



elevationmarketing



# Agrium Advanced Technologies Inc.

## CASE STUDY

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**Elevation Marketing** helps major producer and distributor of agriculture products dramatically boost revenues with a new training and sales microsite.



## BACKGROUND

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# Targeted Education Campaign Elevates Fertilizer Sales



*With a focus on sustainability,  
the company strives to  
improve the communities  
in which it operates*

Agrium Inc. is a major producer and distributor of agricultural products and services in North America, South America, Australia and Egypt through its agricultural retail-distribution and wholesale nutrient businesses. Agrium supplies growers with key products and services such as crop nutrients, crop protection, seed, agronomic and application services, thereby helping to meet the ever-growing global demand for food and fiber.

Agrium produces nitrogen, potash and phosphate fertilizers, with a combined wholesale nutrient capacity of over nine million tons and with competitive advantages across all product lines. Agrium retail-distribution has an unmatched network of over 1,300 facilities and over 3,000 crop consultants. They partner with over half a million grower customers globally to help them increase their yields and returns on more than 50 different crops. With a focus on sustainability, the company strives to **improve the communities in which it operates through safety, education, environmental improvement and new technologies such as the development of precision agriculture and controlled release nutrient products.**

Agrium Advanced Technologies (AAT) is a large division of Agrium that specifically manufactures and markets controlled-release fertilizers and micronutrients for the agricultural, professional turf grass, horticulture, and consumer lawn and garden markets. **The company also offers insect, rodent, and bird control products, as well as supplies equipment and retail products.** The company is headquartered in the Denver, Colorado area with its parent company located in Canada.

AAT is part of the Agrium family of brands with revenue exceeding sixteen billion dollars a year worldwide. Elevation works within multiple Agrium brands and business including Direct Solutions, Loveland, SIFI, Crop Protection Services and various Turf and Ornamental brands, and the relationship is over ten years old.

The company originally turned to Elevation based on its experience in the agriculture space. Previous clients had included Monsanto, Simplot, Fertilzona, Farm Links, Horizon, Phoenix Environmental, and many others. Elevation also worked with Toro in the turf and ornamental space, giving Elevation a unique combination of experience.



## CHALLENGE

# Revive Slumping Sales and Overcome Lack of Awareness in a Crowded Marketplace

Agrium Advanced Technologies Inc. (AAT), launched a new fertilizer for the lawn care market, but after a year on the market, executives recognized the product needed a strong marketing campaign to drive sales. As sales slumped, **it became clear that marketing and sales needed to align to improve awareness in the marketplace.**

Agrium's new technology is a single application, controlled-release fertilizer that could feed turf for six months or longer, requiring just a single application per growing season. **The fertilizer's once-a-season application is a marked departure from standard fertilizing practices, which saw lawn care professionals spreading fertilizer four to six times a year.** Despite the significant benefits from Agrium's new technology, sales continued to slump.

New to the turf and ornamental market, and lacking a marketing team familiar with the space, AAT engaged Elevation Marketing. Agrium's long-term marketing agency partner was tasked with fueling the product's re-launch and achieving sustainable sales through a multi-touch campaign.

Elevation, with years of B2B experience in the agribusiness, high-tech and industrial manufacturing industries, understood the challenge facing Agrium. Entering a new market required a cohesive marketing campaign targeting both end users and wholesale distributors, while aligning with sales activities.

As with any new technology that challenges conventional practices, Elevation knew that Agrium's marketing required an education approach designed to establish a new market, and drive prospective end users to distributors.

First, Agrium and Elevation had to overcome a lack of product awareness in an already crowded marketplace where fertilizer was viewed as a commodity. **The target audience suffered from limited time, tight budgets and a general confusion about the efficacy of fertilizers, leaving Agrium with a big challenge ahead.**



## STRATEGY

# Reinvigorate Brand Positioning and Messaging to Resonate with the Core Audience and Educate the Channel

### Tapping Business Intelligence to Refine and Better Target Different Buyers

Based on its vast multichannel and agricultural market experience, the Elevation Marketing team identified the key to success as creating compelling value propositions for targeted audiences, **using data intelligence to drive product awareness while monetizing big data to upsell and cross sell to customers more effectively.**

Elevation also knew that Agrium faced a tough educational challenge ahead, especially when it came to lawn care professionals who were accustomed to charging by the visit and applying fertilizer several times a year. But the agency also knew that **Agrium had a testing culture that encouraged buyers seeking cost-effective fertility programs and more environmentally acceptable products**, a practice they could tap into.

**"Less is More  
Less is Economical  
Less is Environmentally Friendly"**

Elevation conducted research to fully understand the market dynamics that impacted the buyers decision-making

process to ensure the positioning and messaging would resonate with the buyer and, most importantly, drive them to the point of sale.

Elevation identified three markets to target initially: the residential lawn care professional, the commercial lawn care provider and governments looking to control costs. Understanding the different needs of these audiences, Elevation then created messaging that would resonate with each one.

To help encourage distributors to carry the new fertilizer, the Elevation team needed to consider **messaging focused on offering distributor partners an agronomically-proven, high-margin solution** that met their customer's environmental, economic and efficacious needs.

Research indicated that to stand out in a crowded market the product needed a unique name, eventually the research department and the creative department settled in on Spread It & Forget It, a play on the product's unique, single application benefit.



“Elevation utilized its proprietary process and research tools, both quantitative and qualitative, to **PRODUCE CUSTOMIZED DATA POINTS UNIQUE** to the **PRODUCT**, the **COMPANY** and the **INDUSTRY.**”

- Scott Miraglia, President, Elevation Marketing

## STRATEGY

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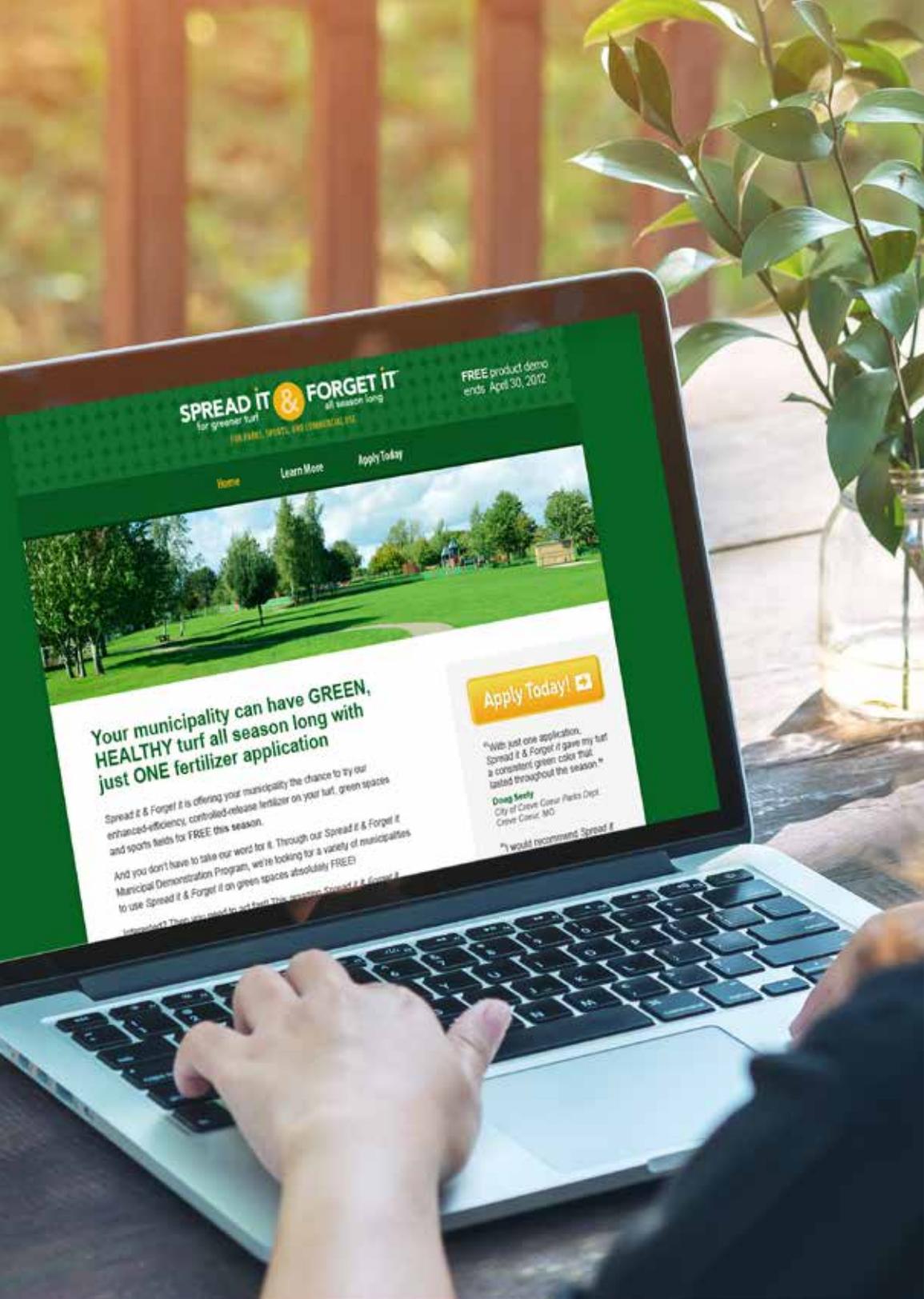
The messaging Elevation chose amplified the product's key value to its audiences: less is more, less is more economical, and less is more environmentally friendly, and then tailored the messaging to the individual groups.

