

SUCCESS IN A DOWN MARKET

Trolltech: Another Hellbent Customer Success Story



Hellbent used color, graphics, and a crystal clear navigation paradigm based on a three-level linkbox to make the benefits of a very complex piece of software obvious.

How do you double sales in a declining market?

Hellbent was the marketing agency for Trolltech AS (a software company that created Qt, a development toolkit) in the early 2000's—the trough of the worst technology-market downturn in history. During those years:

- The DJIA declined 37 percent (from 11358 to 8303)
- The NASDAQ 100 plummeted 74 percent (from 425 to 110)
- And Trolltech's worldwide sales doubled—twice.

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Web page showing dramatic examples of program screenshots achieved with Trolltech's powerful software.





Hellbent invested a lot of time and energy in producing clear, beautiful customer success stories.

Memorable Advantages


Why? It certainly wasn't by outspending their competitors on marketing. Trolltech is an archetypal engineering company. They have beautiful technology, a small core of fanatical customers, ruthless competitors—and only a rudimentary understanding of market dynamics.

Hellbent didn't have the budget to “carpet bomb” its targets. Instead, we “created” our way to success by systematically identifying Qt's advantages—both technical and business—and making them memorable across all media.

Many Audiences, Many Tactics

We came up with the one-word message “Unfair” (as in “Qt: The Unfair Advantage in Application Development”), and made it the foundation for every Trolltech marketing program—including a two-year ad campaign, a full set of product and corporate collateral, trade show signs, public relations, and (most important) a 347-page web site for which we created the architecture, design, and all content.

The biggest challenge at Trolltech was communicating with its many audiences: engineers, C-level officers, industry analysts, the press, and all segments of the Linux community, including free-software ideologues. So we adapted our tactics to the audience. We created one brochure whose content was three compilable applications, other brochures that focused on business benefits only, and ads whose message was carried by a series of hilarious Photoshopped photographs of unfair competitions.

We were technical, business-focused, serious, and funny. But did we succeed? Let's put it this way: Companies don't grow in a downturn by accident. 



This ad campaign (which won multiple Addy and Harvey Readership awards) distilled the huge number of competitive advantages Trolltech's software provides into a single word: Unfair. It gives programmers an unfair advantage against their competition.



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Web Collateral Advertising Branding

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