

Sandra Fraga, chief sales and marketing officer at Syspro

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Sandra Fraga, chief sales and marketing officer at Syspro, unpacks the journey behind the software development company's rebrand, its marketing initiatives and the most successful channels for getting your brand message out there.



■ **What does your job entail and what does your average workday look like these days?**

Syspro is an enterprise resource planning provider, specialising in key manufacturing and distributor industries. As the chief sales and marketing officer at Syspro, I am responsible for sales and marketing globally.

Within my dual role, I oversee all sales revenue for both channel and direct sales as well as marketing for Syspro globally.

“ Working within the dynamic world of technology, I can honestly say that no two days are the same. ”

My role involves working closely with my global team to create customer success by nurturing relationships and building communities. For that reason, I am often up at 5am to have a call with Australasia and will round off my day with a 10pm call with my US team. I love the fast pace of the industry and thrive on finding innovative solutions that solve key manufacturing industry pain points.

■ **Can you tell us a bit about your career journey prior to your current role?**

I have extensive experience in building successful sales and marketing strategies and teams. Prior to joining Syspro, I spent nine years at Dell and was responsible for growing channel, acquiring and managing distribution partners, selling to global accounts and then the last three years leading marketing across emerging markets, which covered 140 countries and three continents (Africa, CEE and Europe).

I then moved to Microsoft South Africa where I was the product category lead responsible for growing the Windows & Office business within the Consumer Channel Group.

■ **How would you define your brand?**

Syspro's purpose is to make things possible for manufacturers and distributors. Over the past year, we have all personally witnessed global vulnerabilities and disruptive forces, that have shifted the dial. Manufacturers and distributors have had to

contend with supply chain disruptions, huge operational inefficiencies and a lack of integration between disparate systems.

In response, the industry started to accelerate their digital transformation journeys with the aim to translate efficiency and bring productivity gains back into the business.



As trusted advisors, we are therefore committed to guiding our customers through industry disruptions by helping them to secure a digital future. Our newly unveiled brand, which was launched in April, is reflective of this commitment.

With a tagline of 'Say Yes to Next', our brand tonality can be described as positive and aspirational with a proactive outlook.

“ With our newbrand promise, our aspiration will be to give our existing and future customers the confidence to say yes – to the next idea, the next vision, the next opportunity, the next possibility, and to ultimately achieve more. ”

■ Which consumer sector does your brand predominantly play in?

We specialise in key industries within manufacturing and distribution, giving them the competitive advantage to secure a digital future. Our key vertical sectors include Industrial Machinery & Equipment, Fabricated Metal, Electronics, Food & Beverage, Plastics and Rubber, Packaging and Automotive Parts and Accessories.

■ Can you share with our readers about your recent brand campaigns and the rationales behind them?

As mentioned, businesses globally have gone through unprecedented transformation in the last 12 months. For our customers, it's now about delivering value, driving operational efficiencies, controlling costs, and developing great

products. Digital innovation, digital resiliency and digital leaderships are key. The Syspro brand moving forward will occupy a distinctive place in the minds and hearts of our customers and prospects as they rely on us as industry experts that understand their dynamic needs.

The process of redefining our brand positioning commenced a year ago. Together with a specialist brand agency, we undertook an anthropology research project to better understand what would resonate with our customers and the industries we serve. As part of our research process, we interviewed globally our customers, our partners, analysts, influencers and internal stakeholders.

We rolled out our re-energized brand internally on the 8 April 2021 and introduced our new brand to the market via owned channels. To date, we have received very positive feedback, because we have focused on the needs of our customers first.

Tell us about your most successful marketing campaign.

We have worked on several successful campaigns that talk to the needs to the market. Here are some that addressed the needs during the pandemic:

Report into the inflection point for the factory of the future

In order to understand how manufacturers and distributors handled the shift presented by the pandemic, we conducted a global industry survey looking at business resilience during Covid-19. The survey touched on the rise of the remote workforce and the need for increased collaboration, the impact of supply chain disruptions and emerging trends that will shape the industry moving forward.

Some key findings from the report included the fact that 47% of businesses were unable to function due to operational staff reliance on-premises, 60% of businesses were impacted by supply chain disruptions and 29% of businesses would be pursuing a cloud-based system moving forward. The report showed how manufacturers and distributors would be gearing up for digital transformation in coming months.

We presented our findings within our annual analyst roadshow in September 2020. One analyst remarked that he found the original research refreshing. We then rolled out a full media relations and social media campaign in the months of October to December. Our messaging was clear – that we were committed to working closely with our customers in their journey in reconfiguring their supply chains with an increased focus on resiliency, transparency and visibility.

Thank-You Campaign

During the pandemic, the world relied on manufacturers and distributors to survive. With gratitude, we rolled out a campaign to thank those industries for their service. In addition, with a continued focus on upskilling the industry, we offered 500 recently unemployed individuals in the manufacturing and distribution sector with unlimited access to Syspro Learning Channel, an online platform, at no cost for a six-month period.

What do you think are the most successful channels for getting your brand message out there?

At Syspro we have a digital-first marketing approach. We launched our new brand to our global employees and channel community virtually. We leverage our owned platforms extensively such as our website, social media platforms and YouTube channel.

From an external perspective we focused considerable effort on SEO, digital advertising on key strategic media platforms, rolled out globally a robust PR strategy, leveraged the ERP analyst community and our channel partners.

What career advice would you give to aspirant young marketing and branding professionals?

I am passionate about developing and enabling the youth and setting them on the path to success. My advice for young

professionals would be - have a digital first mindset, embrace innovation and be curious. Identify a mentor that can help shape your career.

■ ***What do you love most about working in the software development space?***

The software space is always evolving and that excites me. I love having the opportunity to learn something new every day and make an impact as a woman in the tech space.

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