



Succeeding Together –

Microsoft and Partner Case Studies

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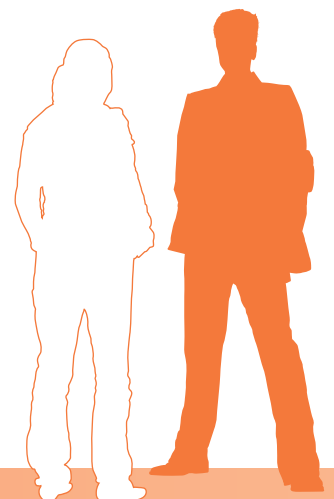
Winning partnerships

At Microsoft we are always keen to share experiences with you – to give you the detailed insights into our technology, relationships and people that will help you get the most from your partnership with us.

In the pages that follow you'll see just a few examples of how some of our partners have profited from a close alliance with us to grow their business.

Whether it's creating a new revenue stream, doubling income over two years, building a cross-border business, or fast-tracking high level skills for a start-up, we have been able to help our partners exceed their greatest expectations.

To find out some of the ways we can work with you to build a better future, just read on...



Beyond the MOSS box with Solidsoft...

Summary

- The challenge:** Evolving Solidsoft's capability to deliver end-to-end business process management solutions by incorporating MOSS 2007 into its domain of expertise
- The solution:** 'Beyond the Box' MOSS capability
- The team:** John Westworth, Jo Carpenter and Chris Parkes
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity, generating demand, closing deals and growing the business

Globally recognised as one of Microsoft's most valuable business integration partners with an extensive capability in delivering Microsoft® BizTalk™ related solutions, Solidsoft saw an opportunity to integrate Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) within its portfolio of offerings in 2007. Doing so would crystallise Solidsoft's position as a Microsoft prime business process management (BPM) partner.

This is the story of how the two organisations worked together to make it happen.

Solidsoft is unique within the Microsoft gold certified partner community. Leveraging its .NET and BizTalk development expertise, Solidsoft delivers beyond-the-box enterprise solutions, including: enterprise application integration (EAI); business to business integration (B2B); business process management (BPM); business activity monitoring (BAM) and service orientated architectures (SOA) solutions.

In 2007, the company realised that incorporating MOSS 2007 into its solution toolbox would enhance its capability and enable it to deliver more highly dynamic customer solutions.

Pam McClelland, Microsoft alliance manager at Solidsoft picks up the story:

"When we decided to go down the MOSS track we wanted to quickly get to the point where we were as comfortable with MOSS capability as we were with BizTalk.

Our Partner Account Manager was quick to introduce us to John Westworth. John wasted no time at all in pulling together all the strands within Microsoft to make this happen," she remembers.

According to Pam and Mark Usher, Solidsoft's business account director, being introduced to John Westworth, a partner solution sales specialist at Microsoft was a turning point.

"In those early days John was brilliant at articulating the capability of MOSS. He made it easy for me to explain MOSS's rich technical capability along with the licensing model in a way which our clients understood," explains Mark.

"He put things into context, helped us connect the technical capabilities with business benefits. We soon became aware of hundreds of possibilities where we could use MOSS immediately. John got us all very excited.

So much so that we decided to extend the regular BizTalk events for which we were renowned to include MOSS. John helped here too, regularly speaking at these events and enthusing our clients. Clients love having people like John at these events. Having access to the experts from Microsoft at lunch and breakouts is something they would not experience elsewhere," continues Mark.

"Increasing numbers of organisations throughout the UK are seeing us as a safe pair of hands."

It was not long before Solidsoft consultants became comfortable enough to make these MOSS presentations themselves. But John's role was not redundant. He was still very much active in a pre-sales support role.

"We provide easy to use solutions to complex issues. Explaining complex technical solutions in a way which business people understand is crucial for us to win new business. In the early days John's support was invaluable and he actively helped in technical architecture workshops with clients. One example is a large city council looking for a record management system (EDRMS). Helped by John, our pitch had MOSS at its centre. John helped us stress the capability of MOSS not just for EDRMS but as a platform from which the council could achieve some of its other objectives too, from its intranet to its external citizenship site.

Rather than sweep away the idea of MOSS as an EDRMS solution, it has now become the product of choice and is challenging some of the more established offerings," Mark explains.

"John has done so much to help us," Pam says.

"He has been brilliant at brokering relationships between us and people at Microsoft who could help us. He introduced us to Chris Parkes, for example, who led a memorable brainstorming session with our senior consultants. The session looked at the end-to-end capabilities of MOSS. He covered collaboration, business intelligence, content management, search and people/personalisation from a functional perspective. He also investigated MOSS's platform capabilities with regards to using workflow and forms, facilitating our team to envisage solutions for customer's specific business processes.

Another person he introduced us to was Jo Carpenter. Jo, a solution channel development manager at Microsoft, provides strategic consultancy, perspective and encouragement. When you're working at the rate that we are, you become too close to projects to see the progress you've made. Jo came in with a fresh pair of eyes and said 'Hey guys, you've got six examples of MOSS projects working in six months, you're well ahead of the game.' She helped us to realise where we had made progress and where there were gaps we needed to focus on.

For example, historically we have been selling to an IT market. Now we also need to sell to a business audience. Jo, forever generous with her time, is helping us to address this transition. She is making introductions to other people who can help along the way too.

"She has come in, brought perspective and raised the bar," adds Pam.

Microsoft has helped Solidsoft increase its capabilities, generate demand and close deals. Named as Microsoft's global partner of the year in 2007 for business process and integration, and one of a handful of UK-based organisations serving on Microsoft's worldwide partner advisory council (PAC) for BPM, Solidsoft is among the best, delivering the best and using its position to influence Microsoft's future product direction.

"Increasing numbers of organisations throughout the UK are seeing us as a safe pair of hands they can entrust to connect their people, processes and systems, not only with BizTalk but with MOSS 2007 too. John, Jo and Chris's work has gone a long way towards getting us to this position. We look forward to realising our next challenge with them..." concludes Pam.

The next challenge?

