driven sales.

In brief



Founded in 2018 by Alex Miljus, Wise & Zeal is a company of ex-client-side Marketers who work with Marketing leaders to transform Marketing processes, programmes, projects, properties and people.

The Wise & Zeal team is made up of senior marketers and strategic thinkers with decades of experience delivering transformational marketing success in corporate and scale-up environments. "Together, we are wise in thought and zealous in action."

Alex Miljus
Founder and CEO



Customer

A leading global technology company



Challenge

The existing customer advocacy programme was slow to produce stories as neither customers nor sales teams were engaged. The lack of regular new success stories made it harder for Sales to evidence the value of a rapidly expanding product range.



Solution

Wise & Zeal re-engineered the recruitment approach, operations and sales enablement for the advocacy programme to create a market-leading programme which they now deliver as a managed service.

Outcomes

70+

public stories delivered in two years of which 60+ named

223%

Increase in nominations in first year, 54% in second year

77%

of stories now feature new products

Integrated

Customer stories are integrated within EMEA and regional marketing plans

Executive

Client executives engaged and quoted in customer stories

"There was endless friction in the programme. Salespeople wanted case studies and videos, and needed customer stories that demonstrated the value of our new products. But there was little sales engagement with the programme to stimulate their interest."

Senior Marketing Director
Leading global technology company

Challenges

A programme in crisis needed a creative solution

This global leading technology company has experienced impressive growth in the last decade, generating thousands of new customers, supported by an ever-increasing number of account managers. Their product portfolio has also significantly expanded making them a leader in almost all of their product categories.

However, the EMEA customer advocacy programme was struggling to keep pace with this growth. The existing success stories were outdated and mostly featured US-centric organisations with limited appeal to EMEA prospects. Securing nominations for new stories was a challenge, and the development process for new stories, managed remotely by the U.S team, was broken. The result? Just six stories produced in a year – and largely from lesser-known brands.

“There was endless friction in the programme,” explains a Senior Marketing Director as spokesperson for the technology company. “We didn’t put dedicated resources in place to drive the programme forward. Sales people wanted case studies and videos, but there was little sales engagement with the programme to stimulate their interest. We also struggled to articulate the value of participating to customers, which meant that it felt like we were asking customers a favour to participate – when in fact they were often eager to tell their story.”

To add to the challenges, the majority of existing customer stories covered only the company’s long-established products, so there were very few stories to help account teams articulate value in the customer’s voice. “Sales teams needed customer stories that demonstrated the value of our new products and how the combinations of our products added increased value to customers,” explains the spokesperson.

A new marketing direction, and the realisation that the programme needed a redesign, led the technology company to Wise & Zeal’s door. The spokesperson explains, “Wise & Zeal are problem solvers. Through previous engagements, we knew we could trust their team to deliver a modern, agile customer advocacy programme.” He adds, “Their team have also walked in our shoes; their experience of client-side technology organisations means they understand our goals and success-driven strategy. I sometimes refer to them as a Swiss Army Knife, as they can complete any challenge you give them.”

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Solution

Bold and imaginative managed programme

Out went the fragmented, intermittent and passive programme model; in came a forward-thinking proactive programme, masterminded by Wise & Zeal in close collaboration with its technology client. “The Wise & Zeal team went much further than tinkering with tactics. They scrutinised the underlying problems with our programme, then recommended a re-engineered approach to customer advocacy, and put it into place,” says the spokesperson.

Pivotal to the programme’s success has been the sales and marketing empowerment tool kit the Wise & Zeal team created with the technology company. The primary goal was to remove the friction that was preventing nominations from being submitted and to create a change of mindset. “Wise & Zeal understood our unique challenges and created sales empowerment tools and a virtual roadshow to showcase our revitalised advocacy programme. They explained how simple the programme was and removed the majority of objections that the sales teams typically posed.” They go on to explain, “The customer is now firmly at the centre of the process, and the actionable reports make it very easy to understand what actions the Marketing and Sales teams need to take to reach targets.”

Two years on, customers have also presented positive feedback on their experience of the programme to the EMEA sales and marketing teams. “It was a game changer for us to have our customers state how simple the programme is and the value they gained – that removed any remaining friction in the team’s adoption of it,” the spokesperson stated.

Wise & Zeal manages and executes the programme in EMEA - and as of 2023 in LATAM also. It removes much of the heavy lifting associated with customer advocacy, from surfacing and qualifying new advocacy opportunities to creating compelling, value-led content for each story to management of approval and publication. “We discovered an unknown benefit in the Wise & Zeal managed service after C-suite executives from our customers told us that working with an independent organisation gave them confidence that their story would be told – not our story as the vendor,” explained the spokesperson.

At the heart of the programme’s success is a genuine understanding of customers’ needs that supports the technology company’s customer-first priorities. The spokesperson says, “Wise & Zeal work tirelessly to ensure our customers benefit from the story we create. This is because they establish what value the customer wants to get from taking part, for example, showcasing innovation, attracting new talent or demonstrating the value their leadership has brought to their organisation.”

Regular engagement, together with real-time dashboard reporting, ensures the client has near-continuous self-service oversight of what’s happening in the programme. “Despite it being a managed service, I can check everything – from the year-to-date nominations to how many customer stories we have per region or by product line. We can also confidently predict our future pipeline.”

“Asking a supplier to re-engineer a customer programme and deliver it as a managed service is all about trust. We couldn’t ask any more from Wise & Zeal; their proactiveness, professionalism and expertise are second to none. They consistently deliver a best-practice programme far beyond our expectations. I genuinely believe it is without equal among our market peers.”

Senior Marketing Director
Leading global technology company

Results

Transformative new customer advocacy strategy

The re-engineered customer advocacy programme continues to deliver business value at every step. To date it has:

Increased success story production by 600%

In the first two years Wise & Zeal increased the volume of approved success stories from six to over 70 across EMEA and LATAM.

Ensured senior executive engagement

Wise & Zeal engage at every level of the client organisation to market the new strategy and drive success story growth.

Internal resources freed up

As Wise & Zeal were trusted to engage directly with customers even at a senior level, internal resources were able to refocus on other aspects of marketing delivery.

Inspired innovation at every step

Among many imaginative moves, Wise & Zeal delivered a roadshow to market the programme, created a checklist of reasons why customers would want to participate and provided real-time dashboard reporting on programme performance. Wise & Zeal also explored new avenues for success story candidates, such as CSAT data.

Created consistently valuable content

Previously, success story content was mainly used at sales events – now it is used universally. For example, one line of business aims to use success story content in 25% of its social media posts. The average read time for the content is almost five minutes, and the content is also embedded in campaigns as a follow-up asset.

Attracted leading brands

The programme is now attracting leading global brands in FMCG, financial services and many other sectors. Previously, the participants were usually smaller, lesser-known organisations.

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