
HCL TECHNOLOGIES: PUSHING THE BILLION-DOLLAR WEBSITE

Srividya Raghavan, Apurva Chamaria, and Guarav Kakkar wrote this case solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

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“Our digital funnel target grew by about half a billion dollars for [FY 2015/16],” said Apurva Chamaria, the head of Global Brand and Digital Marketing at HCL Technologies (HCL-Tech), to his colleague, Gaurav Kakkar, associate general manager and head of Digital Marketing. A silent nod of understanding from Kakkar conveyed to Chamaria that the increased target was a challenge that his team had foreseen. While both Chamaria and Kakkar had sensed the growing expectations of management for the digital marketing team, they figured that a 35 to 40 per cent growth in target could prove to be a challenge, even for such an enthusiastic team.

With the HCL-Tech website as its springboard, a concerted multichannel digital campaign had yielded the \$5.8 billion company a “lead funnel” of about US\$1.1 billion¹ in FY 2014/15. The digital marketing team had become popular among the company’s sales teams across geographies as a result of the online lead generation and customer-intelligence-gathering task it had undertaken. During the last senior management meeting, the head of strategic marketing and senior corporate vice-president, Krishnan Chatterjee, had pegged the team’s target for qualified lead generation at \$1.5 billion. To achieve this new target, the team had to revisit its journey over the past two years to make an assessment of the group’s digital strategies and tactics.

Besides Chamaria and Kakkar, the digital marketing team at HCL-Tech comprised Paritosh Gautam, Maneesh Choudhary, and Akhil Agarwal. Gautam managed the website’s technical team and was in charge of developing and updating the front end and back end of the site (www.hcltech.com). The lead generation and analytics team was fronted by Choudhary. His team collected and responded to queries, collected lead intelligence, and followed up on the lead qualification and action taken for the leads generated from the website through the company’s integrated customer relationship management (CRM) system. Agarwal and his team managed the search engine (organic and paid) and the paid digital media marketing across channels that were aimed at search engine dominance and lead generation. Besides its regular online activities for generating and optimizing leads from the website, the team provided digital marketing support for campaigns initiated by other departments. Abhishek Atre, an external branding head, delivered insights and worked with the digital marketing team for all online branding and positioning initiatives.

¹ All currency amounts are in US\$ unless otherwise specified.

Upon receiving the new target update from Chamaria, and after a day of preparation, Kakkar decided to call the digital marketing team together for a review meeting. The team circulated comprehensive review reports of the various activities undertaken and of their respective performances so everyone would be equally well informed when they came in for the discussion. The agenda comprised four topics: (1) to discuss the digital strategies and tactics the team had implemented since FY 2012/13; (2) to decide which of those activities the team should enhance, continue, or stop; (3) to identify new activities to initiate; and (4) to deliberate on budget allocations across various digital activities.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Founded by Shiv Nadar in 1976, HCL Enterprise (HCL) was a pioneer of the Indian computer industry at a time when the country had only 250 computers. A small team of eight technologists led by Nadar at HCL had developed the first indigenous computer chip in 1978, roughly at the same time as Apple Computers, and about three years before IBM. This advance in technology led to a string of new activities at HCL, including the development of a UNIX multiprocessor in 1988, three years ahead of Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Sun Microsystems. Over the next 35 years, the company grew strategically and transformed itself through alliances and joint ventures with companies such as HP, Cisco Systems, Perot Systems, Deutsche Bank, and NEC Corporation.

HCL maintained a strong focus on manufacturing, and, at the turn of the millennium, when the world began focussing on information technology (IT) software, HCL-Tech was spun off as the information technology and software services arm of the enterprise. In 2015, HCL Enterprise, a \$6.5 billion organization, existed as two listed companies: HCL Info Systems (1976) and HCL Technologies (1999).

HCL's range of offerings included product engineering, custom and package applications, business process outsourcing, information technology (IT) infrastructure services, IT hardware, systems integration, and distribution of information and communications technology products across a wide range of focused industry verticals.

HCL Technologies

In 2014, HCL-Tech was listed as one of only eight 21st-century listed technology companies in the world that turned a profit of \$1 billion on revenues of \$5 billion and market capitalization of \$15 billion. The company operated in over 31 countries across the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa, and it had over 500 contact points in India. While HCL-Tech did possess a global presence, it was little known in the global markets. Its stronghold resided in the technology manufacturing domain, and the company had made forays into software only at the turn of the millennium. As Atre pointed out:

Indian IT companies such as Infosys, Wipro, and TCS had made forays into international markets well before the turn of the millennium, when there was a massive global demand to fix the Y2K² software glitches. HCL had decided to hedge [its] overreliance on software to develop a healthy balance in both IT products as well as service industries, and hence, made a conscientious decision *not* to enter into the Y2K domain. While HCL is usually thought of as being in the same league as

² The Y2K bug (in metric measurements, K stands for thousand), also called the Year 2000 bug or Millennium Bug, was a problem in the coding of computerized systems that was projected to create havoc in computers and computer networks around the world at the beginning of the year 2000. After more than a year of international alarm, feverish preparations, and programming corrections, few major failures occurred in the transition from December 31, 1999, to January 1, 2000. "Y2k-bug," Encyclopedia Britannica, reference term, accessed April 24, 2015, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/382740/Y2K-bug.

Infosys, Wipro, and TCS, [that] is perhaps only because of its Indian origin. Given our portfolio of services, I would count IBM, Accenture, and HP as comparable companies.

With over 100,000 employees, HCL-Tech had grown in the first half of the decade on its corporate mission Employees First. The company believed in empowering its employees to deliver everyday ideas that created immense value for their customers. This philosophy was aimed at making HCL-Tech, the world's largest "Ideapreneurship™." In the past couple of years, the company had moved past inviting ideas and innovations from employees towards values beyond the bounds of a contract—that is, to embody relationships. According to the company website, "Our fixation on Value Centricity is dedicated to delivering more value for our clients, putting their interests ahead of ours and delivering value that goes beyond the contract. Our belief in Trust, Transparency and Flexibility drives us to step into our customers' business reality, guaranteeing outcomes with great enthusiasm."³ HCL-Tech's Employees First philosophy went beyond ideas to empower employees, to satisfy the company's mission of delivering value to customers.

THE DIGITAL MARKETING REPORT

Back at his desk, Kakkar thought of how the team had taken tentative steps towards digital marketing by the end of 2012. At a time when most business-to-business (B2B) technology companies were using their website as nothing more than an information tool, the digital marketing team members at HCL-Tech had embarked on a journey to convert the company's legacy website into an effective lead-generation vehicle, setting Forbes Global 2000 (G-2000) companies and their existing customers as the primary target audience. Secondary target audiences were identified as stakeholders, including investors, analysts, and potential job-seekers. The team had come a long way since those initial days and had made great strides towards achieving its goals. The team had won many national and international awards⁴ for its digital marketing efforts and had garnered strong internal support for its initiatives, but it was time to take the team's performance to the next level. With that thought in mind, Kakkar turned his attention to review the documents shared by the team members.

