

**CLIENT**

Microsoft Oil & Gas Industry

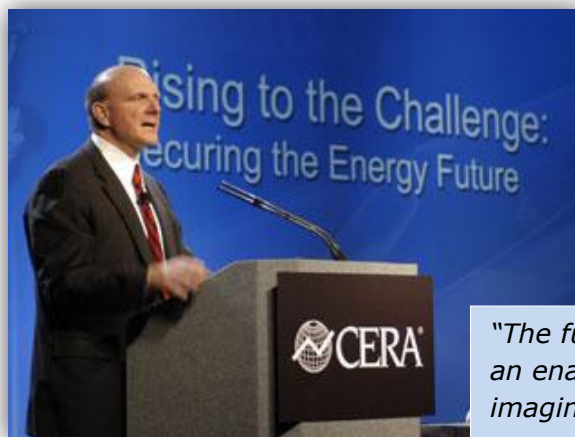
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**SERVICES**

Media relations

**CAMPAIGN**

2005



**Microsoft®**

*"The fundamental promise of information technology: an enabler for creativity, for productivity, for the human imagination in every sense."*

*- Steve Ballmer, CERAWeek 2005*

## Why Is Steve Ballmer at CERAWeek?

**BACKGROUND**

In 2003 Microsoft formed a vertical unit focused on the energy industry (oil, gas and retail petroleum), yet prior to CERAWeek 2005, few business reporters who cover the energy industry were aware of that. As the premier global conference for this industry, CERAWeek is the world's largest industry gathering of top industry executives, heads of state from oil-producing nations, strong industry influencers and about 100 high-level national, international and energy trade journalists. Further, each journalist reaches energy industry executive decision makers – Microsoft's primary industry targets. For this reason, the event was the perfect venue for Microsoft to make a strong statement regarding its dedication to the energy industry and raise awareness of Microsoft's oil and gas industry focus.

Brooks & Associates Public Relations' Microsoft account team thoroughly researched business media articles covering the oil and gas industry and found very little mention of information technology. They saw an

opportunity to reach out to the reporters attending the event to educate them on the role information technology and Microsoft play in the energy industry. Faced with ambitious growth goals and limited budgets, the unit's executives put a lot of faith into public relations to get the word out about the still new unit to its target audiences.

**STRATEGY**

As a part of a long-term public relations strategy, Brooks & Associates began lobbying two years prior for Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer to speak at CERAWeek, hosted by industry think tank Cambridge Energy Research Association (CERA). In early January 2005, Steve Ballmer confirmed that he would participate as the first CERAWeek IT industry keynoter at the mid-February 2005 event, kicking off the event media planning process. Since other speakers were, unlike Ballmer, heavily energy focused and included CEOs of the world's largest energy companies, high-level government officials and heads of state, the strategy was to play off the question 'Why is Steve Ballmer at CERAWeek?'

The Brooks & Associates team also used the CERAWeek event to create a “soft launch” of Microsoft’s energy vision in preparation for a full-fledged launch at Microsoft’s Global Energy Forum customer event in May. Media messaging encompassed Microsoft’s business strategy – that it was serious about providing tools and solutions for the industry – while also engaging journalists from Reuters, Houston Chronicle and others with industry-specific topics that they were writing about. This was a challenge considering that most of these journalists didn’t have information technology on their radar screens, nor did their readers.

Despite these challenges, many journalists were intrigued by the message “Why Ballmer at CERAWeek?” The Brooks & Associates team scheduled and staffed seven interviews with Microsoft executives and business journalists from AP, Bloomberg News, Forbes, Reuters, Wall Street Journal, trade reporters and informal conversations with many others. Journalists received a copy of Ballmer’s speech in case they could not attend the dinner presentation or needed to file stories quickly after the address. Based on post-event feedback, CERAWeek attendees initially wondered why Ballmer was there. However, they left the event with a greater understanding of Microsoft’s presence and its role and relevance to the oil and gas industry.

## RESULTS

Statistics showed almost **7.8 million media impressions** during the first two weeks following the event – just on Ballmer’s speech coverage. Three stories appeared before Ballmer’s appearance by AP, CBSMarketWatch and *Oil & Gas Journal*. Microsoft had additional follow-up coverage in 11 media outlets: CareerJournal.com, Dow Jones Newswires, Houston Chronicle, Investor’s Business Daily, *Natural Gas Week*, NGL’s Daily Price Index, PeakOil.com News, *Petroleum Intelligence Weekly*, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, *SmartMoney* and Wall Street Journal. Journalists included Microsoft’s key messages in quotes or other text in 100% of coverage.

The campaign also generated ongoing interest in Microsoft’s role in the industry and presented an opportunity to nurture new relationships with journalists. Eight newswire and trade reporters attended Microsoft’s 2005 Global Energy Forum compared with three trade reporters at the 2004 event.

The CERAWeek campaign was honored with an International Association of Business Communicators Bronze Quill Award of Excellence in media relations.



*“You have consistently proven your group’s reputation for excellence in media relations: cultivating lasting relationships with first-tier and trade press, crafting impactful messaging that commands attention, and maximizes exposure effectively and efficiently.”*

- Marisé J.B. Mikulis, Microsoft Worldwide Oil & Gas Industry Manager

March 24, 2005