



Our Focus is on Growing Companies™

## Evolution engaged Smith Growth Partners to develop a Marketing Action Plan and wound up developing an entirely new business: **GoBeyond IT**

GoBeyond IT offers clients an alternative to traditional in-house IT, enabling them to quickly deploy hosted desktops and applications without the associated cost and burden of owning, managing or supporting the applications or underlying technical infrastructure.

### The Evolution of GoBeyond IT

"We hired SGP as marketing strategists, and they were not afraid to take off their marketing hat and help us see and resolve the other obstacles we were facing."

Rick Crane, President and CEO, GoBeyond IT



Evolution was at an exciting point in the life of any small business. Founded in 2002, with a four-year track record of growth in its core business of systems integration for large corporations, the company was ready to launch a new service: a hosted Microsoft Desktop solution. This new managed services offering would be targeted to small and mid-sized companies looking to decrease the cost and complexity of operating their businesses.

But when Evolution launched hosted desktops as a service, initial sales were disappointing and potential clients required a great deal of education. "Evolution had developed one market with one type of service, and now we were adding to our message, which created some confusion. It was difficult in the early going for us to articulate the difference," said Rick Crane, founder of Evolution, and President and CEO of GoBeyond IT. "We had goals and we needed a better plan to get there." That's when Smith Growth Partners (SGP) entered the picture to develop a Marketing Action Plan.



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Though Evolution had engaged SGP for “marketing,” the primary need (and the one that would bring the most immediate benefit) was to improve sales of the core business. During the first phase of the engagement it became evident that a cultural change within the company was necessary to support its growth goals. “The first real breakthrough in the planning process was seeing the need to create a culture of accountability whereby everyone in the company bore some responsibility for increasing profitability,” said John Starling, lead SGP consultant on the project..

## Separating the brands

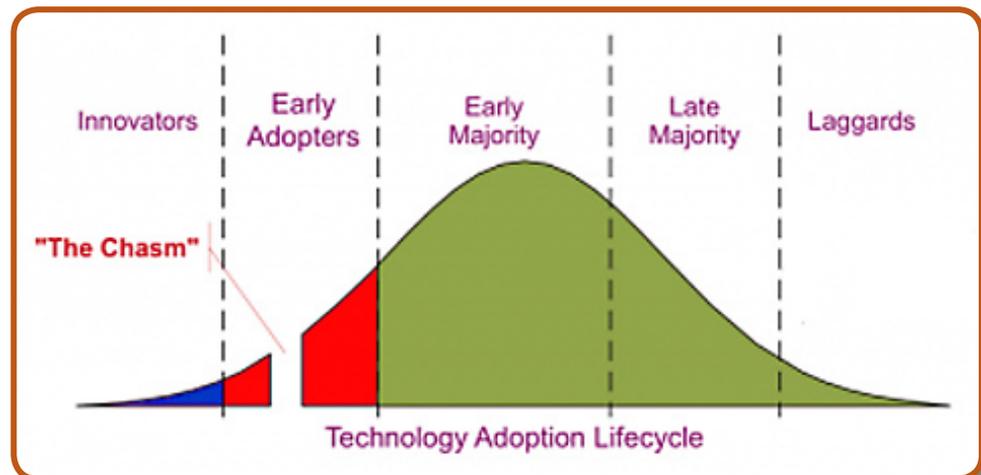
“SGP was our Nostradamus. The Marketing Action Plan predicted our future. Now, in 2010, I still go back to it and am amazed at its accuracy: they nailed it.”

Rick Crane, President and CEO, GoBeyond IT



With the partners and a few key employees leading the way on sales of Evolution’s core business, the question became: which service would be the main driver of the company’s future growth? And the answer was unequivocally the hosted desktop, due in part to the recurring revenue stream that is built into the managed services model.

“Evolution is a company of early adopters of technology. They love the bleeding edge of technology and sell the leading edge of IT to their systems integration clients,” said Starling. But where were the buyers (in this case the business owners) on the technology adoption curve?



SGP determined that business owners had been through several cycles of hiring and firing IT people and IT support providers, and a secure, domestic, outsourced IT model seemed ripe. In tech adoption curve terms, we felt like the offering was coming off of the leading edge and heading toward full market adoption by pragmatic buyers.

But what about the brand? The Evolution name had long been associated with systems integration, which has a completely different audience. While Managed Services was poised to become Evolution’s revenue generator, in 2007 the bulk of the company’s revenue was being derived from system integration.



“We did not want to put Evolution’s brand at risk by diluting its offering,” said Starling. The new service would require a new brand.

After filling half a trashcan with balled-up paper and taking more than a few trips to the Web to see what URLs were available, SGP developed the name: GoBeyond IT ([www.gobeyondit.com](http://www.gobeyondit.com)).

## From a brand to a company

“SGP helped us with every aspect of developing GoBeyond IT: The MAP, then branding and a sales plan strategy. SGP’s pacing was right on. They timed us very well relative to the market.”

Rick Crane, President and CEO, GoBeyond IT



With the brand name established, it was time to build an identity. Because GoBeyond IT focused on selling to the CEO, it was not ready for Internet marketing-driven campaigns. SGP developed a networking event-driven marketing approach, where the sales team could interact with C-level executives, including seminars.

From 2007 to 2009, GoBeyond IT grew from an idea to a seven-figure revenue generator. “We are very pleased with the growth,” said David Webb, partner at GoBeyond IT. After the first year’s hockey-stick growth curve was followed by two years of double-digit growth, it made sense to separate Evolution and GoBeyond IT into different entities. GoBeyond IT launched as a stand-alone corporation in 2010.

What accounts for this growth, even in the face of a bad economy? Sticking to the plan. “When we stuck to the plan, we saw unbelievable value—not only in terms of new revenue, but also in terms of cost avoidance from mistakes we did not make. SGP could have recommended any number of marketing ideas, but SGP was more committed to our growth than to their billings,” said Crane. “The plan they delivered helps me guide the company to this day.”

SGP continues to serve the company as a trusted advisor.

To learn more about GoBeyond IT, visit [www.gobeyondit.com](http://www.gobeyondit.com) – and if you’re frustrated with your current IT provider and want a stable fixed monthly cost, GoBeyond IT!