The Legacy Website

The website development report had been drafted by Gautam and Choudhury. Gautam was the technical mind behind the website's back end and front end. His role was to ensure that the website lived up to the technical demands of the team and functioned without any glitches. Choudhury was one of the earliest members of the team and had joined as the content operations and analytics lead in 2011. Since that time, he had taken a keen interest in developing the digital marketing efforts at HCL-Tech.

As Choudhary had documented, in FY 2011/12, the legacy site (see Exhibit 1) contained several glitches that made it ineffective for lead generation. The pain points for the primary audience included poor navigation, non-mobile responsiveness, and a non-personalized experience. Approximately 2.5 million annual website visits in FY 2011/12 had generated approximately 1,000 completed customer forms, of which only 40 per cent constituted genuine marketing qualified leads. The target audiences did not appear to understand or relate to the brand while navigating the website. They were also unresponsive to the site's

³ "About Us," HCL Technologies, accessed May 20, 2015, www.hcltech.com/about-us/about-hcl-technologies.

⁴ The team had won 29 awards in 2014, including the following notable honours: prestigious awards from AIMA (special Jury mention for #coolestinterviewer); two DMAi (Data Driven Marketing and Advertising) awards; two DMA (Digital Marketing Award) international ECHO awards; two W3 (World Wide Consortium) awards; four Abby Awards; various Forrester Groundswell awards; two BMA (Business Marketing Association) Gold awards; two BMA Excellence Awards; two prestigious "Exchange4media" awards; and various ITSMA awards.

calls for response, such as submission of enquiries or customer forms. The team realized that low awareness of the HCL-Tech brand in international markets was a key reason for the low web traffic from these markets. The target audiences were C-level senior executives, vice-presidents, directors, and managers, all primarily from areas such as IT, finance, legal, procurement, and other functions from large companies (i.e., more than 10,000 employees) and the Forbes Global 2000 companies. The website needed to reach and match the expectations of the intended audience.

By early 2013, it was clear that the website needed a complete overhaul. In order to increase the level of qualified leads, the digital marketing team had to increase the number of visitors *and* the amount of time visitors spent on the site. The content had to be interesting enough to keep the audience members interested in the website long enough to explore HCL-Tech's wide portfolio of offerings and to frame a positive image of the company.

The New Website

The revamped website was developed on the Drupal platform, which was an open-source content management system that was written in PHP (a general-purpose programming language) and maintained by a community of over 1 million users, including developers. Since the online community was so large, developers could get quick fixes to solutions from existing users, a factor that benefitted the engineering team when it came to making the website flexible, scalable, and capable of managing content and workflow. The developers could adapt the website to include new trends and extend functionalities because of the freely available codes in the form of modules, patches, and reusable codes and customization functionalities for all their experimental needs. The database access was available through MySQL, a popular open-source program that was easy to use.

Improving Aesthetics and Functionality

On the front end of the website, several changes were made to the home page (see Exhibit 2) to make it more attractive and user-friendly. After the home page, the About Us page was the next most-viewed page in almost all of the marketing qualified leads. The About Us page was viewed in approximately 13 per cent of all sales-qualified web enquiries and had contributed around \$64 million to the funnel in the year 2014–15. Besides providing access to the company profile and the corporate philosophy of “Ideapreneurship,” the About Us page provided a list of everything HCL-Tech stood for and information that was relevant to all stakeholders. The following significant additions were made to the website during the upgrade: information on the company's “geographical footprint,” a useful link for overseas clients who wanted to know whether the company had a local presence; a link to the Relationship Beyond the Contract (RBtC) branding initiative page; the HCL Social Wall, which was a tiled page of all social media updates; information for investors and analysts; and a link directing viewers to various social service initiatives.

The website was integrated with multimedia access to LinkedIn's Slideshare, YouTube channels, webinars, and a video gallery. The website team also added a visually appealing awards page, developed as smart infographics, which displayed all the awards that HCL-Tech had won in a vertically moving timeline, thereby demonstrating the company's long tradition of producing award-winning technology products. The team believed that the About Us drop down-link was useful in building awareness about the company and the brand. Since the target audience predominantly included managers at the CxO⁵ level or those involved

⁵ “CxO” stands for “Chief x Officer” (e.g., chief executive officer, chief operating officer, or chief technology officer).

in higher levels of decision-making, it was necessary for the website to deliver a high-level impact while also making it easy for users to navigate and find information.

For the customers seeking service-line information, the website had two entry points. Potential clients could get information about HCL-Tech's services portfolio either directly from the Service Lines link or from the Industries link. The Service Lines link dropped down to 25 different services,⁶ and the Industries link dropped down to 19 different industries.⁷ In the earlier version of the website, the Service Lines had been divided into five categories, and visitors had to click multiple times to identify the service or industry they needed. With the new interface, visitors could find and access the relevant content in a single click. The next two links led to the I Have an Idea and Careers sections. The I Have an Idea link opened a list of links related to Thought Leadership initiatives at HCL-Tech, such as the ITSMA⁸ Diamond Award, the peer-to-peer information exchange platform called *Straight Talk*, innovations pages, blogs, and other links of interest.

The Careers tab housed information that a potential recruit for HCL-Tech might want, as well as a link to the HCL Alumni Portal. The last link at the top of the home page was the Contact Us page, which was a critical tool for the digital marketing team. It dropped down to separate forms for customers, partners/alliances, analysts, employees (current/alumni), investors, media journalists, and staffing partners, as well as to a technology question-and-answer (Q&A) section. The Call to Action feature was in the form of a query or contact link to all stakeholders with just one click. Once viewers had browsed through the website, they could immediately contact the company to seek any information they wanted.

In 2012, when the team had started the initial leg of its digital marketing journey in earnest, the members had believed that digital data had the potential to generate leads. Even with a .NET information website, weak positioning, mundane content, and poor form-fill experience, the team had been able to generate leads worth \$10 million, and that experience had reinforced the belief that a better visual experience would create a better first impression and lead to increased business for the company. By 2013, the website had been given a very sleek, aesthetically appealing facelift to tap into this potential. The changes included a cleaner home page with just six major links on the top, a large scrolling banner, and three small banners beneath it projecting all the recent leadership awards that had been won in the various spheres of business and service lines (see Exhibit 2).

Scrolling down, the page took the viewer back to the major links and to a call for action (i.e., the Contact Us button). There was a sticky Contact Us button on every page, which made it easy for visitors to find the query function. The focus of the redesign was to increase traffic to the website, make it more user-friendly, and increase engagement with the audience in multiple ways.

⁶ The 25 service lines included: Applications Development, Applications Management, Business Analytics Services, Business Assurance and Testing Services, Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery, Business Process Outsourcing, Customer Relationship Management, Ecommerce and Omni Channel, Embedded Engineering, Engineering and Research and Development Services, Financial Accounting Business Services, Gen 2.0 Outsourcing, IT Infrastructure Management Services, Mainframe & AS400, Mechanical SAP, Security, Software Product Engineering, Supply Chain Management, and Software Integration.

⁷ The 19 different industries included: Aerospace and Defense, Automotive, Computer Electronics, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Government, Public Services, Independent Software Vendors, Industrial Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Healthcare, Manufacturing, Media and Entertainment, Professional services, Retail and Consumer, Semiconductors, Servers and Storage, Telecom, Travel, Transportation, Logistics and Hospitality, and Oil and Gas.

⁸ "ITSMA" stands for "Information Technology Service Marketing Awards."

A Second Language Option

Until 2014, the information on the HCL-Tech website was available in English language only. To tap new customers in specific geographies, the development team translated the site's content into the German language because German visitors comprised the majority of non-English-speaking customers who visited the site. The company made use of paid promotions on search and display in order to increase awareness about the new German-language version of the website. The German website attracted 80 per cent of new visitors to HCL's updated website. Compared with the previous year, page visits from new visitors in Germany had increased by 1,794 per cent.

Adding Mobile Access

In 2014–15, the website was made mobile-responsive in order to enhance new-customer acquisition. This enhancement not only resulted in increased mobile audience traffic but also helped in generating good quality leads. Website traffic from new visitors through mobile access had increased by 196 per cent, and traffic from tablets had increased by 98 per cent. Digital promotions that were aimed at capturing the mindshare of the mobile audience (amid the target audience) resulted in a 333 per cent increase in marketing-qualified leads.

Personalization of Content

Another important enhancement made to the website came in the form of personalization of content. The team realized that when a website provided personalized experience, visitors stayed on the website longer and downloaded more—and ultimately purchased more—services and products. Hence, personalization was implemented for the business and service pages. To implement this update, 400 pages of personalized content, targeted to specific audiences, were added to the back end of the website such that, when combined with visitor-tracking tools, a personalized page could be pulled up, making the visit more fruitful for the visitor. Post-implementation, the average time spent on any one of the business sections from visitors of related industries had increased by as much as 42 per cent. Most importantly, the number of G-2000 companies (tracked through Demandbase) that visited the website had crept up slowly from fewer than 800 in 2013 to more than 1,400 by 2015.

Traffic-Building Strategies

The website report ended with a summary of the various modifications and enhancements that had helped to retain customers longer on the site and that increased the likelihood of active engagement. However, driving traffic to the website was a function of customers' awareness of the company and of their online search behaviour for the service lines that HCL-Tech offered. Kakkar knew that website enhancements alone would not help to achieve the company's objectives, and the development team would have to come up with some effective strategies and efficient tactics in the support areas. Kakkar turned his attention to the reports from Agarwal regarding search engine optimization (SEO) for the website.

Search Engine Optimization

Agarwal had reported on the strategy, implementation, and results from the paid and organic search optimization for the website. This digital strategy was critical for driving visitors to the website. In his

document, Agarwal had etched out the role of website semantic architecture for a search-engine-friendly website. Agarwal pointed out that adding multiple links to internal pages, backed by deep keyword research in the top navigation, had played a major role in adding more power to SEO. A well-researched navigation with an optimized uniform resource locator (URL) or website address structure with links close to the root (through deep interlinking and backlinking) had helped to dominate the keywords game.

The multiple lines of terms used in the drop-down menu of the main navigation page had been identified from thorough research of popular search keyword terminologies and had been kept simple. These search terms were identified from a high volume list of 100,000 shortlisted keywords. A blog was introduced across business categories, interlinking the business pages to ensure the feeding of fresh content into the search engines, because appropriate and fresh content was a key factor to driving traffic. The team conducted small, controlled experiments on the algorithm changes to ensure that best-in-class techniques were implemented. For example, the Technical Q&A feature in the Contact Us drop-down menu was strategically placed to drive educational searches to the website.

Harnessing the Google Answer Box was a development that enabled effective traffic-building from relevant keyword searches. For example, a user who typed “What is DDLC?” would find that the first link took them to the answer on HCL-Tech’s Technical Q&A page. This information was not only intended to educate the audience but also to help with SEO.

More than 90 per cent of B2B customers carried out their information searches online. Furthermore, research showed that, on an increasing basis, customers preferred to interact with companies on digital platforms. Agarwal contended that HCL-Tech could lose out on potential markets if it did not appropriately utilize the digital opportunity, and the team had strategized that this step would be easier and more lucrative if customers could be identified and tracked at the search phase itself. Thus, all research, navigational, and transactional queries were identified to capture user attention at all stages. The website was made technically healthy by resolving errors such as dead pages, duplicate pages, unfriendly redirections, and other issues.

A detailed robots.txt file was developed to block search engines from non-important links and to save crawl time. With keywords in place, content gaps were identified to foster a clear understanding of the content-generation and optimization requirements. A dedicated team worked on optimizing the website across service-line categories. The execution of a comprehensive content marketing strategy ensured effective reach to influential bloggers and utilized internal assets like events and analyst reports to generate backlinks that helped to increase domain authority.

Keyword Mapping

The members of the development team decided to first focus on the business units/horizontals and then on the industries/verticals. They started mapping keywords in IT across all the services with inputs from Enterprise SEO tools, Webmasters Data, Google Analytics, and Keywords already ranked and from competition rankings. They did not confine their analysis to the external customer search data alone, but also looked into the internal business-unit performance to develop a consolidated keyword list—a mix of internal and external data—to arrive at a comprehensive set of 10,000 keywords. The objective of this semantic analysis was to identify the most appropriate keyword structure for each business unit according to keyword strength content requirements and business perspectives.

The keywords were then divided across three critical phases—optimization, new page creation, and theming—for effective implementation. The team analyzed the backlink strategy of competition and IT

industry to build relationships with authoritative sources. The following six-step solution was then implemented:

1. Regular technical checks were done to ensure search engine compatibility. Alerts were set up for technical glitches to ensure that crawlers found the right URLs.
2. The website architecture was aligned with the keyword basket. Based on a keyword basket, the website was aligned with the semantic architecture, keywords were properly segregated in file names, and internal linking was done for structural alignment.
3. Governance was set up. It was deemed necessary to use SEO inputs at each level, right from the start of content creation, through to publishing and deletion.
4. Industry leaders were identified across HCL to generate thought-leadership content for blogs in order to take advantage of real-time trends and to drive traffic.
5. A backlink strategy was implemented to ensure organic link creation for HCL-Tech in events, seminars, and PR communications.
6. SEO tools like Moz, AdWords, iSpionage, Authority Labs, Screaming Frog, Xenu, and others were employed for constant monitoring of keyword searches.

While the digital marketing team's primary focus was to lay a strong foundation on which it could improvise in the following years for positive impact on the sales-lead funnel, the team members already had a clear idea of how efforts had paid off in 2014 versus 2013. The SEO strategy had resulted in 46 per cent improvement in total cost value (TCV) from leads through search engines, with a 100 per cent increase in the average transaction value of each lead (see Exhibit 3).

Lead Generation

After reviewing the SEO strategy and implementation plan, along with the results report from Agarwal, Kakkar mused that between the redesigning and enhancements of the website and implementing the SEO strategies, the team had laid a solid foundation for enabling a lead-generation funnel throughout the website. He then picked up Choudhary's report on the lead generation process and lead lifecycle management process.

