HOLDSWAY | INTERIM CASE STUDY

How to Re-Energise Commercial & Digital Marketing in a Leading Global Company

Interim Commercial Digital Marketing Specialist | B2B Marketing Transformation & Product Launch *(Introduced by Holdsway)*

CLIENT AT A GLANCE

Sector: Secure products, technology & services | **Customers: Central B**anks & Governments | **Revenue:** c.£900m | **Workforce: 3**,500+ | **Footprint:** Global

The Situation

The client is a global, UK-headquartered business with more than two centuries of history, around £500m in revenue, more than 3,500 employees and an extensive patent portfolio. Its secure products and services, built on deep expertise in identity and counterfeit management, are sold mainly to central banks and governments, who are cautious, conservative customers.

The company reflected its clients: quiet and understated, despite being highly innovative. It was led by products and sales. Client relationships were left to individual salespeople, and there was almost no direct marketing communication. A new Chief Marketing Officer was appointed to bring in modern, professional B2B marketing. He arrived in a brand-new role with no team, no predecessor and no marketing history to build on. He set out a three-year plan to refresh the brand, produce thought-leadership content and introduce digital marketing to the company's clients for the first time.

> *"The brand is one of the most extraordinary I have worked on. But the company was like its clients – quiet and understated, even though it was also very innovative. Most people likely thought: 'We've survived for two centuries without marketing, so why do we need it now?'"* **— Chief Marketing Officer, the client**

The Challenge

An early priority was to build basic lead-generation capability and show the organisation that marketing could deliver. That was a big change, because the business had:

- No in-house experience or resources in digital or lead-generation marketing.
- No real ownership of the brand, and little thoughtful management of customer relationships.
- A cautious culture, wary of email marketing, in which client relationships mattered above everything.
- A short-term need that didn't justify a permanent hire but did demand an expert who could get results quickly.

The Chief Marketing Officer had worked with Holdsway's Nick Diprose before. He spoke to several interim agencies and quickly came back to Nick. He met four candidates and chose Holdsway's recommendation: an interim with the right mix of practical skills, clear thinking and experience. The interim also had the personality to fit the culture and the ability to build belief in marketing as a positive force.

> *"Nick stands out because he focuses on creating business value. He takes a strategic view and has a talent for identifying people who can get stuck in and produce results very quickly."* **— Chief Marketing Officer, the client**

The Intervention

Build the capability. The interim first set up the company's lead-generation skills and processes, giving the business the basic tools of modern B2B marketing.

Seize the moment. The ideal test soon came along: the launch of a new data-analytics software product, developed in-house. It helps central banks make data-driven decisions about the supply and lifecycle of their products and was the first of its kind. Expectations were high for its launch at a major global industry conference.

Run the first integrated campaign. The interim designed a classic launch plan around the conference, including the company's first-ever integrated marketing campaign. It ran to fourteen emails over two months, before, during and after the event. The campaign aimed to:

- build awareness and interest in becoming a pilot user before the conference
- drive visits to the exhibition stand
- secure demonstration requests
- generate leads that turned into sales

> *"We had a target list of 20. The product team thought three to five sign-ups would be a good result. Our plan got 16 central banks to sign up before the conference started. While our competitors had empty rooms, our stand was full of people, demonstrations and new customers."* **— Commercial Digital Marketing Interim**

Key Outcomes

Results Panel	
Commercial	16 central banks signed up before the launch event, against an expectation of 3–5, with 14 more at the event. The product has since grown to 70 users.
Operational	Lead-generation capability was built from scratch, and the company delivered its first integrated campaign (14 emails over two months).
Strategic	Marketing became a credible function, now covering thought leadership, video, social media and traditional media.
People & stakeholders	The whole business now backs modernising marketing. The interim's role was extended, and the marketing capability now runs on its own.

Legacy

The launch gave the Chief Marketing Officer and the interim the attention and backing of the whole business to keep modernising. The interim's role was extended, and the company took up digital marketing even further. With its long history, a culture of innovation and a new appetite for bold ideas, it now has the marketing in place to tell its stories. The business is more energetic and customer-focused, and its marketing can now keep going without outside help, thanks to the skills the interim left behind.

> *"Cultural fit was key. The company was very cautious and knew little about marketing. We had to quickly build skills, then show clear proof that marketing worked."* **— Chief Marketing Officer, the client**