

# Getting past the assistants and into CEOs' minds.

BE DIFFERENT  
Mitel



## THE ISSUE

Mitel designs, markets and sells unified IP communications solutions to organizations ranging from large multi-nationals to small businesses. Although it has approximately 20 million users in over 90 countries and is growing by over one million ports annually, Mitel suffers relatively low brand awareness, especially in the larger enterprise market.

Mitel's competitors – gorillas like Nortel, Cisco, Avaya, Alcatel and Microsoft – build strong brand awareness through sheer volume of marketing. However, this approach has led to the perception that there is little to differentiate them and their solutions.

To create an effective integrated awareness and lead- and demand-generation campaign, Mitel needed to differentiate itself.

And that meant doing something, well, different.

## THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND THE APPROACH WE TOOK

We conducted interviews with Mitel channel, field sales and marketing and strategy staff, as well as with channel partners and key customers. This, combined with research on Mitel's competitors, gave us an understanding of where Mitel's opportunities for differentiation lay.

We developed a messaging platform that focused on Mitel's unique ability to create solutions for its customers that "fit" particular business needs. Whereas their competitors slot their customers into verticals, Mitel focuses on each customer, creating a "vertical of one" each time. In other words, Mitel's solutions allow you – even encourage you – to be different:

**Being different. In business, it's critical to your success. Call it your unique selling proposition, your value-add, whatever. Your difference distinguishes you in the marketplace. It gives you a competitive advantage. It's something your customers can embrace and your people can live and own. In a very real way, it is the lifeblood of your organization.**

Visually, the message of difference would be embodied by a strong, simple and (to ensure campaign longevity) flexible image: a single Mitel-orange sphere standing out amid a field of identical blue spheres.

Initially representing the straightforward virtue of difference, the orange sphere and its relationship to the blue spheres could be easily manipulated to communicate other benefits of Mitel's solutions. So, in subsequent ads, the sphere would be glowing to show how Mitel provides on-demand ("always on") service, or slaloming around the static blue spheres to illustrate Mitel's dynamism.

But knowing what to say and how to say it was only the beginning. We wanted to talk directly to CEOs and other senior IT decision makers within Fortune 1000 companies. And if you want to talk to the CEO of a \$100 million+ company, you first have to get past his or her assistant.

We purchased a subscription to the globally recognized customer strategy magazine *1to1* for each targeted CEO. There could hardly be a more perfect vehicle for Mitel's message.

At least, not until we added branding and bound ads – synched with editorial content provided by *1to1* – right into each issue. We scheduled the campaign to run for a year – the length of the

initial subscriptions. Isotopes of the ads formatted as direct mail pieces were also delivered to IT personnel (key influencers) within targeted companies.

Since communications were directed to both the retail and financial services sectors, it became necessary to develop individualized, parallel messaging streams. Separate, mutually invisible websites continue the conversation with each audience in its own terms and with content keyed to its field and updated with each new mail out.

## OUTCOMES

While the awareness and lead- and demand-generation campaign is still ongoing, Mitel's internal engagement with the campaign's messaging and creative is high: Mitel's corporate magazine, *presence*, has been re-launched with the new branding; the Be Different theme became a major component of Mitel's annual sales-and-channel-partner meeting; and grass-roots adoption of the brand has also taken place.

Production of the ongoing campaign is now done internally at Mitel, while HBS retains its role as creative and strategic resource – as was always the intention.



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- 1 Insert
- 2 Direct Mailer
- 3 Magazine
- 4 Website