Choudhary had interestingly titled his report "New Customer Acquisition," which signalled the revenue implication of the process. The website was the core of all paid and non-paid activities run by several business marketing teams, with 35 per cent of new website visitors consuming content on www.hcltech.com every month. Most of the visitors browsed business pages, and some of them submitted IT-specific requirements via the site's Contact Us form. In addition to a fundamental website makeover and a comprehensive SEO strategy, the team had undertaken the following initiatives:

1. Year-long, business-specific campaigns of diverse digital channels and IT-specific publishers
2. Implementation of lead form enhancements, such as enablement of social sign-on
3. Personalization of web content to increase site stickiness
4. Identification of new avenues for acquiring new customers and utilization of lead-generation services of various technology publishers (e.g., ithound.com), which not only enabled niche targeting but also resulted in generation of good quality leads

By FY 2014/15, the website was drawing 6,000 to 7,000 queries per month, of which about 60 to 70 were assessed as qualified leads. An important part of the lead-generation process was the ability to track the visitors and assess the validity of queries. To obtain tracking capabilities, two tools—Google Analytics and Demandbase—were integrated with the source code on every page of the new HCL-Tech website. Google Analytics provided information on page views and traffic. Demandbase was a B2B tool that provided

company-specific attributes by tracking the Internet Protocol addresses. With these tools, the team was able to track the pages that a user visited, as well as identify the user's country of origin and time spent on each page. According to Choudhary's report, lead intelligence comprised three segments: visit intelligence, visitor information, and company information.

Visit Intelligence

HCL-Tech tracked the digital body language of each online visitor who registered an enquiry. Visit intelligence included: (1) visit source, (2) visit medium, (3) keyword searched on search engines (if available), (4) visit city, (5) visit country, (6) device used, (7) pages viewed, and (8) time spent on the visit. Visit intelligence was captured using Google Analytics and Demandbase. This customer intelligence represented a key input for the sales team to help them pursue leads.

Visitor's Information

Most of the visitor-level information (name, phone, title, email, etc.) was included in the enquiry form. Lead form enhancements like enablement of social sign-on functionality helped enrich lead details. Social sign-on (log in through a social media account, such as Facebook or LinkedIn) not only helped reduce the number of required form fields, which in turn led to increased opt-in rates, but it also led to the compilation of accurate customer data. However, in the event that the visitor did not use the social sign-on option, a search was made for that visitor's online presence. This search included identifying LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, or any available online profile for the visitor. Visitor-level intelligence was an important tool for the member of the sales team since it gave them a way to facilitate a direct connection with the visitor on social platforms.

Company Information

The third type of lead intelligence was company-level information, which included information about the company website and a brief description of the company itself, as well as its online profile (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and its estimated annual revenues.

Company-level intelligence represented an important tool for the members of the sales team as it helped them to understand the types of products and services that the prospect's company dealt in, as well as helping to assess the prospect's financial capability to fund IT projects. A dashboard of digital metrics was developed and sent to HCL-Tech's managers every month. The dashboard provided an integrated snapshot of the various sources of lead generation and their outcomes for a comprehensive perspective on business opportunities.

LEAD LIFE-CYCLE MANAGEMENT

The new process for lead generation and lead life-cycle management was developed over the two-year period, from 2013 to 2015, and was highly integrated. It involved active participation and constant communication across several internal teams, including business marketing, sales and delivery, pre-sales, advisory, and partnership. The process helped to bridge the gap between the sales and marketing teams. Once lead intelligence had been tracked, the lead then had to be assigned to the right team. In the process of deciding where to allocate a particular lead, the factors under consideration included the region from where the lead originated, whether the lead came from an existing account or a new account, the type of

service required, and the industry to which the company belonged. Each lead was first assessed by the marketing team, who gave it an assigned score, and within four hours, the scored lead would be passed on to the appropriate member of the sales team.

The company's Salesforce CRM was integrated with the Contact Us form submissions, which made it easy to allocate the leads to the appropriate account manager. This process helped the team to track and follow up on the leads from the time the lead was passed to the business marketing and sales team up to the time of lead closure.

After a marketing qualified lead (MQL) was assigned to a sales manager, it then moved into sales territory. To track the movement of an MQL, the team devised a stringent follow-up process with a well-defined escalation matrix. The follow-up represented an extremely critical step in the life-cycle management process. Through timely follow-ups on an MQL, HCL-Tech's marketing team could check on the number of MQLs that moved forward as sales-accepted leads (SALs), sales-qualified leads (SQLs), and rejections. If a lead was rejected by the sales team, there was a provision for capturing the rejection reason directly into the system. For leads that moved to the SQL zone, there was a provision for capturing their value (known as total cost value or TCV). Thus, the web leads management process started with customer research and ended with the estimation of a TCV associated with the customer enquiry. HCL-Tech's marketing team was able to record each customer enquiry that was generated online. In FY 2014/15, the digital marketing team generated SQLs worth \$1.1 billion.

While the new web leads management process was unique in that it was integrated with internal processes (see Exhibit 4), lead tracking involved the use of tools like Google Analytics and Demand base to identify and capture all the digital touchpoints of the B2B buyer. In its initial version, the lead management process involved the use of Excel spreadsheets to manage the activity. With the introduction of the new process, the Contact Us form on the website was integrated with Salesforce CRM. This improved measurement and communication framework involved the following steps:

1. Lead scoring: This mechanism enabled the scoring of each lead.
2. Lead allocation: HCL-Tech was a large organization, so it was vital to allocate the lead to the right team. HCL marketing created an extensive list of internal stakeholders for lead allocation that was updated every quarter.
3. Service-level agreement (SLA)-driven approach: HCL-Tech was very sensitive to a potential client's needs. For a quick response, an aggressive SLA on a lead allocation of four hours was created. This standard not only helped to accelerate lead allocation but also to increase customer satisfaction.
4. Follow-ups: One of the most important aspects of the lead management process was the follow-up with internal stakeholders to check the outcome of the web-generated lead. Follow-ups led to identification of important metrics such as the number of SALs and SQLs of a lead, as well as its TCV.
5. Reporting: Metrics such as MQLs, SALs, SQLs, and TCV found their place in the monthly dashboard. These metrics not only helped to identify key performing channels for HCL-Tech but also to quantify and measure the company's marketing performance.

As a result of all these activities, the company gained the ability to effectively assess and measure its digital marketing results (see Exhibits 5 and 6). Besides the various lead-generation tactics, the team was also involved in supporting the various promotional and branding efforts of other business units. Some of the initiatives included the digital promotion of HCL-Tech's RBtC positioning promotions, the use of social media—particularly LinkedIn and the white paper launch campaign of the Alternative Application Support and Maintenance service (ALT ASM™). The team also supported other divisions by reviewing their campaigns, such as the end-to-end recruitment campaign on Twitter (see Exhibit 7), a social media initiative to digitally empower women, and the launch of a corporate video with a tie-up to the Indian School of Business, one of India's top business schools.

Relationship Beyond the Contract

HCL-Tech's Employees First philosophy had stood as its vision for a decade, and it had been immensely successful in empowering employees to take up initiatives to increase customer value. Even so, the resulting experiences showed that what really mattered, within a business context, was the relationship that service providers shared with their customers. As stated on the company website,

In business, a contract can safeguard all that is within the “span of control.” But, in today's ever-changing uncertain world, where business and macro environment are witnessing new challenges and simultaneously undergoing change, what makes an engagement truly worthwhile is that which cannot be scripted in any contract. It's a simple thing called values. We believe that our values of Trust, Transparency and Flexibility, fueled by our philosophy of “Employees First” will ensure a continued defense of our customers' interests. For these values nourish a relationship from outside the box, empowering every day innovation by thousands of our employees interfacing with your system lifelines and critical business processes.⁹

In October 2013, HCL-Tech initiated the global, unified messaging campaign RBtC, which had three objectives: (1) to align all lines of business under a unified messaging architecture, (2) to ensure that this message directly resonated with HCL-Tech's core beliefs and could easily lend itself to more tangible customer-experience benefits that the sales teams could articulate with ease, and (3) to express how the relevance of its brand promise directly translated into the robustness of the company's business model.

To accomplish this threefold goal, the company website was seen as the first and most powerful zero-moment interaction between a client/prospect and an HCL brand. The unified messaging campaign made two changes to the website. First, it created some visual brand consistency by switching all visuals from IT service-oriented generic graphics to original creative around the relationship theme of RBtC. Second, it provided some geo-sensitivity by making the website available in German language, with plans for more language options in the pipeline.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

HCL-Tech enjoyed a social media presence across all major platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Besides having an active presence, the company also updated content on the Social Wall of its website. In 2012, when HCL-Tech's focus shifted to identify a social platform that catered to the requirements of a global B2B IT company, LinkedIn—the largest professional global network—emerged as the platform of choice for HCL-Tech's outreach initiatives. LinkedIn's platform personality, along with the availability of precise targeting options, synchronized well with the goals of HCL-Tech. From a lead-generation and brand-building perspective for HCL-Tech's target audience, LinkedIn presented itself as an effective platform.

HCL-Tech aggressively expanded its presence on LinkedIn by leveraging three key areas: marketing, sales, and talent. Using LinkedIn's social networking platform, not only was HCL-Tech able to engage an audience of over 300,000 across the world, but it also became one of the top three influential brands in India on LinkedIn. The company managed to establish its influence and thought leadership on LinkedIn by concentrating on content strategy and effective targeting of the content. The digital marketing team focused on delivering best-in-class initiatives, such as the LinkedIn RBtC mobile application, to promote its unique vision and brand proposition (see Exhibit 8).

⁹ “Relationship Beyond the Contract,” HCL Technologies, accessed May 20, 2015, www.hcltech.com/relationship-beyond-contract.

The ALT-ASM Campaign

The ALT-ASM lead-generation campaign was aimed at promoting the white paper entitled “Alternative Applications Support and Maintenance (ALT ASM),” which was co-authored by the IT research and advisory company Gartner, Inc. ALT ASM was a business proposition from HCL-Tech that explained how businesses can achieve efficiency by reducing costs incurred on application support and maintenance. The lead-generation campaign aimed to promote the white paper specifically to IT decision-makers in the consumer-services industry (e.g., media, entertainment, retail, telecom, and publishing). Within one month, the lead-generation campaign, which cost just \$5,000, had gathered more than a million impressions and 148 leads from the target audience, and had influenced deals worth \$121.42 million. Digital promotions on Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Display networks generated impressions that increased the awareness of the ALT ASM proposition in the first part of the campaign. The advertising copy presented business benefits (such as cutting application support costs by 40 per cent, for example), which resulted in increased response. A Twitter chat further improved the campaign’s reach to the target audience.

A dedicated, conversion-friendly and mobile-friendly landing page was created for this lead-generation campaign. In order to reduce multiple steps in completing user forms when downloading the white paper from the landing page, the download form was given social media sign-on functionality as well. A/B site testing¹⁰ was conducted to eliminate non-optimized elements, as well as to increase the conversion rate and develop a good landing-page experience (see Exhibit 9).

THE REVIEW MEETING

As the team settled into the meeting room, Kakkar began the discussion. “As you all know, we must develop a plan to achieve the increased target for FY 2015/16. I hope you have ideas for improving the lead generation and branding efforts?”

Choudhary jumped in right away and said,

We should enable remarketing campaigns and paid search campaigns. The team should invest in business-specific remarketing campaigns utilizing the technologies of best remarketing tools across globe. The remarketing campaign will serve a dual purpose: It will not only help nurture our audience but will also keep them engaged with the brand, thus influencing brand recall. Remarketing campaigns will result in better cost per lead and better conversion. In order to capture the mindshare of the audience who is unaware of HCL-Tech, the team should devise a strategy to run a paid search campaign that involves bidding on business-specific keywords.

Gautam joined in, saying, “Yes, many B2B companies are leveraging remarketing. The engineering team can provide the technology required for remarketing.”

Choudhary reiterated the importance of nurturing the website’s audience via new remarketing technologies such as LinkedIn Lead Accelerator, adding,

Business-specific remarketing campaigns have given us good-quality leads in the past and at a lower cost per lead when compared with other digital channels. One of the reasons for this [success] is that the audience [members] who are researching our products and services have a tendency to convert more quickly as compared to new customers.

¹⁰ A method in which audiences are exposed to different website formats—A and B—to compare elements in the site layout, and, in turn, allow the site’s operator to incorporate the best elements into the final website design.

Agarwal agreed with Choudhary's paid-search proposition, saying,

Search has been the largest source of leads to the website, which continues to be dominant. This year, a comprehensive content strategy with large-scale content-marketing programs that tap in industrial bloggers and thought leaders will be put into activation. The new Straight Talk platform integration into hcltech.com will provide depth across trending topics and influential content to add great value.

Choudhary highlighted the fact that initiatives such as the #CoolestInterviewEver and #aMileForHer (see Exhibit 6) helped to build awareness of the brand among all stakeholders and also helped to increase awareness of the company and its propositions. The team members seemed quite excited about establishing alliances with social media websites such as LinkedIn as a way to increase HCL-Tech's reach among the right target audience. Choudhary added,

Initiatives such as RBtC and Straight Talk build a relationship with the right audience to help them get into the consideration set of the decision-makers. The ALT-ASM white-paper promotion was a good example [of a] business-unit-specific initiative that was very successful and directly impacted lead generation for specific business units. We need to do more of these activities and promotions.

