

## **Interim VP Marketing & Customer Support – Skype**

### **Ability to integrate into the client company**

Joined the Skype management team when they had fallen out with eBay 16 months into the 2 year earnout. Brought in by Skype on an interim basis to head up a 25 person marketing team and 50 person customer support team that had been leaderless for more than a year and was not contributing to the user, revenue and profit earnout goals. Presented a turnaround plan in a week and secured trust of management team to make required organisation and personnel changes. Also, rapidly built confidence of best performers in teams I was leading and with teams across the business.

### **Impact on the business / bottom line**

Focused on the key levers marketing and customer support controls to drive the user, revenue and profit goals. New user growth was driven by fuelling PR coverage of Skype by overhauling the PR operation to focus on fewer messages and a dramatic rationalisation of agencies. In addition, the website was redesigned to improve conversion rates significantly by bringing to the the paying services and Skype for Business services in a benefits-led manner. Rapid changes were made to the affiliate marketing pricing structure to make it more attractive. Email marketing was simplified. And a big focus was put on delivering data-driven infrastructure to target messages within the Skype desktop app upselling to paid services. On the customer support side, the key issue that was addressed was a lack of financial controls on approval of refunds.

### **Overall contribution / achievement of objectives**

In a 12 month period 40 million new users were added, the active user percentage remained constant and revenues grew by more than \$50m. This led to the majority of the earnout being achieved.

### **Working style**

Approach was to have a plan in mind on arrival into the role but to be open-minded and listening from the outset. Acted decisively once plan was clear including direct conversations to address personnel issues. A good collaborator across all the functions of the management team. This is helped by being a management accountant by training but working in marketing and business development roles. Have a good head for ROI and analysis which helps win Finance's respect. Built a strong team spirit rapidly by a focus on targets and deliverables putting the right people into the right roles

### **Leadership / people management skills**

Hands on and decisive but also a listener. Teams rapidly warm to the 'can do' and optimistic attitude. A focus on putting in place robust people management performance processes and having a ruthless focus on top talent hiring and never letting standards slip.

### **Legacy**

Founders received majority of their \$500m earnout and a much better structured and focused marketing and customer support team was handed over to new management. The significant growth of the business continued with it ultimately being sold to Microsoft via a 70% sale initially by eBay to private equity. Am still in contact with many of the team members.

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