

BearingPoint's Paul Dunay: Marketer on a Mission to Demonstrate Differentiation, Positioning and Branding

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Since the new millennium, professional service firms have faced increasing pressure to become more effective in differentiation, positioning and branding. I am struck by how hard firms are working to "get it right" in creating unique value for their clients, in positioning themselves for having the most favorable capabilities, and in branding themselves as delivering the most competitively potent attributes.

And I am struck by how internally focused the job of professional service marketing has become.



Here, if anything, is a situation crying out for a "doing things differently" approach. Paul Dunay of BearingPoint is a marketer who embarked on an independent quest to vividly demonstrate differentiation, positioning and branding to his global enterprise. His professional bravery has sent an electric charge throughout his firm.

Dunay is a director of global field marketing for [BearingPoint](#), a global management and technology consulting company. Traded under the ticker symbol BE, BearingPoint has 17,000 employees who provide strategic consulting, applications services, technology solutions, and managed services to government organizations, Global 2000 companies and medium-sized businesses in the U.S. and around the world.

I met Dunay in May 2006, when I heard him make some provocative remarks about technology and marketing at a Boston chapter meeting of the [PM Forum](#). I was intrigued by his unabashed expression of opinions, to which I took some exception in a [post](#) on the Marketing Profs Daily Fix blog. I thought, "Isn't it refreshing to encounter a marketing thought leader who says something 'controversial'?"

Since that time, I've watched as Dunay has steadily ramped up his presence in the field of what he calls "Buzz Marketing." I began tracking his blog, [Buzz Marketing for Technology](#), in which he discusses innovative ideas for B2B technology marketers, specifically how to leverage Web 2.0 tools to create "Buzz."

I thought, "How rare to see a senior marketer from any professional service firm—even one as prominent as BearingPoint—leading a series of cutting-edge conversations that do not appear to be directed at just his internal colleagues." (The vast majority of B2B or professional marketing observers and commentators are like me: analysts, authors and consultants.)

Imagine my delight when I checked in with Dunay and learned the extent to which he has intentionally begun to "do things differently" and how positively it has benefited BearingPoint. Here is his story:

My career thus far has focused on the intersection of marketing, services and technology. I've been observing with great anticipation as the business world slowly begins to embrace Web 2.0 and all its possibilities—blogging, podcasting, videocasting, RSS, wikis, interactive search, and so much more. I became convinced that our firm needed to embrace these new technologies to create an arena of "conversational marketing."

But about a year ago, I had an epiphany regarding my role as a marketing leader for my company, and the skills that I bring that can help my colleagues succeed and grow. Being a B2B marketer in a professional services firm, I live within reach of some of the finest business-oriented content and content creators on the planet. I realized that I could best explain to my colleagues what a thought leader does in a Web 2.0 world by actively demonstrating it.

I developed an internal Buzz Marketing e-newsletter, which I began to distribute to my colleagues throughout the firm. My topics related to the social media "tipping points" that I believe are ahead of us as Web 2.0 spreads. And I started my Buzz Marketing for Technology blog.

From there, I pushed ahead to demonstrate other ways that our firm could use social media tools to expand and enrich our customer conversation. For example, I jumped on the opportunity to do podcasts when Apple announced that the new version of iTunes would accept them. As a result, my team was the first consultancy to get a podcast posted on iTunes, beating IBM's debut by a week. Now, a year and a half later, I get three or four requests a week to network or do public speaking, and my blog has just broken Technorati's Top 80,000 (out of 5+ million blogs).

But, most important, at BearingPoint I've begun a broad and deep engagement with my colleagues. There is buzz in our firm for Buzz Marketing. My enthusiasm, even evangelism, for all things Web 2.0 has truly begun to take hold. Folks are frequently asking my help in their efforts to enter this new, highly connected arena for differentiating, positioning, and branding their services.

My quest is to help BearingPoint expand its industry leadership through powerful, content-rich client conversation. I will continue to teach by example that integrated marketing—sticky marketing—is the most effective way for our firm to maintain and grow its eminent market position. It changes how we differentiate, position and brand the firm. My goal is for people to say, with respect, that BearingPoint is everywhere.

Leading by Example

What Dunay has done is highly unusual in a professional services environment, especially one as large and far-flung as BearingPoint. His colleagues tolerated, and even fostered, his independent actions. And now his individual "evangelism" has been endorsed organizationally. His colleagues are working collaboratively with him, overcoming internal silos and barriers, to bring germane content to clients in a newly effective way.

Dunay's leadership by example has set in motion a sea change that will inevitably reconfigure the way this global firm differentiates, positions, and brands itself. This is no small feat, and reflects very positively on BearingPoint.

Find Your "Paul" and Let Him Loose!

When writing about professional services marketing, I've talked about the importance of individuals manifesting "[professional bravery](#)" and "[doing things differently](#)" to help their firms gain new marketplace leadership. Indeed, most marketers regularly do find ways to demonstrate their own kind of courage and innovation.

But it's rare that I hear a professional service marketer use the word "quest" when describing an internal marketing initiative. This word, "quest," bespeaks a higher level of personal initiative and risk-taking than what I've seen in most professionals (even beyond marketers!).

It speaks of the courage to embark on a significant pathway without asking for the organization's permission... the chutzpah to risk being told "no you can't do that"... and the professional passion to envision how one's individual actions can benefit an organization of thousands of people.

What's *your* quest?



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