Case Study: WildPackets

When the Story team began working with WildPackets in late 2002, the company had a ten-year history of making technically sophisticated and graphically rich network protocol analysis software. WildPackets' products regularly received strong reviews and it could boast of many happy customers in the Fortune 500, but the company was not viewed as a major player in network analysis.

Unlike Network General, Fluke, and other companies whose products included expensive hardware components that required direct sales models, WildPackets' products were software-only, and were often ordered directly by network managers via the Web or distributors. Often, the CIOs and other executives who had to approve large expenditures for hardware-based products were not aware of WildPackets because its product prices fell below executive-level purchase authorization thresholds.

WildPackets' in-house team was doing a strong job of securing reviews and product awards, but the company was missing the kind of high-level publicity exposure that would raise its visibility among corporate IT executives. In addition, WildPackets was preparing to introduce Omni[3], a new distributed network analysis platform that competed more directly against those of its major competitors.

Story's strategy was to build WildPackets' reputation and broaden its exposure through contributed articles, speaker placements, analyst outreach, customer profiles, and trend stories, both in the US and in Europe. The process began by translating WildPackets' product-level feature messages into corporate-level benefits messages. Another important tactic involved separating press and analyst lists by sector among WildPackets' product line, which eventually included products for WAN, wired LAN, wireless LAN, and VoIP applications.

After working with the company to prepare an analyst presentation, Story conducted a U.S. analyst tour to present WildPackets' high-level benefits to Gartner Group, Meta Group, Burton Group, Current Analysis, Enterprise Management Associates, IDC, NetForecast, and other top analyst firms, receiving generally positive responses and securing references for the media push.

Concurrently, Story pitched and sold over a dozen contributed articles and executive columns to industry publications such as *Communications Convergence*, *Communications News*, *Next-Generation Data Center*, and *Internet Telephony*, and established WildPackets CTO Scott Haugdahl as a wireless network analysis and deployment expert through column contributions in *Network World, Next-Gen Data Center Forum, and TechTarget*. At the end of 2003, Story's European partner, Ascendant, began conducting press and analyst relations, product review, and customer reference programs aimed at UK and German media.

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During its Omni[3] launch in fall 2004, WildPackets briefed 15 press and nine analyst contacts in the United States, securing 20 stories, including *eWeek*, *InfoWorld, Network World Fusion*, *Next-Generation Data Center Forum*, *TechWorld*, *TMCNet, Unstrung*, and *Wi-Fi Planet*. In Europe, Ascendant's efforts built a core audience of supporters in the IT media and analysts communities in the UK and Germany. In addition, WildPackets won a major UK industry award (the Network Award) and has received excellent product reviews in major IT and networking titles.

In addition to ongoing product reviews, WildPackets-related news and features now appear regularly in well over a dozen North American and European publications that bring its messages in front of corporate executives exploring solutions in wireless LANs, Ethernet networking, voice over IP, and remote WAN management.