To educate prospects, **messaging focused on the product's single application benefits, and its advanced technology to uniquely position the product in the marketplace.**

The team also knew it needed a broad educational and integrated marketing campaign that specifically targeted niches within the turf and ornamental market with messages that resonated with different buyers.

Elevation initiated a full marketing and sales campaign that included **website development, digital marketing campaigns, trade show, distributor and end user education, telemarketing, distributor, co-op programs and a trial program.**

To fuel end user awareness, Elevation also needed an effective public relations campaign that successfully placed articles in popular industry periodicals that highlighted Spread It & Forget It's unique features.



## TRIAL PROGRAM

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# Fully Integrated Trial Program Garnered Impressive Distributor Participation

Elevation also helped Agrium conduct a six-month trial program and coordinated logistics with several vendors. The agency created marketing materials to solicit distributor participation, spearheaded an outbound call campaign to follow up with product users, conducted surveys, created a trial-program product website, and tabulated results throughout the process. Those results included testimonials from trial users and data regarding the success of the single use product, which were used in multiple marketing materials.

Then Elevation extended the campaign with email blasts, print advertising in trade publications, online banner ads, collateral materials, savings calculators, custom packaging and direct mail.

The product public relations campaign included creating case studies, an electronic media kit, and scheduling media briefings at trade shows. Elevation also handled on-site media inquiries and pitched story ideas to news outlets around the results.

**“ELEVATION CREATED A FULLY INTEGRATED HIGH-PROFILE TRIAL CAMPAIGN** that ran for six months. The campaign combined digital and event marketing with PR and social media to deliver testimonials and uncover key participant data.”

- Scott Miraglia, President, Elevation Marketing



## BUSINESS WINS

# Program Resulted in Product Line Acquisition by Koch Agronomic Services After Seeing a **300% Revenue Increase Year-on-Year**

Elevation Marketing's multi-channel efforts produced a three-fold increase in Spread It & Forget It revenues. Overall, the integrated marketing campaign targeted more than 20,000 lawn care operators, municipalities and golf course superintendents.

More than 500 turf professionals across the country trialed the product. In the trial program, it was found that just one application of Spread It & Forget It fertilizer consistently worked as promised. **Trial participants loved the product and felt compelled to share their trial results, which resulted in a 15 percent survey completion rate.** That rate was nearly quadruple the average click-through rate for the agriculture industry, which typically sees a lower 3.21% survey competition rate.

Elevation's campaign with lawn care professionals in the residential and commercial markets was successfully extended into the golf course maintenance market. In addition, Agrium hired Elevation to launch a multi-year trial program for the municipal market to generate further awareness and leads at trade shows.

Eventually, the stepped up multi-channel marketing campaign for Spread It & Forget It contributed to a successful sale of Agrium Advanced Technologies Inc.'s turf and ornamental assets and fertilizer brands to Koch Agronomic Services.

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“Trial participants loved the product and felt compelled to share their trial results, which resulted in **A 15 PERCENT SURVEY COMPLETION RATE.**”

-Scott Miraglia, President, Elevation Marketing

## ABOUT ELEVATION

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# More Business Wins

Elevation Marketing is a full-service B2B marketing agency, providing exceptional client experiences that result in more business wins.

We go beyond tactics to inspire experiences that build brand believers. From a holistic perspective, we focus on all aspects of operations and strategy to ensure alignment between marketing and sales.

We have a strong command of inbound marketing, and know how to effectively manage, deliver and retain buyers. We offer full-cycle, web development services for the enterprise. We build bridges of communication, streamlining the dissemination of information to targeted entities.

Whether its partner portals, online stores, web apps or microsites, our custom digital solutions help you govern persona data through its entire lifecycle for superior lead generation and nurturing.

If you have a B2B product or service that solves real world problems, then you've done your job. We'll do ours by connecting you to the B2B decision makers that will benefit from what you have to offer.



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