To have all of Solidsoft consultants reach MOSS MVP (Microsoft Most Valued Partner) status and to join the Microsoft information worker MOSS related PAC.

Bringing it all together for SCC

Summary

- The challenge:** To treat SCC as one business
- The solution:** Re-engineering the way Microsoft account manages SCC
- The team:** Toni Kent, Stuart Monro
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity and growing the business

When Mark Murrin challenged Microsoft to treat SCC as one business, leveraging the sum of its parts to give its customers a better experience, his Microsoft Partner Account Managers pulled all the strings to support SCC's ambitious planning and direction.

Doing so changed the way SCC was perceived, both within Microsoft and outside, led to a new way of working, a way that is setting the standard in Infrastructure Optimisation (IO), increased SCC's capabilities and helped it to re-engineer and grow its business...

As a best of breed technology solutions provider specialising in infrastructure, SCC has an enviable 30 year track record for helping European based companies and government organisations source, integrate and manage their infrastructure to deliver more for less. So when Mark Murrin took on the role of Microsoft Alliance Manager for SCC in 2007, he was keen to revitalise the promise and potential of partnering with Microsoft. As a multi-disciplined partner, SCC had historically partnered with Microsoft on several levels. Mark wanted to create an integrated approach that combined the sum of the parts to offer a better service, experience and value innovation to SCC's customers. He took this challenge to his Microsoft Partner Account Managers, Toni Kent and Stuart Monro, asking them how they could help make it happen.

"Toni and Stuart responded brilliantly. They worked together to help produce one plan leveraging all SCC's strengths to their best effect. Previously Toni had lead the licensing side of our partnership agreement with Microsoft and Stuart had looked after the systems integrator side – a critical and fast evolving area for SCC. They swiftly and seamlessly integrated their approaches, in support of our much broader and ambitious aims," explains Mark.

That SCC wanted to be treated by Microsoft as one partner delivering A-Z in a number of areas made sense to Toni and Stuart. So they collaborated with Mark, envisioning what such a partnership would look like and how to best represent it to the Microsoft and SCC boards. Having arrived at a plan, they set about changing the perceptions of SCC within Microsoft. This was the first step towards making it happen.

Their diligence paid off. The change happened and it happened quickly. So, how were two people able to change processes and perceptions within such a large organisation as Microsoft so rapidly?

"Any organisation is only as good as the sum of its parts, even an organisation as colossal as Microsoft. Our relationship with the Microsoft team works because everyone sees and is committed to the bigger opportunity this approach affords and is absolutely about wringing maximum value out of the sum of those parts," explains Mark.

"Through effective partnering even the most ambitious strategy can be realised."

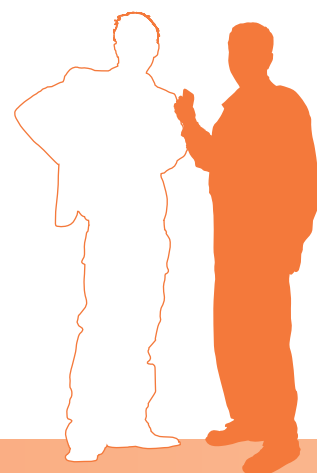
"The individuals involved are proactive, collaborative, agile and able to see the big picture. Take Toni: while she had traditionally looked after the large accounts side of our business, she had a clear view of all the areas of SCC's business and how we may be able to work together. She had the foresight and strategic insight to see how to make this happen. She is also a great influencer, able to quickly win hearts and minds to get top level sponsorship; able to articulate what it is that SCC brings to Microsoft that other partners can't. Every touch-point in both businesses right up to the board understands the value in this new way of working.

Toni taking the lead in the Microsoft team, allowed Stuart to stay focused on the systems integrator side of the SCC account, continuing to deliver whilst helping facilitate direction changing activities focused on IO supporting the increased value we take to our customers. Without Stuart's vision and collaboration they would not have succeeded in 'joining us up'.

Indeed, we're ahead of the curve thanks to Stuart's inputs. For example, he was instrumental in getting us selected as one of just 14 IO Academy members. He helped support and drive our ambitious technical and commercial readiness programmes across the UK, contributing to a sales training plan to ensure 200 plus UK SCC sales people were ready to take this new approach to market."

According to Mark, account managers like Toni and Stuart have the power to make an enormous amount of difference to partners' businesses. They know the Microsoft business inside out and if you help them understand yours' then through effective partnering even the most ambitious strategy can be realised.

"Toni and Stuart have helped me change the way we do business with Microsoft, taking it to a new level from which our customers are already benefiting. They have helped to enhance our capability and drive our growth," concludes Mark.



Bringing the Force to EASY SOFTWARE UK

Summary

- The challenge:** To realise EASY SOFTWARE's potential in the UK
- The solution:** Raising visibility locally, supporting marketing activity
- The team:** Nigel Turner, Kirsty Sizeland
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity with the intention of creating joint demand, and growing the business

Founded in 1990, EASY SOFTWARE has evolved to become the unrivalled leader in modern, scalable document management solutions deployed through a network of resellers, integrators and line of business applications providers.

Headquartered in Germany, with a turnover of €21m in 2006, EASY has offices in the UK, US and Singapore and operates in a further 27 countries supported through a network of over 120 partners.

Indeed, partnership is at the heart of its go-to-market strategy. So, with key partners in the UK including Touchstone, ITNET, Xerox, Konica, TSL and Spacemaker Solutions and customers including Mediterranean Shipping Company, Martin Dawes, Hitachi, WH Smith, Electricity Supply Board (Ireland), Alcon Labs, Cape Industrial Services, Novar Gent, Radstone, French Connection UK and Alcatel Submarine Networks, it is surprising that EASY SOFTWARE UK was not on Microsoft UK's radar until recently.

The fact that it is comes down to the Obi Wan Kenobi character traits of Microsoft's very own Jedi Knight, Nigel Turner, claims Nic Metcalfe, EASY SOFTWARE UK's channel and marketing manager.

This is the story of how Nigel uncovered EASY SOFTWARE UK's potential and challenged it to double its income in two years, with Microsoft's support.

When Nigel Turner, EASY SOFTWARE's International Partner Account Manager, spotted that the company's head office in Germany was doing rather well from Microsoft's Influenced Revenue Royalty programme, thanks in no small part to activity in the UK, he made a point of meeting the UK team at the end of the summer of 2007.

"We met Nigel at a partner's event. He had done his homework and seemed interested in looking further under the hood, asking us about EASY UK's targets and aspirations," says Nic Metcalfe, Channel and Marketing Manager for EASY SOFTWARE UK.

"Having completed his fact finding mission, Nigel declared 'Microsoft can help you double your turnover in 24 months. We were listening.'"

EASY SOFTWARE UK was not in the certified partner community at this stage, but both Nic and Andrew Graham, EASY SOFTWARE UK's Managing Director, had seen what could happen to organisations that engaged fully with Microsoft in previous roles. Keen to accelerate the relationship, guided by Nigel, EASY SOFTWARE UK began its quest for gold certification.

"We now have all the customer references and our product is certified. We are just awaiting confirmation of our Microsoft Certified Software Engineers status. Even without these, our relationship is bearing rich fruits," advises Nic.

"Microsoft can help you double your turnover in 24 months. We were listening," Nigel declared.

"Getting Nigel along, as part of the Microsoft Open Borders programme, to our kick-off meeting in January was a great start. He presented his aspirations for EASY in the UK and, to the delight of our techies, did a bit of product evangelism, giving them sneaky peaks of the future with demo's of Surface and Silverlight," picks up Andrew.

"Our UK staff felt that they were no longer the poor cousin's in the EASY SOFTWARE family. They were being taken seriously. This was inspiring. It was just the start though," added Andrew.

Indeed. Being part of the Microsoft partnership community brings many benefits, not least of which is being introduced to service providers with a track record of dramatically improving relationships between Microsoft and its partners. For EASY SOFTWARE UK, the introduction to Caroline Egan of Giant Step Ltd has been crucial.

"Nigel and Kirsty Sizeland, our Partner Marketing Manager at Microsoft, recommended using Caroline to help us nail our value propositions for key markets in a way that would resonate within the Microsoft community. She facilitated a day's workshop with all of us present. The end result was three value propositions that would drive forward our marketing activity: one for the legal sector; one for financial services and one for business services," says Nic.

"Caroline was awesome, a more than convincing Princess Leia. The results of this activity are now with another Microsoft recommended provider, The Telemarketing Company, who will be running a campaign in these sectors for us imminently, co-funded by Microsoft," he adds.

So what have the benefits been to EASY SOFTWARE of extending its strong partnership relationship with Microsoft in Germany to the UK?

"Well it's still early days, yet, thanks to Nigel's vigilance and attention to detail, EASY SOFTWARE UK has grown from being not even on the radar, to being up there in the driving seat of its very own Jedi Starship. OK, so we're just flying down the trenches at the moment. We haven't started hitting the decks. But, with Obi and Princess Leia at our side, the sequel is looking promising," concludes Nic...or should that be Luke?"

Changing perceptions for NEC Philips

Summary

The challenge: Changing perception of NEC Philips as a vendor to a systems integrator

The solution: Championing NEC Philips

The team: Sandra Peignaux, Karl Small, Sue Hogg, Rina Ladva, Mark Deakin

The benefits: Growing the business

To the uninitiated, the name NEC Philips conjurs up images of products and packaging. Uniting two such powerful brand names, it is easy to see why the assumption is often made that NEC Philips is a vendor.

For the UK based NEC Philips Unified Solutions business this can cause problems. Why? Because it is the UK systems integrator business of the NEC Group of Japan and is focused on providing enterprise IT and unified communications (UC) and collaboration solutions to medium and large enterprises in the commercial and public sectors. It delivers customised and secure productivity solutions integrated tightly into business processes – certainly not a vendor.

This was the challenge that Chris de Silva, NEC Philips managing director realised he had to overcome when meeting with Sandra Peignaux, a Microsoft unified communications specialist, at the VOIP exhibition last year. This meeting led to a catalogue of events and contacts, culminating in a change of perception at Microsoft that is helping the organisation to grow...

With a name like NEC Philips behind you, it should not be difficult to leverage partnership opportunities from an organisation like Microsoft. However, with brand names comes brand baggage, and so even though Microsoft was fully engaged with NEC Philips at an EMEA level, NEC Philips in Cambridge, UK, was not really realising the full potential of such opportunities.

"We were a gold partner because NEC Philips had been using Microsoft technologies in its solutions for many years across EMEA. However, as a UC systems integrator we had not been active in the channel and we were not really on Microsoft's radar," explains Chris.

"Being a gold partner, or a recognisable brand name, is not enough in itself to enable partners to get the best out of their Microsoft partnership. You need to leverage such advantages to get noticed locally. Once you are noticed locally and your cause is championed, many things can happen," he continues.

This is certainly true for NEC Philips. After meeting Sandra Peignaux, a Microsoft UC expert at last year's VoIP exhibition, the organisation found itself put into incubation and hot-housed by a new account manager.

"Sandra took a real interest in our business and came to see us in Cambridge. She immediately recognised that we needed a proactive account manager on our case and arranged for Karl Small to look after our interests during an incubation period.

"Making this transition is helping us to grow our business."

We had expected the ritualistic process driven knowledge capturing you go through at the start of such relationships. It was not like that though. Karl was keen to understand our business and did so quickly. Proactive, intelligent and approachable, Karl took us to places we had not previously been.

Realising that we were not an established vendor, but a start up systems integrator/ solutions provider, he began to treat us to all the trappings a new organisation gets, and to encourage others to do so too. Getting us on an incubation programme, Karl went on to ensure that we were invited to all the right gatherings and introduced to all the right people.

It felt like Microsoft was really interested in us. I could relax in the knowledge that somebody inside Microsoft was looking after our interests, profiling us at the right level with the right people," continues Chris.

As part of the incubation programme NEC Philips was encouraged to attend the World Partner Conference in Denver where Chris met Sue Hogg and Rina Ladva and subsequently Mark Deakin back in the UK, all of whom took an active interest in the NEC Philips business. The company is now in touch with key Microsoft people in a number of the verticals it serves, working together to win new business opportunities.

Now, as it comes out of incubation and enters the next phase of its relationship with Microsoft, Chris reflects on how NEC Philips' story reflects that of the evolution of the communications business generally, recognising the irony of the fact that it took local interest to leverage global understanding:

"Because of the NEC Philips name and the history of the once separate parts of this organisation, we were highly engaged with Microsoft at the Redmond and EMEA level and, hampered by assumptions, almost disengaged at a local level. Through recognising this and getting some switched on UK people on our case at Microsoft, treating us as what we are, a small but fast-growing and focused systems integrator, we were able to accelerate the speed at which we made the transition, in their minds, from voice vendor to service partner. Making this transition is helping us to grow our business."



Creating a new revenue stream for Volt Delta International

Summary

- The challenge:** To create a new revenue stream
- The solution:** Integrating Microsoft CRM within Volt Delta International's product
- The team:** Rachael Beeston, Anne Lambton, Michael McClary, Lynn Robson
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity and growing the business

Perhaps best known for its directory enquiry and operator assistance solutions, Volt Delta International (www.voltdelta.net) offers a wide array of business solutions to the telecom, contact centre, financial services and enterprise markets.

To Microsoft however, with its \$250 million turnover, its global presence, its rich client-base and its ambitious growth plans, Volt Delta offered a fast route to market for Microsoft CRM.

This is the story of how individuals within the two organisations combined their strengths to side-step potential obstacles and create a new revenue stream.

Volt Delta had been a Microsoft partner for some years before it really began to reap the rewards. Paying its annual subscription, it had been taking the wall plaques and logos, sticking them on its walls and its literature and doing little else, confesses Roger Smith, Volt Delta's enterprise sales director.

It was the arrival of Rachael Beeston as its Partner Account Manager (PAM) and the subsequent relationships that she helped to build that really made the difference.

"Sure our two corporations offer complementary elements that could result in substantial new income for both, but people do business with people, not corporations," explains Roger.

"It is the relationship between the people in both organisations that has driven the business between us. If either side had acted differently, our one stop shop CRM solution would still be an idea."

So how did the opportunity for a new revenue stream come about?

"We had been a Microsoft partner for some time but the relationship had never been a proactive one. Then, two years ago, we learnt that we were to have a new PAM. This was the turning point," remembers Roger.

Indeed, it was at Volt Delta's initial orientation meeting with Rachael that the opportunity to open up a new revenue stream by integrating Microsoft CRM became apparent.

"Rachael wasted no time in introducing us to Anne Lambton, Microsoft Dynamics CRM Partner Account Manager and Michael McClary, Dynamics ISV architect evangelist. Within three months myself, James Glasspool – Volt Delta's director of strategic marketing, Rachael, Anne and Michael were sat around a table in a Microsoft meeting room at Thames Valley Park (TVP) planning our future. Anne and Michael were phenomenal. They understood immediately what was possible and how to make it happen. They knew how Microsoft worked inside out and,

"It was fantastic. It happened so quickly."

through Rachael, understood how we worked. We did not have to jump through one hoop; there was no prolonged policing of procedures; they made it simple. All we needed to do was to come up with a top line business plan and marketing strategy. Then Anne would help us with the fiscals,” explains Roger.

For Roger and James this was a relief. Though part of a large organisation in terms of turnover, Volt Delta does not have the headcount to dedicate people to look after relationships with partners. Neither did it plan to. Flexible working is part of VDI’s culture. It is why Volt Delta is so agile and able to respond to opportunities so quickly.

“Rachael has been wonderful in helping us side-step administrative processes. We have an agreement. She understands that we simply do not have the time to do everything Microsoft’s internal controls demand. We understand that she knows what needs to be done by when. She has permission to nag me. I guess she exercises that right as she seems to get me organised even though she works three days a weeks and has other clients to care for too. It does not seem like nagging though and you absolutely trust that what needs to be done is being done. She is the ultimate facilitator,” Roger explains.

Rachael must have been working her magic after the initial meeting with Anne because within weeks, Roger and James returned to TVP complete with their plan. They left a few hours later, complete with Anne’s commitment to fund training and marketing and help them turn the plan into reality.

“It was fantastic. It happened so quickly. We now have a new dimension to our business which we will be introducing to the Microsoft CRM user group in June. With the might of the Microsoft marketing machine behind us, we will be rolling out across EMEA and USA too,” Roger picks up.

The benefits do not stop here though. Rachael is still busy introducing Volt Delta to internal telco Account Managers. It is Rachael who introduced them to Lynn Robson with whom they are now working on a joint proposition to a major European telco.

“It’s opportunities like these, where the sum equals more than the parts, that the true potential of partnering with Microsoft lays. If you work with your PAM to find these opportunities then you soon find yourself in the fast lane. Don’t just sit in the hard shoulder waiting for Microsoft to pull you in though. Look for the opportunities and make them happen,” advises Roger. Roger, James and the team at Volt Delta did. The benefits include realising new streams of revenue, new markets and new applications. This has included technical, marketing, training and financial support. Although Volt Delta’s new one stop CRM solution is not yet live, Roger, James, Rachael and Anne have total confidence that it will make its challenging sales target for its first year.

“Microsoft is all too often seen as just a very large corporation with many processes and internal controls that can seem demanding. It is one of the biggest businesses on the planet so needs process. Once you get to know it though, Microsoft has a very human side which works with organisations to mutual benefit, increasing their capacity and helping them and their people to thrive.” concludes Roger.

Crossing borders with Mamut

Summary

- The challenge:** To help Mamut do business in the UK
- The solution:** Connecting, promoting and validating Mamut
- The team:** Nigel Turner
- The benefits:** Creating joint demand, closing deals, increasing capacity and growing the business

More than 350,000 small businesses across Europe already simplify their daily business with Mamut's Microsoft-based solution. With the pro-active partnering arrangement it now has in place with Microsoft throughout Northern Europe, this figure looks set to grow exponentially.

Here's Mamut's story:

Founded in 1994 in Norway, Mamut is a leading European provider of complete, integrated software solutions and internet services for SMEs. Following an IPO in 2004, the organisation began expanding its business across UK, Ireland and Holland. Acquiring a hosting company in 2006, giving coverage in 16 European companies with the target of expanding this to 27 within three years, Mamut is ideally positioned to expand its reach across Northern Europe.

Here in the UK, Mamut has been more than making its numbers since its inception. Microsoft's contribution to this success has been significant, and it has been about far more than technology alone, according to Alan Moody, managing director of Mamut UK and Ireland:

"Sure, we've been able to grow quickly because we use standard technology and that technology happens to be Microsoft's, but our relationship goes way beyond technology.

In the UK, our engagement with Microsoft has evolved from their Open Borders Programme, an initiative to help partners leverage their presence through all the countries they do business. We were one of only ten European ISVs on this programme and it is through it that our Account Manager in Norway, John Henrik Anderson, introduced us to our UK Account Manager, Nigel Turner. Nigel has helped grow our business here in many ways.

A Senior Account Manager, Nigel knows his way around Microsoft and can open doors. He has introduced us to existing channel partners, collaborated on work with certified small business specialists in the UK and helped to promote us to the UK SME market. One such opportunity alone led to 80 qualified business leads," advises Alan.

Yet, it is not just through its SME network that Microsoft is helping Mamut. It is also introducing Mamut to other infrastructure partners, such as HP and Orange.

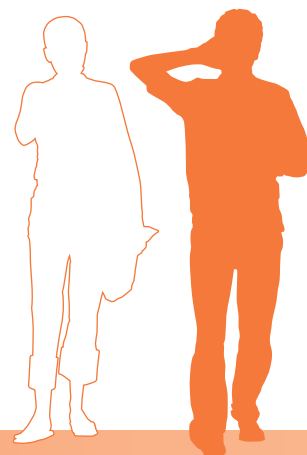
"This gives us
great credibility.
It earns respect.
It wins deals."

Take the HP opportunity. Driven by the Server Community at Microsoft, Nigel introduced Alan to senior ISV people at HP, positioning Mamut as a route to the SME market for their collaborative offering.

"When in meetings with the likes of HP, Nigel appears to be representing us, not Microsoft. He pretty much positions it as 'Look guys, when dealing with Mamut, so far as you're concerned they are Microsoft'. This gives us great credibility. It earns respect. It wins deals.

"What makes Nigel great? He understands our business and how it can get the best out of Microsoft. For every initiative I'm aware of, he's aware of ten more. He knows what's realistic so helps us prioritise. He gets stuck in and makes things happen, passing on his experiences to his equivalents in Norway and the other markets we sell into, so they can too. He even drives you to the airport when you're running late.

What business results are we achieving thanks to our partnership with Microsoft? Well, the deals that Microsoft have introduced us to and helped us close have, in no small part, contributed to our 52 quarters of double digit growth." concludes Alan.



Easing the way for SunGard

Summary

- The challenge:** Adapting with SunGard as it changed shape
- The solution:** Helping to take care of the small things whilst reshaping the big ones
- The team:** Adrian Mepham, Steve Morrow and Karl Noakes
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity, generating joint demand, closing deals together and growing the business

Jonathan Woodward, chief technical officer (CTO) for SunGard, is somebody who has truly gone through the Microsoft rights of passage. Kicking off SunGard's relationship with Microsoft as a technical vendor leveraging .Net eight years ago, he has grown it to that of a strategic business partner. Treated as a non-managed vendor, an ISV, a SI and recently as a mixture of both – he has seen it all.

As with all rights of passage stories there have been highs and lows, periods of anticipation and of growth and one or two people who have eased the way. As with all good rights of passage stories, the end marks a new beginning.

This is SunGard's story:

With annual revenue of more than \$4 billion, SunGard is a global leader in software and processing solutions for financial services, higher education and the public sector. Serving over 25,000 customers in more than 50 countries, including the world's 50 largest financial services companies, SunGard is a global name and a key strategic business partner for Microsoft. It has not always been this way though.

"SunGard has been around for 30 years now. I kicked off our relationship with Microsoft eight years ago as a product vendor leveraging .Net. As SunGard delivered, the relationship grew to that of a managed partner in Microsoft's ISV group, delivering national scaled rollouts across the UK police force using Biztalk and other Microsoft technologies. Fairly quickly, SunGard became a fully managed partner. Within the last year we have looked at our capabilities and decided to open a professional service arm. Microsoft is working very closely with us to enable this," advises Jonathan.

Along the way, Jonathan has met many Microsoft companions: Adrian Mepham, Partner Account Manager; Steve Morrow, ISV Team Manager and more recently Karl Noakes, Director of Partner Sales have been pivotal.

"Adrian worked with us for several years in a technical support role on our UK Police Forces account before becoming our Partner Account Manager. Technically strong and commercial savvy, Adrian simultaneously sees the big and the small picture. Removing barriers, he has consistently introduced us to other account managers, sector and technology specialists and to leads, at exactly the right time. His network is extensive and he has always gone that extra mile for us, even if doing so has been beyond his remit."

"It's been a great journey, pretty much non-stop."

Indeed, it is Adrian that introduced SunGard to Steve Morrow and to Karl Noakes.

"Adrian introduced us to Steve to help us formulate a strategy that would enable us to become a services partner. This introduction was instrumental in allowing us to expand. Steve really understands his partners' strengths and has a great ability to foresee opportunities. Alongside Adrian, he helped to join the dots in terms of introductions that enabled us to complete our larger picture," advises Jonathan.

"One significant thing Steve did was to get SunGard onto a partner advisory panel. This positioned us as an influencer and got us in front of other influencers," he adds.

These introductions brought in new business and SunGard's network took on a life of its own. Jonathan became a thought leader and a familiar face around Microsoft, sitting on the UK Architects' Council and the Connected Systems Advisory Council.

Then came the day when SunGard sat down and reviewed its capabilities. They offered leading products and services across the public sector. They employed 1500 people in the UK. This made a great powerbase from which to open a professional services arm. Here was another great opportunity.

Enter Karl Noakes.

"Adrian knew a meeting with Karl was the next stepping stone. Karl is a visionary leader. He knows how to bring people, ideas and strategies together. He makes things happen. After just one meeting with him, we had distilled our strategy down to three key elements. We had an agreement that Microsoft would help us integrate our offerings and become a recognised services leader in the UK. That was six months ago and we are already well down the path. I am looking forward to my next meeting with Karl and to accelerating it further," advised Jonathan.

The benefits to SunGard's business have been many: leads; campaigns; partner solution plans ensuring it was pushing the right messages to the right people; introductions; early adoption training and its associated first to market benefits and a phenomenal and sustained growth.

Like any adolescence, lessons have been learnt. Like the best adolescences, coming of age has equipped SunGard with the confidence and contacts to meet its next challenge – unifying the way in which Microsoft manages its accounts.

"It's been a great journey, pretty much non-stop. The key lessons I have learnt are that to get the most out of partnering with Microsoft you have to show that you have the capability and capacity to deliver. Do this, demonstrate that you understand how Microsoft works and that you are aligned to them and great things will happen." concludes Jonathan.

Fast tracking NCI Technologies...

Summary

The challenge: To excel

The solution: Fast tracking gold certification, raising visibility; fast tracking high level skills across multiple competencies and fast tracking the passing on of knowledge

The team: Charlotte Carter, Jason Goddard and Emma Antunes

Andy Trish, Chris Penrose and John Andrew left the safety of paid employment in 2004 to set up NCI Technologies. Four years later, it has grown from a team of three with a debt-laden credit card and a turnover of zero, to a highly profitable team of 18 with a turnover of £1.8 million and high expectations of the future.

Theirs is the type of story 20th Century Fox turns into a Hollywood blockbuster – or could have been, if only NCI had experienced more obstacles and been forced to make more sacrifices along the way.

The truth is it didn't need to and its story is all the more compelling because of this...

In 2004 three senior Microsoft certified engineer's left their place of employment intent on carving their own future. Armed with only a credit card, ambition and knowledge of how to work with Microsoft, they bought three computers, upgraded and sold them. Repeating this exercise six times, they soon created enough of a float to ensure that they would never again be in debt.

Andy Trish, one of those engineers and NCI Technologies' CEO remembers how it felt back then.

"We grew so quickly. We never had to do any marketing. We just grew through word of mouth. We still do. We knew it would be this way because we'd been here before, having gone through Microsoft gold certification at our previous company. This experience had taught us that getting gold certification was a priority. Within six months, we had it," explains Andy.

Experience had also taught Andy to build a strong relationship with his Microsoft Partner Account Manager (PAM). Back then NCI's PAM was Charlotte Carter. Andy knew he could rely on her 100 per cent.

"Charlotte worked wonders. Off the back of the speed with which we'd gained gold certification, she got me a free space at a partner conference in Minneapolis. Here, I realised that NCI's next big challenge would be to get short-listed for an award the following year.

Charlotte pointed me in the right direction and was present at the awards. She spoke to others on my behalf. She oiled the wheels," Andy recalls.

NCI did make it onto the short-list of nominees for the 2006 Microsoft Partner of the Year. It did not win but it was the only UK partner on the list for its competency. This meant visibility. Visibility turned to leads and leads turned to business.

By now, NCI had gained the sort of momentum that could bring risks. Working with Charlotte and Jason Goddard, who was to become its new PAM, NCI set about its next challenge – gaining top skills levels within ten competency areas.

"With year on year growth of 70%, NCI is undoubtedly a success story."

"Jason was phenomenal. He got us on all the right training programmes, he began delving into Microsoft's portfolio, finding things which suited our SME client-base that we had never thought of selling and he put us in touch with the associated product managers."

Whereas most Microsoft partners focus on the short product portfolio, NCI and Jason focused on finding the best solutions for NCI's customers – some of which were hidden gems.

"Exchange Hosted Services was one such product. It had no minimum user level so we could sell it to everyone and that meant that, even though we only sold it at £1.25 per user, within just one month we had £2,000 extra revenue and a portfolio of happy clients with increased resilience to viruses and spam," continues Andy.

During this time, NCI never became diverted from gaining its competencies. Within a year it had all ten. Would it trip over its own shadow? Possibly...

"Suddenly Jason, our partner technology co-ordinators, and people from each of the ten competencies began calling, all wanting updates. We felt we were working for Microsoft. We hadn't set up by ourselves to answer to another master. Luckily we knew Microsoft well enough to understand what to do," Andy continues.

"We asked Jason to work out a way to manage us on a 1:1, not a 1: many basis. He did."

By this time Andy had learnt a great deal about partnering. He had valuable knowledge to share. Helped by Jason and Emma Antunes SME marketing manager at Microsoft, he did this in two ways: by becoming a mentor to other Microsoft partners, introduced to him by Jason; and by co-writing a book about how to partner with Microsoft.

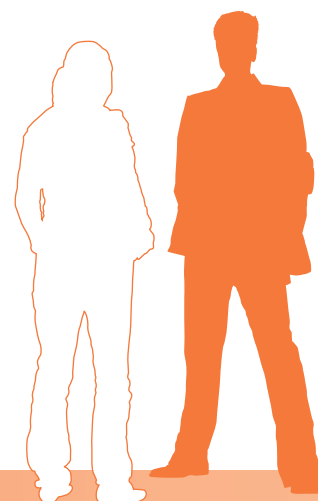
Emma went out of her way to help Andy make this book a reality, even though it was not part of her remit. Andy explains more:

"Emma felt so strongly that this would benefit both Microsoft and its partners that she helped make things happen. We had multiple conference calls, she gave me ideas and helped me present mine. She really went out of her way to listen and provide realistic guidance and to help promote it."

With year on year growth of 70%, NCI is undoubtedly a success story. The key, according to Andy, was gaining gold certification. But what next?

"We have grown from a break-fix partner to a managed service organisation. We are now intent on becoming an e-commerce retailer and ramping up our growth. Having grown organically to 18 employees and £1.8 million turnover, the time has come for strategic acquisitions. Being at the heart of the partner ecosystem will enable us to achieve this too. The story has only just begun..." concludes Andy.

Andy is also researching his second book on partnering with Microsoft. If you would like to contribute to the research, you can find out how on NCI's website.



Building the future with Pelagon...

Summary

- The challenge:** To gain footage in an explosive emerging market
- The solution:** Gold certification, joint marketing initiatives and co-funding future product development
- The team:** Emma Bright and Zoe Andrews
- The benefits:** Closing deals, generating joint demand, increasing capacity and growing the business

Founded in 1999 by David Parker, Pelagon has built its Activity Management Solution (AMS) around Microsoft .NET architecture. AMS is a compelling business management solution for the advertising, marketing, brands and media and entertainment sector.

David and the Pelagon team have a deep understanding of the media and entertainment sector and the agility required to keep up with the sector's pace. With no other integrated and specialised solution serving this sector in place today built entirely on Microsoft technology and fully embracing .Net, Pelagon's AMS gives Microsoft a fantastic opportunity to gain presence in this explosive space.

This is the story of how Emma Bright, Pelagon's Partner Account Manager, spotted this opportunity and, together with Zoe Andrews, Microsoft's head of marketing communications for the leisure and entertainments sector, is helping them to seize it.

"We had been a Microsoft Partner for four years. When Emma joined our account last year she really encouraged us to become a Gold Certified partner. She explained we'd get software to run in-house, access to new technologies crucial to our sector and to sector specific people – from engineers to marketers and everything in between," explains David.

"We did. Emma diligently introduced us to other Microsoft account teams with clients in the advertising, marketing, brand management, media and entertainment sector. We've won new business with three prestigious global agencies totalling 17,000 potential users, who will be utilising Microsoft SharePoint®, MOSS, SQL Server® 2008, IMM, Silverlight™ and Dynamics AX technology platforms.

She pulled all the internal strings to get us on track to being a launch partner for the 3 wave launch in March.

She introduced us to Zoe Andrews, Microsoft UK's head of communications marketing in our sector. Zoe has helped us develop a joint marketing plan which is taking us to places we could never have got to this quickly by ourselves, from interviews in the key trade journal to road shows in the US.

Zoe has even found her way into various parts of the Microsoft partnering purse to help fund the continuing development of our solution against the new wave of technologies due in 2008," concludes David.

Generating joint leads, closing deals together, becoming a launch partner for emerging technologies, promoting its product and co-funding continuing development, the benefits of partnering with Microsoft have been worth their weight in gold for Pelagon. For Microsoft the benefit has been entry into a new and explosive space.

Inspiring performance with Nimbus

Summary

- The challenge:** To find new ways to showcase successes
- The solution:** Sponsorship of an event
- The team:** Ben Tamblyn and James Akrigg
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity, generating joint demand and growing the business

Nimbus delivers software and service solutions which enable companies to capture and deploy a consistent view of their operational processes throughout the organisation, from the CEO to the shop floor.

Headquartered in the UK, with offices in mainland Europe, USA, Middle East and China, Nimbus is one of the UK's fastest-growing companies, regularly featuring in the Deloitte & Touche Fast 50 & European 500.

Nimbus's technology, Control 2007, is tightly integrated with Microsoft SharePoint 2007 and PerformancePoint™ 2007. The results that Nimbus achieves, supporting corporations such as Nestle, Toyota and Chevron, are staggering, so staggering that it was keen to find new and more memorable ways to showcase its successes with its customers.

This is the story of how Microsoft helped, sponsoring Nimbus's annual user conference Inspiring Performance 07 for the first time last year. The event was such a success that Microsoft has since agreed to sponsor Inspiring Performance 08, a series of five conferences in London, Chicago, Johannesburg, Dubai and Beijing.

Ian Gotts, founder and CEO of Nimbus and member of Microsoft's World Wide Partner Advisory Council and UK ISV Partner Advisory Council explains:

"Nimbus has been hosting an annual user conference since its inception 10 years ago. Last year for the first time, Microsoft was the lead sponsor. How did this come about? I asked Ben Tamblyn, Business Development Manager at Microsoft, explaining that it was an opportunity to influence 300 business decision makers from some of the world's largest organisations.

" 'I'll make it happen. I'll work out where to get the money from,' Ben responded in typical style. He did," explains Ian.

The event, Inspiring Performance 07, was the most successful in Nimbus's history. Attended by 310 clients (up from 250 in previous years) it gave Nimbus the perfect platform to launch the integration of SharePoint into their solution, branded Control 2007.

The launch presentation was a sell-out with standing room at the back. It was given by James Akrigg.

"Expecting more Microsoft techno-babble about Sharepoint, James really connected with a very senior business audience. I was staggered by the positive response he got," comments Ian.

"Since then the Nimbus User Group (NUGS), which has over 180 companies as members, specifically asked James back to present to them. James has really helped to drive upgrades to Control 2007 and new sales," he concludes.

For Microsoft, the event was such a success that in 2008 it will fund taking Nimbus's user conference on the road to Chicago, Johannesburg, Dubai, Beijing and London. An inspiring performance indeed...

Keeping it Relevant for SFW Ltd.

Summary

- The challenge:** Becoming the Microsoft approved brand within central government
- The solution:** Keeping things proactive and relevant
- The team:** Adrian Mepham, Matt Ball, Kirsty Sizeland and Shailan Chudasama
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity, generating joint demand and growing the business

SFW's technology, consulting and delivery services create the IT systems to underpin business change. As a specialist "right sized" supplier to government agencies, NDPBs and departmental units, they bring the speed of delivery, responsiveness, efficiency and value which larger players cannot.

Intent on becoming the Microsoft approved brand inside central government, they are often competing against much larger and more well-known systems integrators and consultancies. The support of their Microsoft partner team has been vital to their success.

"Adrian, Matt, Kirsty and the team have helped us gain a foothold and carve our niche in the central government market. From working on our business plan, guiding and supporting us on our areas of specialism, to introducing us to the right person at the right time – nothing is too much for these guys," explains Peter Hornsby, Founder of SFW.

