

“APCO is our **global counsel** on a number of issues. They help us think about our brands in a broader way, **identify trends** and spot issues we might not normally have seen. We rely on them as **trusted advisors** in many countries around the world.”

Pamela Passman
corporate vice president
global corporate affairs
Microsoft

Microsoft

Microsoft Unlimited Potential

THE CHALLENGE

Five years after the launch of two global citizenship initiatives, Microsoft wanted to define its “next generation” goals for corporate citizenship and strengthen the alignment between its large portfolio of programs and its business growth strategy. The company’s Citizenship team also wanted to bring clearer focus, branding and impact to the portfolio, which included around half a billion dollars of annual financial, software and training curricula grants; and to enable the company to build upon its many valuable relationships with NGOs and governments in markets around the globe.

THE SOLUTION

Microsoft’s corporate mission is to *help people and businesses around the world realize their full potential*. This is central to its citizenship group’s work, but also guides Microsoft’s business units, one of which was the dynamic group charged with developing relevant and affordable products for emerging and underserved markets around the world. As part of a Microsoft team, APCO conducted market research, peer and best practice analysis, and interviews with the company’s most senior executives. This led to the conclusion that the two groups shared many of the same goals, stakeholders and market insights. While one group invested in communities and one generated revenue for Microsoft, both aimed to achieve the same social outcomes: equipping people with technology and tools to improve their lives. Using APCO’s recommendations, Microsoft created an overarching initiative, led by the Citizenship and Emerging Markets groups, to bring technology to the next billion underserved people worldwide by 2015, under the brand name of *Microsoft Unlimited Potential*.

THE RESULT

Microsoft Unlimited Potential was unveiled by Bill Gates in Beijing in April 2007 and was immediately heralded as a pioneering integration of business and corporate citizenship strategy and practice. Since then the group has developed breakthrough technologies, as well as further public-private partnerships, that bring the benefits of technology to people at the middle and bottom of the economic pyramid. Microsoft continues to support underserved communities through significant investment in education, entrepreneurship, skills training and capacity building – all of which are clearly aligned with the company’s core competencies and wider business goals.

APCO has worked with Microsoft since 2001 supporting and advising on corporate citizenship, regulatory matters, government relations and communication across markets in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas.

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY & FINANCE

- Branding & Positioning
- Corporate Advisory & Market Entry
- Executive & Board Communication
- Financial Communication
- Internal Communication
- Marketing Communication
- Product Launch Navigator – APCO PathfinderSM

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- Litigation Communication
- Media Relations & Spokesperson Training
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- Social Media – APCO Online[®]
- Stakeholder Mapping & Engagement
- Strategic Philanthropy

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC POLICY

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- Antitrust & Competition
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