



# FARGO ELECTRONICS, INC.

## C A S E S T U D Y

### Transformed Presentation Energizes and Excites High-Tech Company's Sales Network

#### BUSINESS PROFILE

Minneapolis-based Fargo Electronics, Inc. (NASDAQ: FRGO) is a global leader in the development of secure technologies for identity card issuance systems. Fargo has earned a reputation as a leader in product development. In 2004 the company launched SecureMark™, a combination of hardware, software, and processes engineered to reduce identity card system vulnerabilities.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*Communicating a new solutions-based focus*

It's a dilemma that confronts many companies across a diverse range of industries. Products eventually become commoditized and difficult to differentiate in the marketplace. For years, Fargo Electronics has enjoyed a clear competitive advantage as a printer of identity and security cards.

In recent years, however, Fargo executives and managers recognized fundamental changes which threaten the status quo. The result has been to shift its identity from high-tech manufacturer to provider of customer-driven solutions.

"For the previous eleven years, our distribution partners knew us as we knew ourselves, as a card-printing company," says Joe Wright, Director of Marketing.

"So, the question became, how do we get them to understand our new solutions-based identity? And, how do we get them excited about it? We clearly needed an engaging way to speak to them at their level."

Previously, Fargo's managers and directors used the standard corporate PowerPoint presentation — slide after slide of bullet points — in meetings with their distribution partners. In content and format, it had become obsolete as a tool for communicating the company's dynamic new direction.

#### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

*First: Build a high-impact, memorable presentation*

Fargo sought Spoken Impact's expertise both in developing the content of the corporate presentation and in the delivery of the presentation by directors, managers and executive-level staff. Kathleen Phillips, VP of Sales and Marketing, who initiated the engagement with Spoken Impact, declares: "I couldn't think of a better group of folks to work with. Joan and her partner, Sue Stoen, were fantastic."

Spoken Impact stressed the need to get listeners interested and involved from the beginning. Brainstorming sessions yielded the idea for a weather theme, intended to convey that, like the weather, security



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*"Partners were energized and excited by the new presentation."*

issues are difficult to predict and require proactive intervention. Building on this theme was the concept of a multimedia opening, employing sound and motion, for the new PowerPoint presentation.

"From the very first minute, we wanted the audience to realize that what we're going to say about Fargo is truly different from anything they've heard before," says Wright. "The weather theme, which is interlaced throughout the presentation, fits a lot of things going on in our marketplace."

*Second: Embrace 'best practices' delivery skills*

With any presentation, content is half of the equation. Therefore, Spoken Impact devotes substantial time to helping its clients with their delivery skills. This was certainly the case with Fargo.

"Spoken Impact did an excellent job working with everybody, finding the right balance between pushing people and also patting them on the back when they were moving in the right direction," observes Phillips. "They are fabulous coaches when it comes to presentation skills."

Spoken Impact videotaped each presentation and then provided analysis and critiquing, aided by a proprietary "scorecard." Strengths and weaknesses were discussed in detail and with total candor, according to Wright. "I was thoroughly impressed with the extent to which they covered all the angles."

**REALIZED VALUE**

*'We have been paid back many times over'*

By any number of criteria, Spoken Impact's work with Fargo has been deemed a resounding success. For instance, at the 2005 fall conference, Fargo's distribution partners were "energized and excited" by the new presentation, according to Wright. "It was very evident, not only in their comments but in their buy-in to our company's vision."

So, was the journey to a transformed presentation worth the time, effort, and the sometimes uneasy feeling of putting one's shortcomings under a spotlight? Wright and Phillips believe it was.

"I'd say that in terms of just the investment in our presentation skills, we have been paid back many times over," remarks Phillips. "And my guess is that the PowerPoint presentation will continue to pay good dividends. It was a tremendous undertaking — a lot of work in the beginning. But now we have a foundation which is solid, yet flexible, one that will evolve with the company."



**SLIDES FROM NEW PRESENTATION**



*New weather theme incorporated into presentation worked well with the international audiences*



*Presentation emphasized new "SecureMark" solution with umbrella symbology*