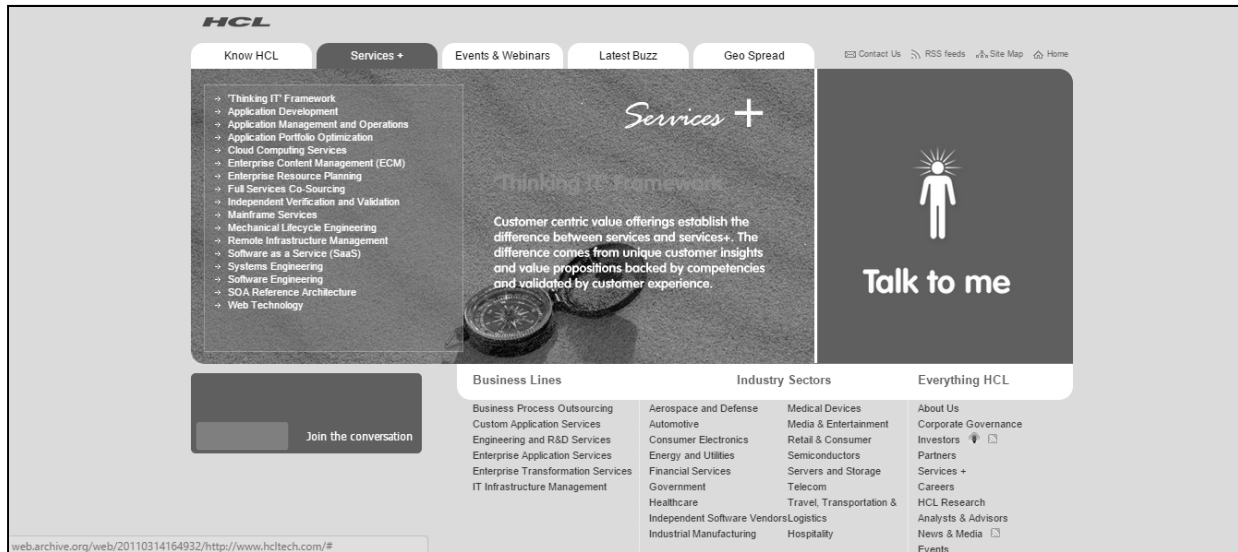
Gautam pointed out that, along with new strategies and tactics, HCL-Tech needed to continue with website enhancements:

Enhancing the website performance will decrease the load time, bounce rate, and will positively impact SEO. . . . Another website enhancement would be to extend geo-sensitivity with language translations to Spanish and French. The German website translation has helped us to extend into the European markets. We have also come up with multiple templates to allow business lines to run their own campaigns for events and promotions. Well-linked, business-specific promotions and campaigns will also help to drive a good amount of relevant traffic to the website.

All members of the leadership team agreed that these enhancements would definitely help the company reach newer audiences, especially in the international markets. The measurement system helped the company track achievements across various objectives (see Exhibit 10). The competitor analysis on a few key parameters indicated that the digital marketing team had performed well on converting search and social media costs, despite a comparatively low number of page visits. The Klout Score and PeerIndex showed comparable results, but there was room for improvement (see Exhibit 11).

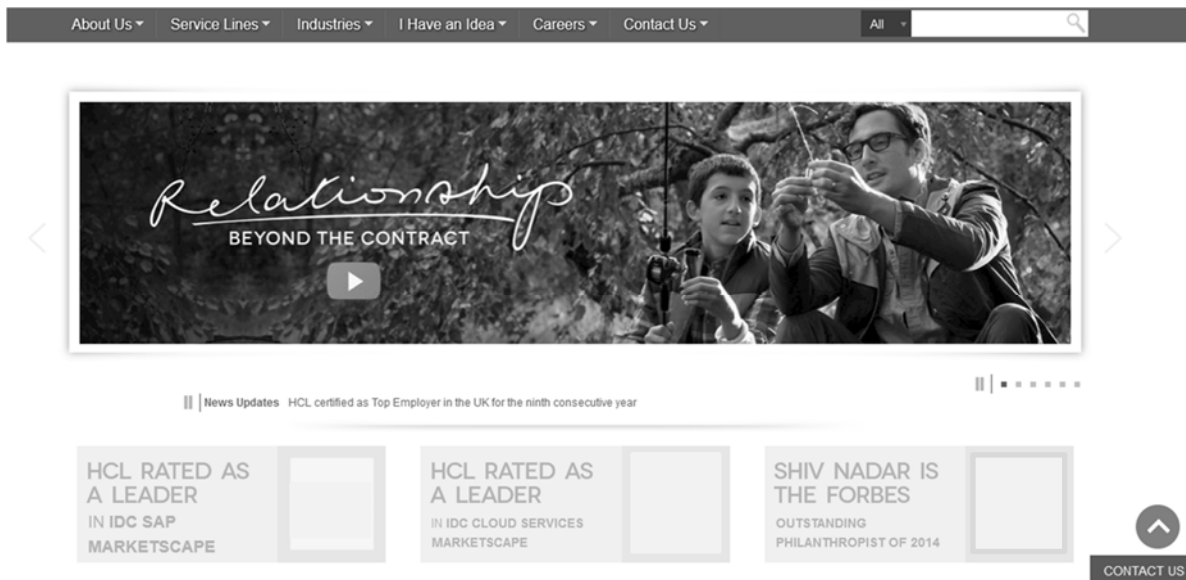
Kakkar was pleased to note that his team members recognized their interdependency and were synchronized on their forthcoming plans. He was sure that he could now report to Chamaria that the team was upbeat, innovative, and had several ideas to take the digital initiative further to ensure results in measureable returns on investment. It occurred to Kakkar that Chamaria might ask about budget requirements and reallocation for the coming year. In the past year, the team had spent approximately 25 per cent of its budget on SEO, 41.5 per cent on the website, and 9.5 per cent on paid platforms. He wondered how the budget should be reallocated for the coming year, given the new propositions. He would need the team to come up with a clear blueprint for action in the following weeks to help him plan ahead and to ensure that he would be prepared with an answer when Chamaria brought up the budget question.

EXHIBIT 1: SCREENSHOT OF HCL TECHNOLOGIES LEGACY HOME PAGE



Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 2: HCL TECHNOLOGIES HOME PAGE



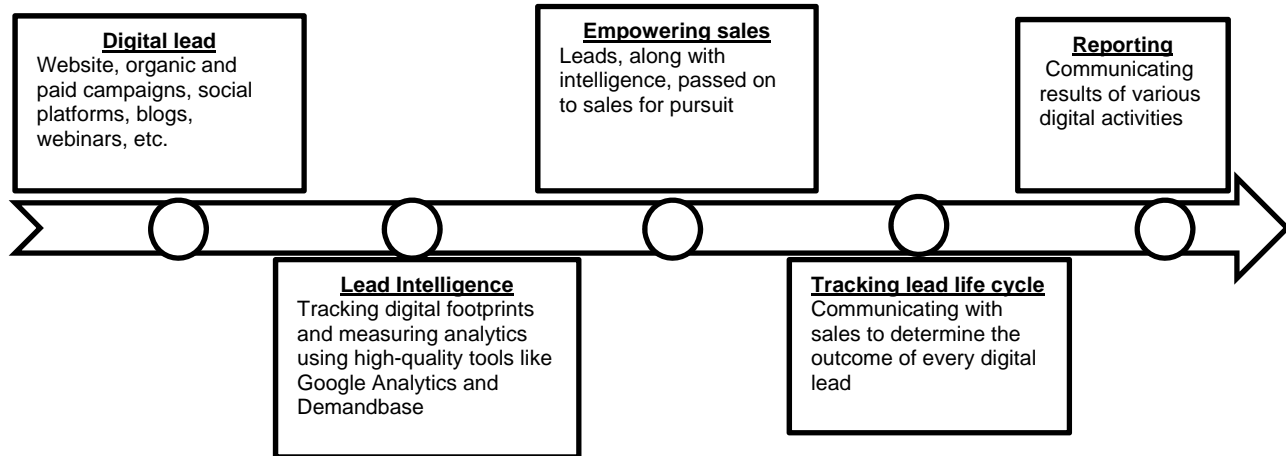
Source: "Home Page," HCL Technologies, accessed May 19, 2015, www.hcltech.com/.

