



# Case Study: Driving Local Presence Through Strategic Marketing Communications Campaigns



## OVERVIEW

Everstream is building a business-only fiber network across select markets in the Midwestern U.S. with more than 10,000 route miles of fiber and speeds up to 100 Gbps. Everstream's enterprise-grade network delivers robust business fiber services, including dedicated internet access, dark fiber, Ethernet and data center solutions. Through its "Do What You Say You Will Do" approach, Everstream has become a valued partner dedicated to the success of enterprise customers.

The company's dedication to its employees and customers is just as important to the company's overall message as its focus on its network. Everstream consistently appears on Best Places to Work lists and is known for sponsoring community projects, such as offering free Wi-Fi to public areas in its home city of Cleveland and sponsoring free ridership on The Hop streetcar in Milwaukee.

When engaging Calysto, Everstream's stated Marketing Goals were to drive sales through brand awareness at a local level by reaching C-level and IT business decision-makers at midsize to large enterprises. A key business goal was to maximize the investment in Everstream's network.



## CHALLENGE

Founded in 2014, Everstream is building out its network in select cities in the Midwest through both acquisition of smaller network providers, and also through expansion and construction of its own fiber network. In September and October 2019, it launched new services in three key markets: Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In February 2020, it announced the purchase of Rocket Fiber, which allowed it to enter the Detroit market with a robust service offering.

Everstream competes in each of these markets with incumbent communications service providers such as AT&T and Charter Communications but offers the differentiator of a business-only network with a range of services beyond what the incumbents can provide. These competitors have large marketing budgets; however, they lack the ability to truly differentiate their message from local market to market as needed.

Each of these markets are considered “underserved” when it comes to telecommunications capabilities because they lack the dense fiber rollout that many larger cities have already undertaken. However, each city has shown tremendous potential for growth, with the addition of a wealth of new businesses over the past several years.

From a marketing and public relations perspective, Everstream was starting from the ground floor, with virtually no presence or awareness among the local media—or the enterprise customers it needed to reach to achieve its business goals.

Everstream needed a strong Media Relations Campaign that:

- Clearly articulated the company’s key messages to each of the three new markets in which it was launching
- Targeted local business media—including print and broadcast—to best reach C-level and IT decision-makers in each market
- Brought out the personality and values of both the company and its CEO



## SOLUTION

Calysto developed an in-depth local Media Strategy that included a comprehensive Public Relations Program along with strategic counsel on Positioning and Messaging as well as how to best approach reporters for each market. The strategy included researching key facts about each city that helped supplement Everstream's key messages, as well as pulling in relevant facts on key upcoming events in each city—including the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee in 2020, which will call on a strong fiber backbone to ensure business' connectivity is not interrupted by the influx of attendees. Calysto also collaborated with Everstream to announce its free ridership sponsorship of The Hop streetcar in Milwaukee alongside its expansion announcement, achieving additional coverage.

Execution of the strategy included:

- Refinement of Positioning and Messaging documentation with differentiation.
- The creation of a Corporate PowerPoint for Everstream based on this Positioning and Messaging with the goal of telling the Everstream story to media so they could share it with their enterprise business customer audience. Each city launch was included on its own news slide as part of the overall presentation.
- The creation of a Comprehensive Q&A as a template for communicating Everstream's Positioning and Messaging for each city to the media in an easy-to-digest, "fast facts" format.
- Drafting Press Releases for each launch city that called out the unique characteristics and value Everstream was bringing to the city with the launch of its business-only fiber network.
- Developing launch Media Lists for each city compiled of local publications and national telecommunications publications that would have interest in Everstream news.
- Developing media outreach Pitches to tease news under embargo to different audiences, including national and local daily media, local business journals, industry trade publications and business publications.
- Conducting aggressive and repeated Media Relations outreach under embargo to acquisition announcement press release media list. Provided draft press release, under embargo, to those reporters that requested it.



### **SOLUTION cont.**

- Counseling and Media Coaching Everstream spokespeople for each announcement, both before each reporter interview as well as post-interview with “Media Training” recommendations and materials to support positioning and message delivery.
- Managing and monitoring interviews with media in each city.
- Conducting aggressive day-of follow-up with all media to encourage editorial coverage on the day-of the announcement.

### **RESULTS**

The launch across the three cities garnered more than 32 articles and interviews in leading local newspapers, business journals and local broadcast stations, including local NPR affiliates. And more importantly, within a few days, the launch coverage resulted in several inbound sales leads, including Facebook Data Center. In October 2019, the company saw its inbound leads reach their highest point in the company’s history, with an 87% year over year increase of more than 67 qualified leads (the highest prior lead “event” generated only 45 more than 18 months previous.) Meanwhile, for the Rocket Fiber acquisition, Calysto was able to secure the interviews and coverage from The Wall Street Journal, TechCrunch, Detroit News, Detroit Free Press and more than 20 additional local and industry publications.

According to Sarah Mugford, CMO at Everstream, “Calysto really understood our goals for the launch into these markets and crafted a strategy that truly hit it out of the park in terms of media coverage. Thanks to the coverage Calysto has delivered, we’re already receiving significant interest from enterprises in the region who want to learn more about Everstream. We look forward to executing on a long-term strategy to engage with both local business media as well as trade publications that can also help spread the word about Everstream’s unique benefits to enterprises in these local markets.”



Key coverage includes articles in the following local business publications :







The campaign also generated interest and coverage from several trade publications, including articles in:

