

# Interview Summary: Cynthia Cooper, Progress Software



# Background

SiriusDecisions identified Progress Software as a client organization making smart investments in customer advocacy. As part of our ongoing research to understand client best practices, we requested an interview to learn more about their approach and results.

Cynthia Cooper, Senior Manager, Customer & Partner Reference Programs from Progress Software was interviewed by Megan Heuer (Vice President and Group Director) and Bob Peterson (Group Director) on January 28, 2014.

The following notes reflect observations from that discussion. We also requested the opportunity to share an example from Cynthia's work at Progress in an upcoming presentation at the Summit on Customer Engagement (gathering of advocacy professionals).

# Summary of Observations (1)

- **Key contributor:** Advocacy is a strategic contributor to marketing and sales and can be part of many tactics, from social media to sales enablement and sales and marketing see advocacy as integral to their goals
  - SD View: This perspective positions advocacy in the right light, which is as a major contributor to marketing and sales success
- **Success not “reference”:** Advocacy is a “win-win” scenario for Progress, focused on delivering marketing and sales tools but also strong internal (and external) marketing tools for customers themselves
  - SD View: This is the best practice perspective that sets apart companies who get more from their advocacy work
- **Role-based needs:** Advocacy supports the needs and goals of different roles, from customer to partner to sales to marketing;
  - SD View: Again this is a best-practice approach that brings a strategic perspective to sourcing and delivering the right assets and interactions

## Summary of Observations (2)

- **Right ask, right time:** Focus on appropriate request of customer based on their lifecycle stage
  - SD View: This is a best practice; waiting for a complex case study misses an opportunity for participation from more customers with valuable stories
- **Can-do Approach:** Those doing advocate marketing must be creative about who within a customer will be able to share a story;
  - SD View: This approach focuses on what can be done rather than what cannot and leads to Cynthia's ability to accomplish more with relatively fewer resources
- **Team work:** "Sales team is customer reference manager's best friend"
  - SD View: This view leads to better partnership with a critical function
- **Ecosystem:** Partners are critical contributors to advocacy and it benefits them to help the program; Her strategy is to streamline process such that takes partner less than 1 hour to help with advocacy activities
  - SD View: Many organizations struggle to engage partners and have to manage a great degree of mistrust over who manages the relationship—Cynthia's view was refreshingly constructive and positive