EXHIBIT 3: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) PERFORMANCE

SEO Performance for the years 2013 and 2014			
Achievements	2013	2014	Increase (%)
Marketing Qualified Lead	198	244	74
Sales Qualified Lead	39	84	115
Top 10 Ranking	17	916	1,200
Top 30 Ranking	196	1742	790
Pages Indexed	17345	47338	173
Organic Traffic	1,508,666	2,637,202	75
New Visitors	1,102,307	1,736,520	57
Returning visitors	406,359	900,682	122

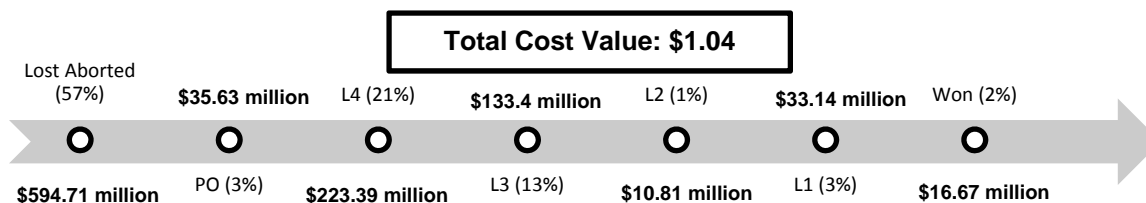
Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 4: THE LEAD GENERATION AND LIFE-CYCLE TRACKING PROCESS



Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 5: REPRESENTATION OF FUNNEL IMPACT AND SOURCE CONTRIBUTION



Source wise contribution of funnel		
1	Website	33%
2	Positioning Advisory	17%
3	Value Portal	16%
4	"Ideapreneurship"	17%
5	Employee Leads	9%
6	Digital Campaigns	8%
		100%

Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 6: RESULTS OF NEW-LEAD GENERATION AND LIFE-CYCLE TRACKING PROCESS

- Using a refined lead-management process, HCL Technologies digital marketing individually generated a \$1.1 billion funnel last year, 26 per cent of which came from new accounts.
- Approximately 20 per cent of all marketing-qualified leads (MQL) converted into sales-qualified leads (SQL).
- The average number of marketing-qualified leads increased by 39 per cent, compared with the same period last year.
- The number of leads from new accounts increased by 24 per cent, compared with the same period last year.
- The digital efforts led to a rise in G-2000 companies' footfall on the corporate website by 5 per cent.
- Paid campaigns and account alerts influenced \$250 million worth of deals.
- Paid campaigns led to more than a 200 per cent increase in website traffic in comparison to last year.
- Impressions and clicks from paid efforts increased 1,000 per cent and 450 per cent, respectively.
- Among its peers, HCL Technologies held the number one position in content marketing scores in the European Union region in the Large Enterprise Business Decision-Maker audience.
- Compared with its peers, HCL Technologies held the number one position in share of images in print media in India.

Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 7: OTHER ONLINE ACTIVITIES

While organizations use this social media platform as a hiring tool through job postings and background checks, there had never been an end-to-end recruitment process on a single social media platform. Also there had never been any attempt to create a preferred employer brand using the new-age social media channel. **#Coolestinterviewever** was a unique reach campaign that leveraged Twitter to conduct a complete recruitment campaign while amplifying “HCL’s employer value proposition.”

For the first time, interviews were conducted openly, and hiring became a two-way conversation on a social platform. The campaign reached 102 countries, and more than 88,000 applicants across the globe were interviewed in 15 days, which led to a total engagement of more than 250,000 on Twitter. While the total expense on this initiative was equal to the average cost for recruiting one full-time employee, it ranked as one of the most significant outreaches in social media history, having already been covered by more than 60 international media outlets such as Bloomberg and Reuters. This level of social media success resulted in HCL-Tech enjoying a preferred employer brand among the members of Generation Y (age group 21 to 33) and helped HCL-Tech to acquire a greater number of Twitter followers than any other IT services organization in the world.

The initiative **#aMileForHer** was a unique corporate social responsibility campaign launched by HCL Technologies that leveraged social media channels to spread the word about empowerment of women and the role individuals could play in that effort. The concept of the campaign was simple: “To celebrate the women in your life: Walk, jog, or run a mile for her, and HCL [Technologies] will match your miles by empowering underprivileged women through digital literacy initiatives.”

Digital literacy stood out as the key requirement in achieving employment in today’s workplace. While there were many outcomes of this campaign, the most important was the empowerment of more than 45,000 individuals through the amplification of HCL Technologies’s role in supporting the empowerment of women. Global influencers in the technology industry from the United States, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region endorsed the campaign. This endeavour also helped HCL Technologies to become the number one international brand on Facebook, as compared to any other information technology services organizations in the world. In India, HCL Technologies trended on Twitter for two days during this campaign.

In just 30 days, more than 45,000 women became empowered, and the campaign received 100 million impressions. Several global influencers were associated with the campaign, including Kim Stevenson, Intel’s chief information officer; Debjani Ghosh, South Asia Intel’s vice president of sales and marketing; Mary Kom, five-time World Amateur Boxing champion and current member of the upper house of Indian parliament; and Gul Panag, Bollywood actress and youth icon. The campaign received traffic from more than 60 countries and inspired engagement from more than 23 countries. During the month of March 2015, when the campaign was being run, the global social media brand intelligence platform Unmetric recognized HCL Technologies as the number one brand among professional service companies, above Ogilvy & Mather, Ernst & Young, Alibaba.com, McKinsey & Company, Deloitte, and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 8: LINKEDIN METRICS

There are multiple ways to measure the benefits of leveraging LinkedIn:

- 1. Talent Brand Index (TBI):** TBI is defined as *talent brand (TB) reach* and *TB engagement*, where TB reach indicates the number of people viewing or connected to employee profiles, while TB engagement indicates the number of people following or researching the company and its jobs. TBI defines how a company performs from the talent brand perspective and is an industry-defined parameter. HCL Technologies increased its TBI from 9 per cent in FY2013/14 to 13.5 per cent in FY2014/15 through various employer brand-related initiatives.
- 2. Content Marketing Score:** The *content marketing score* is a metric developed by LinkedIn, and is measured using the following three scores:
 - A score that quantifies and benchmarks the influence that companies have on LinkedIn
 - A score that can be filtered by audience
 - A score that stacks up against a competitive set

Among its peers, HCL Technologies ranks number one in the European Union in the category of Large Enterprise Business Decision-Maker audience.

