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OneNeck reinvents brand beyond IT and into business value

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Introduction

Built from five acquisitions, OneNeck is looking to better represent the combined value of its offering with a brand refresh. Its new tagline, 'Keep moving forward. We got your back,' is about expressing empathy toward technology leaders who are having to balance the strategic responsibility of technological innovation against the need for daily operational excellence. It aims to show clients and prospects that its role is to be a trusted partner that is well-equipped to execute on its clients' IT strategies and visions, in order to free up their time and resources to focus on innovation and adding business value.

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Often, a change is as good as a rest, and a new message can make employees and clients more confident that progress is taking place. In a company built from five acquisitions, it's likely that OneNeck's unified message has not been as strong or clear as it could be. The company has also been simplifying its product portfolio to reduce complexity and make it easier for its customers to understand and use. Both of these changes should make it easier for customers and prospects to grasp how OneNeck adds value to IT (and the broader business), and make it easier for sales to identify and close opportunities.

Details

OneNeck is the arm of TDS (aka Telephone and Data Systems) that deals with IT services such as cloud, colocation, managed services, application management, hardware resale and professional services. This capability has grown through acquisition, starting with the acquisitions of VISI and TEAM by TDS in 2010, with OneNeck following in 2011. Vital joined the OneNeck 'A TDS Company' brand in 2012, as did MSN Communications in 2013. Combining so many different companies across different parts of the US poses challenges in creating a unified message.

From 2018-2019, OneNeck claims a 20% CAGR in cloud, hosting and managed services; 15% CAGR in Microsoft Dynamics; and 7% growth in CAGR. It does not report number of customers served or revenue figures because these are included under the TDS umbrella of about \$5bn in revenue for 2018.

This has been a big year for the company's development. As we recently covered, OneNeck has made progress in packaging its capabilities into easier-to-digest products from across its acquisitions, and has taken steps to revamp its brand messaging to better represent the sum of the acquisitions and communicate the 'what, why and how' to internal and external parties. To that end, its new tagline aims to show clients and prospects that its role is to be a trusted partner that is well-equipped to execute on its clients' IT strategies and visions, in order to free up their time and resources to focus on innovation and adding business value.

The company undertook a review of 250 competitors nationally, aiming to understand similarities and differences in messaging and positioning. OneNeck was aware that MSPs often emulate each other, so the market had begun to feel homogeneous, where everyone looks and sounds the same. The company found that most positioning was focused on the technology itself, rather than the value enabled by technology. In other words, most positioning was, 'We're an IT company, these are the things we do,' rather than, 'We exist to help you and your business succeed by doing this.'

OneNeck has taken this lesson and built it into an internal elevator pitch that focuses on how OneNeck frees up resources so IT leaders (in its target midmarket) can focus on strategic initiatives that move their businesses forward. In particular, it wants to communicate empathy, relating to the pressures and challenges their clients face. Brand expression has also been revamped, to be more inspirational and energetic (compared with passive), more straightforward (and less buzzwordy), and more confident and united (one company, not five acquisitions). The company will be using its new brand messaging as the basis of a sales launch roadshow in the coming months, and to drive future market, promotion and sales support.