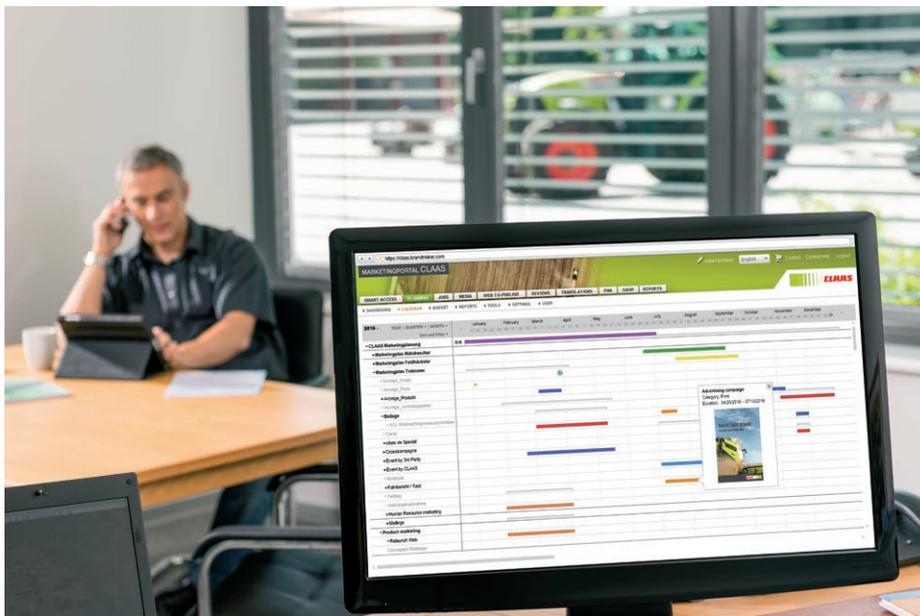# AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY MANUFACTURER REAPS MARKETING SUCCESS

The Marketing Planner from BrandMaker gives the CLAAS Distribution Company in Germany greater transparency in its Marketing



## CHALLENGE

- Expensive and confusing marketing planning based on Excel tables
- Collaboration hindered due to a lack of standardized workflows
- No way to evaluate the success of campaigns at product level

## SOLUTION

- BrandMaker Marketing Planner as a SaaS solution
- A large number of requirements available in the standard product

## RESULT

- Clear structuring and hierarchical mapping of individual marketing measures ("Which measures when for which target group?")
- Meaningful analyses based on custom filters and dimensions
- Differentiated rights and roles concept allows for the quick and simple incorporation of external service providers
- Easy to adapt and change marketing measures that have already been planned
- Simplification of processes in marketing planning
- Comprehensive overview of all marketing measures thanks to the top-level perspective

More Transparency! That was what the leading agricultural technology company wanted from its marketing. The Excel lists in use previously were no longer suitable for meeting the demands of modern marketing planning. They wanted the confusing spreadsheets that were costly to maintain to become a thing of the past. With that in mind, the company from Harsewinkel in eastern Westphalia chose the BrandMaker Marketing Planner.

Nowadays, it is a well established fact that marketing is taking on a primary role in international groups. However, the tools that Claas used in its marketing were no longer in keeping with the times. Previously, the agricultural machinery manufacturer organized its marketing plan using Microsoft Excel. "In the past, we maintained a separate Excel sheet for each product range," reports Johann Tjarko Gerdes, Head of Marketing at Claas. "Considering our

extensive product range, the expense involved was enormous – especially because we had to define the targets, target groups and budgets for all the different marketing projects each year in a new sheet." Adding to the difficulty was the fact that the Excel lists were poorly laid out, there were no standardized workflows and any kind of evaluation at product level was simply not possible.

## DIFFERENT VERSIONS EVEN IN SMALL TEAMS

Even in a small marketing team – at Claas, only a small number of employees are responsible for operational marketing planning – it became apparent that different versions of the marketing plans were being used. No wonder then that Claas decided to use a dedicated tool for marketing planning in the future. The objective: To get a better overview of planned marketing activities and to be able to measure the success of campaigns carried out previously.

## COSTS AND USABILITY OF BRANDMAKER DECISIVE

During its search for a professional system to replace the inadequate Excel solution, Claas conducted comprehensive market research, established a short list and created a catalog of criteria. The requirements placed on the new software were high: It had to be available in a SaaS model and had to cover a large number of the agricultural machinery manufacturer's processes as standard so that it could be adapted and deployed quickly. Furthermore, it also had to provide a certain level of investment security, conform with Germany data privacy provisions and be capable of platform-neutral operation. In total, four providers were shortlisted, and Claas held



Johann Tjarko Gerdes, Head of Marketing at Claas

The Marketing Planner from BrandMaker provides greater transparency in marketing planning at Claas

concrete negotiations with two software companies. The marketing team ultimately chose to go with the Marketing Planner from Brand-Maker. "The costs and especially the usability were really decisive," elaborates Head of Marketing Johann Tjarko Gerdes on the choice.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLL-OUT GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN

The implementation of the Marketing Planner took around six months – including a needs analysis and revision of the project schedule. The rollout was completed within just two months. "We held two workshops at the start and end of the rollout," says André Mayer, Account Director at BrandMaker. "We felt that BrandMaker took care of our needs with professionalism and expertise not just during the workshops but throughout the entire period of collaboration," adds Gerdes.