- 3. Engagement Metrics:** HCL Technologies measures engagement with its target audience on LinkedIn in terms of the following two different ratings:
 - **Conversion rate:** The conversion rate is based on the number of conversions per post. On LinkedIn, this measurement is defined as the number of comments to a post. For April 2014, the conversion rate for HCLT on LinkedIn was 4.27.
 - **Applause rate:** The applause rate is based on the number of “likes” that each post receives. For April 2014, the applause rate for HCL Technologies on LinkedIn was 36.14.

Source: Company records.

EXHIBIT 9: MEASURABLE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE (ALT-ASM) SERVICE

- The campaign influenced deals worth \$121.42 million.
- The campaign received over one million impressions and more than 10,000 clicks across all digital channels.
- Social media yielded 63 quality leads with expenses of \$1,500; IThound.com resulted in 50 leads from the target audience with expenses of \$2,000; and search engine marketing (paid search and display) produced 35 leads with expenses of \$1,500.
- Overall cost per lead was as low as \$33.
- Paid search received an impressive click-through rate of 1.04 per cent and a conversion rate of 8.7 per cent.
- The white paper was downloaded by 117 unique companies from a target set of accounts.
- Thirty-one per cent of downloads originated from G-2000 companies.
- Forty-six per cent of downloads originated from companies with annual estimated revenue of more than \$1 billion.
- The Slideshare deck received massive traction, with over 920 shares from LinkedIn alone.
- A total of 232 unique companies viewed the Slideshare presentation on HCL Technologies's ALT ASM framework.

Source: Company records.

EXHIBIT 10: MEASURES

Awareness phase measures factors that contribute to increased awareness of the HCL Technologies brand. The factors include keyword rankings, number of impressions from paid campaigns, Klout Score and/PeerIndex for HCL Technologies against competitors, brand share of voice for HCL Technologies compared to competitors, visibility and image score, and exposure of brand artifacts.

Interest phase of dashboard measures factors that correspond to B2B buyer interest in the HCL Technologies brand. The factors measured in this phase are overall website visits, business unit's number of pageviews and bounce rate, number of clicks from paid campaigns, social media reach index and social sentiments for HCL Technologies compared to competitors, social engagement metrics across various digital platforms, visits from Forbes G-2000 organizations, and response to brand artifacts.

The desire part of the dashboard measures the act of desires from B2B buyers. The phase includes the business unit's number of marketing qualified leads (MQLs), the business unit's number of sales-qualified leads (SQLs), the total number of collateral (white paper, brochures, research papers, etc.), downloads, social media engagement index for HCL Technologies against competitors, event and conference meetings, webinar registrations, booth footfalls, and interaction with brand artifacts.

The action phase of the dashboard provides status updates on value generated by marketing leads. This phase essentially contains the pipeline influence of overall marketing initiatives without a double count of single deals.

Source: Company records.

EXHIBIT 11: COMPETITOR ANALYSIS ON KEY PARAMETERS

HCL TECHNOLOGIES & COMPETITION	ESTIMATED VISITS	PAGES /Visit	BOUNCE RATE (%)	DIRECT VISITS (% of overall visits)	REFERRAL VISITS (% of overall visits)	MAIL (% of overall visits)	DISPLAY (% of overall visits)
HCL TECHNOLOGIES	270,000	3.14	49.46	22.50	18.09	1.19	0.53
TCS	6,000,000	8.59	16.46	55.11	22.63	3.51	0.21
Wipro	2,800,000	7.81	22.25	38.42	26.49	21.60	0.21
Infosys	1,000,000	7.79	32.32	42.43	21.74	3.25	0.29
Accenture	5,700,000	7.79	26.52	53.56	25.10	2.67	0.27
Cognizant	3,200,000	8.28	16.62	54.68	29.25	4.41	0.12
CSC	1,200,000	8.14	33.24	51.69	29.92	1.48	0.44
IBM	25,200,000	6.56	50.99	34.46	17.31	1.04	0.40
Capgemini	1,400,000	7.00	31.89	47.16	27.62	3.39	0.24

SEARCH (% of overall visits)	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES ON PAID SEARCH (Monthly)
55.41	\$1,208
17.08	\$0
11.00	\$792
29.41	\$0
15.97	\$207,677
9.80	\$57,221
15.36	\$829
44.93	\$725,006
18.57	\$11,602

SOCIAL VISITS (% of overall visits)	KLOUT SCORE / PEERINDEX
2.27	83
1.46	64
2.26	84
2.88	84
2.42	59
1.73	67
1.12	65
1.86	-
3.02	83

Source: Company documents.

EXHIBIT 12: GLOSSARY

TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION
Visits (or Sessions)	A session is the period of time a user is actively engaged with the website; all usage data (screenviews, events, e-commerce, etc.) are associated with a session
Pageviews	Pageviews represent the total number of pages that visitors looked at on the website; if a visitor clicks "reload" after reaching the page, this is counted as an additional pageview.
Bounce rate	Bounce rate is the percentage of visits that visit only one page before exiting a website.
Social media reach index	This index measures the total number of fans, followers, views, and subscribers on social media channels, in comparison to the competition.
Social media engagement index	This index measures the number of (comments + likes + shares) ÷ total reach.
Top rankings for keywords (Google—1st page)	These are the keywords that rank on the first page of Google.com due to search engine optimization efforts.
Number of impressions of paid search	An impression is counted each time the paid ad is shown on a search result page or other website on the Google network.
Number of impressions on social platforms	This is the number of times that the content was seen by social media users.
Klout Score and PeerIndex for HCL Technologies compared to competitors	This is a third-party calculation of the influence of a brand or persona with respect to followers, fans, and active participation in social media.
Conversation rate	Number of conversations per post; on Twitter, qualifiers are replies to a tweet; on Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram, it's a comment on the pin, post, or photo.
Amplification rate	Any time a post is retweeted or reshared, it's being amplified; all social media networks allow this, which can be the number of repins, retweets, or reshares of a particular post.
Applause rate	All social media networks use touchpoints to show appreciation, or applause. Twitter has favourites, Facebook has likes, Google+ has plusses, and blogs may have thumbs-up votes. The applause rate is based on the number of likes each post gets.
Number of sales-qualified leads	This is the total number of queries that have been qualified by the sales team as a potential revenue-generating lead during a given month. All of these leads have a valid opportunity identifier that is mapped with a horizontal and a vertical direction. Therefore, the total won't add up to the overall figure of leads accepted for a given month.
Collateral downloads	This is the total number of collaterals (white papers, brochures, case studies, research papers, etc.) downloaded from HCL Technologies corporate website and from the official Slideshare account for HCL Technologies.

Source: Company documents.