

Atmel: Igniting the B2C in B2B

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Marketing

Atmel Corporation is a manufacturer of semiconductors (chips). It is an engineering-driven business-to-business company, and prior to 2012 its marketing was largely limited to preparation of specifications, launching new products, and trade shows. In 2012, it hired Sander Arts as Vice President of Marketing. Arts was not an engineer, and had very different ideas about how marketing could add value to the company. For instance, he believed that social media could be used to create active user communities for a company that makes commodity products. He also believed that the company was missing important opportunities in long-tail markets, and the Maker movement. He wanted to humanize the brand and create imaginative marketing solutions.

This “case” is a series of videos – one to prepare students for the class session, and two to be shown after the class discussion. The 15-minute preparation video is a series of interviews in which the perspectives of different stakeholders (engineering, marketing, customer, etc.) are presented prior to the arrival of Arts. The challenges facing Arts are clearly demonstrated.

Following class discussion, a nine-minute video interview with Arts can be used to show how he approached the challenges. The third video was prepared by Atmel, and shows the company’s view of its success in developing marketing as an important part of the organization.

The videos are available for purchase from [Harvard Business Publishing](#).

Learning Objective

This case is designed for use in an Executive Education program for mid- to senior-level marketing executives. However, it can also be used for MBA courses in marketing or organizational change. It can be used to discuss how marketing can be relevant in an engineering-driven organization, and how organizational change can be achieved.

This material is available for download by current Stanford GSB students, faculty, and staff, as well as Stanford GSB alumni. For inquiries, contact the [Case Writing Office](#).

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