## OVERSIGHT THROUGH HIERAR-CHICAL STRUCTURING

12 employees at Claas now work with the Marketing Planner. Two members of the operational marketing team take care of the general mar-

keting planning calendar. They choose which measures are to be performed when and for which target group centrally. Claas has defined a number of different levels to arrange and map this information in a hierarchical structure: The first level provides an overview of all the planning measures for individual categories, such as combines and forage harvesters. The second level below that contains product-related marketing plans, while the third level supplies information about the marketing mix within the categories. The fourth and final level maps the actual measures themselves. "We can provide each element with dimensions," explains Gerdes. They can include series or media, for instance.

## MEANINGFUL REPORTS WITH THE SIMPLE PUSH OF A BUTTON

"Defining dimensions is important for the filter function – which is our main evaluation tool." With the aid of the individual custom filters, Claas can create meaningful reports with the simple push of a button. That allows Claas to gather important information about the success of the individual measures. A further benefit is the range of options for exporting the

results. Users can also visualize the status of a measure using different markers.

## INTUITIVE OPERATION WITH NO NEED FOR EXPENSIVE TRAINING

At Claas, in-depth planning of marketing measures is performed by an external service provider for reasons of time and cost. With its differentiated rights and roles concept, the web-based Marketing Planner is ideal for seamlessly incorporating service providers in the planning process. "That is one of the biggest strengths of the Marketing Planner," states Gerdes. "It is an independent tool that is simple and intuitive to operate without any training expense." As well as the two members of the operational marketing team, ten other employees currently have read-only access to the Marketing Planner.

## SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN TRANSPARENCY

For Johann Tjarko Gerdes, the benefit of the Marketing Planner is clear: "It gives us the transparency we previously lacked. Nowadays, we have absolute clarity about which measures we want to perform – or have performed already – for a specific product in a specific target group in a specific time period. We know which products were well received by the customer once the campaign is complete." He praises the Marketing Planner as an organizational tool that allows for the optimization of operational and administrative processes in marketing: "The tool gives us an analytical insight into our actions." Thanks to this top-level perspective, Claas has greater insight into its marketing projects than ever before. The centralized data retention system allows everyone involved to communicate with more speed, while also simplifying the processes.

## PROSPECT OF USING FURTHER MODULES

The Marketing Planner go-live date will not mark the end of the collaboration between Claas and BrandMaker. "We are currently working on read-only access for around 800 dealers, so that they can be kept informed about the activities scheduled in the Marketing Planner," explains André Mayer from BrandMaker. Head of Marketing Johann Tjarko Gerdes continues: "We really like the modular approach of the Marketing Efficiency Cloud. We can certainly see ourselves using additional modules in our marketing."

## About Claas

Claas KGaA mbH is one of the world's leading manufacturers of agricultural machinery, with headquarters in Harsewinkel in eastern Westphalia. As well as combines, self-propelled forage harvesters, tractors, agricultural balers and grass harvesters, the company also supplies state-of-the art information technology. The traditional company, which was founded in 1913, employs more than 11,000 staff at its five German branches and locations in Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Russia, the USA, Argentina, China, India, and Thailand.

## About BrandMaker

BrandMaker is Europe's leading provider of Marketing Resource Management (MRM) systems. Founded in 1999, the company develops and markets sophisticated software solutions for the marketing communications of medium and large-scale organizations. Leading analysts rate BrandMaker as a "Leader" in the area of MRM and consider it to be one of the fastest growing providers in the world in this field.

The Marketing Efficiency Cloud from Brand-Maker is a comprehensive solution suite that can be operated either in a private cloud or as an internally hosted server installation. It includes modules for Brand Management, Marketing Planning and Campaign Management, Digital Asset Management, the Automation of Advertising Material Production, Advertising Material Logistics, Advertising Performance Reviews, Local Area Marketing and more.

Some of the notable companies that use Brand-Maker solutions in their communications and marketing departments include AkzoNobel, Audi, Bayer, Butlers, Carl Zeiss, Commerzbank, DB Schenker, Ernst & Young, GLS, Hewlett Packard, HRS, Humana, Kyocera, Maybank, MetLife, Michelin, Oerlikon, Qiagen, Pandora, Roche, SEW Eurodrive, UBS, Volkswagen, and ZF Friedrichshafen.

The company is headquartered in Karlsruhe, Germany and employs more than 200 staff. A worldwide partner network, branches in a number of European countries and BrandMaker Inc., based in Atlanta, Georgia, provide support for BrandMaker's international customers.