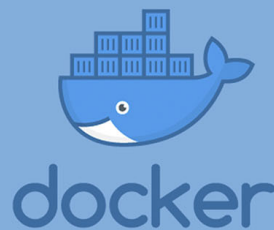


INNOVATION

Docker: Innovation in the B2B Tech Market

by Amanda Wong



Docker is a B2B web platform company with an innovative business model.

✓ **INSIGHT** | NOTE 16 Sep 2015

The term business-to-business, or B2B, comprises a range of transactions conducted between companies. B2B organizations play a critical role in facilitating the transfer of goods, materials, and services between enterprises, though they rarely enter the public awareness. While B2B companies may not have the same widespread recognition held by many Business-to-Consumer (B2C) companies, they must still work to develop a reputable brand reputation within their markets.

The difficulty of this prospect has been partially responsible for the challenges facing B2B corporations within the tech industry. Despite the field's overall whirlwind growth, B2B tech products have faced an increasingly competitive landscape where clear differentiation and strong brand equity have become critical. Lukasz Gumini, of software consultancy firm Container Solutions, hypothesizes that the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a brand in the B2B marketplace stems from the higher expectations of consumers in B2B markets.

"I think that businesses expect a much higher quality of service than end users do. So it is harder for the market of B2B services to grow. Only a handful of companies were actually able to win customers' trust."

The open source project **Docker** has managed to solve questions of brand reputability by establishing a unique relationship between their own core product and the products of their consumers – a model that has promoted high levels of trust between the organization and its clients.

The Docker platform, launched in 2013, aims to make it more efficient for software developers and companies to distribute and run web applications by packaging single applications and their dependencies – runtime, system tools, etc. – into an isolated container which can then be run on any computer and in any cloud configuration. The product relies on customers to delineate how application and network resources are distributed and deployed, giving customers the ability to use Docker's technology within situations and environments entirely under their control.

This process compels organizational consumers to develop a partnership with Docker that serves as a foundation for a relationship of brand trust, creating a strong competitive advantage for the company in the B2B market. The strength of Docker's model and reputation that has led to its rapid growth – in 2014, the company saw an increase of 18.8K% in software downloads.

The surge in open source downloads has prompted the company to expand into commercial products and services. Earlier this year, Docker secured reseller agreements with software giants Amazon, IBM, and Microsoft. They intend to provide certified versions of Docker Engines along with support services and management tools to customers.

As far as these commercial partnerships have progressed, Docker has been integrated fully into IBM's DevOps and cloud. Docker has also worked with Microsoft Azure to integrate container applications across Microsoft Windows Server. At DockerCon 2015, Microsoft Azure CTO Mark Russinovich exhibited Microsoft's ability to run a hybrid Linux/Windows application on a Mac using containers that are part of Microsoft Azure's Windows Server, expected to be released in 2016.

While it may not be as easy to see the value of brand reputation within B2B markets, Docker's rapid growth over the past two years demonstrates that even those organizations without a direct connection to consumer markets will benefit by cultivating trust within their brands.

For more information on B2B marketing, management, and strategy, please consider reading the California Management Review article "[B2B Brand Architecture](#)," by Stephen Muelle, Niraj Dawar, and Deva Rangarajan.



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