"Introducing us to the right person at the Home Office, helping us make it to the top of the tender list for the new NHS Framework, the list is endless. What each item on it has in common though, is that a member of the team has introduced us to a person, organisation or technology at exactly the right time. Whatever they do, whenever they do it, it is relevant."

The ways in which the Microsoft partner support team have helped SFW grow their business are many. Here are just a few stories:

Making connections

SFW discovered what it believed to be fundamental architectural issues in a governmental department's MOSS integration delivered by another much larger integrator. The department had spent a lot of time and money on the project. SFW knew the complexity of the physical architecture would prevent it from being adopted elsewhere in that department's numerous agencies where security issues were still paramount. They turned to Adrian Mepham, their Partner Account Manager, for help.

Peter Hornsby, founder of SFW explains: "Adrian quickly made contact with the government department and aligned all the key players from that department, Microsoft and SFW. Together we worked it out and developed a simple, replicable solution."

On the Ball

SFW Ltd was bidding for the development of the Heritage Lottery Fund's new grant management system using Visual Studio® 2008. The technology was so new Microsoft was still running showcases. Time was of the essence. SFW needed someone there and then to get them up and running. There was no time for courses. What could they do?

"Microsoft calls Shailan a 'data technology specialist'. To us he is a 'deal maker'."

"I simply rang Matt Ball, our Technical Account Manager. He was on the case. He turned up almost immediately and ran a two hour course. It was like speed dating – only with memorable content ... and aftercare. He did everything possible to cut out weeks of waiting. We won the work," advises Richard Page, sales manager.

Opening doors

"Kirsty Sizeland, our Partner Marketing Manager, has helped us develop and deliver a focused marketing plan. She is even involved in day-to-day implementation. The SharePoint seminars she leads, for example, continue to win us significant new business in the both the public and private sectors. Take the Greater London Authority and Dean and Dyball. Both accounts evolved directly from her input.

She knows how to innovate too – and when. She recently introduced us to a Microsoft approved telemarketing agency. We are now looking forward to converting some of the many leads from our first SharePoint telemarketing campaign," advises Elisa Davey, marketing manager

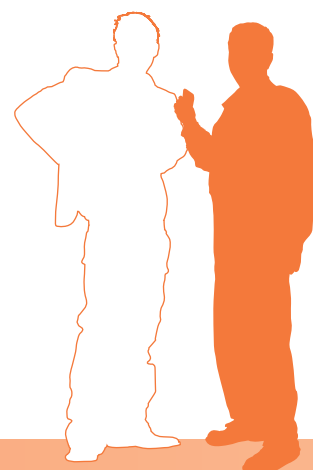
Winning business

"When we need to introduce a new technology to a client base, the team wheels out its secret weapon – Shailan Chudasama," advises Richard Page, SFW's sales manager.

"Shailan is a technologist who chooses to use English as his first language. He really knows how to simplify the complicated, doing so famously won us the SE England Development Agency account.

"Microsoft calls Shailan a 'data technology specialist'. To us he is a 'deal maker'."

Closing deals, increasing capacity, creating joint demand – SFW's partnership with Microsoft is fuelling its growth in every way possible. Not only does SFW have a firm foothold within the central government market, its name is becoming synonymous within it.



Leading POSTcti to water

Summary

- The challenge:** Finding out how best to work with Microsoft
- The solution:** Listening, connecting, gaining Gold partner status, focusing, promoting
- The team:** Mark Deakin, Sandra Peignaux, Julian Datta, Victoria Yates and Glynn Henry
- The benefits:** Generating joint leads and growing the business by 400% in one year

‘You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.’ Or so we’re told.

Neil May, managing director of the unified communications (UC) specialist POSTcti, knew from experience that this is certainly true in the IT partnering world. So, thirsty, with the bit between his teeth, he approached his Microsoft partnership with the stubbornness and speed of a thoroughbred.

“Lead me,” he said. “I’ll drink.”

This is his story.

Since 1997, POSTcti has been providing VARs and SIs with a one-stop shop for converged communication technology building blocks. Its links with leading manufacturers including Intel, HP, Dialogic, Audiocodes and Quintum puts it at the heart of a thriving ecosystem. This ecosystem enables it to supply the essential component parts for all computer based voice and fax communication solutions.

Indeed, it was through this ecosystem that Intel introduced POSTcti to Microsoft two years ago. Given the experiences he already had of partnering with some of the world’s biggest names in technology, Neil May, POSTcti’s managing director, knew that his first challenge would be to find out how to work best with Microsoft.

“I remember during the early days being in touch with Mark Deakin, Microsoft’s UC product specialist in the UK, three times a day every day for weeks. ‘How does Microsoft work? Who do I need to influence? What are the key areas we need to develop competencies in? What is it that’s driving you – licenses, collaboration opportunities or something else? How can we be useful? How can we help you reach your goals?’ I knew from experience that we had to know the answers to these questions if we were to maximise the opportunities that partnering can bring,” advises Neil.

“Mark was always the professional: conscientious; result-focused and brave. He stuck his neck out for us. At the time we were nobodies in the Microsoft partnership community. He took the time to listen. Listening instilled in him a belief in us, motivating him to connect us to his network. He led us to the water. Now it was up to us to drink.”

One of the people Mark introduced Neil to in this period was Sandra Peignaux, Microsoft’s UC Channel Development Manager.

“Sandra was a key enabler. She worked with us to produce a partner sales plan (PSP), talking us through a step by step process to take us to market. She gave us the structure we needed to get the best out of the Microsoft ecosystem and made some very strategic introductions,” Neil recalls.

“At the time we were nobodies in the Microsoft partnership community. He took the time to listen.”

Part of Mark and Sandra's advice had been that POSTcti needed to reach Gold partner status if it wanted to be involved in some of the UK programmes that could really help it flourish. They committed to helping Neil, gave him a roadmap, worked closely with him to achieve the deployment references needed to reach Gold status and generally cleared the way.

"Within a year we were there. We had the Gold status, a portal to another world," remembers Neil.

POSTcti had made it to the Promised Land, a land where things happened even faster. One person who made a big difference to Neil once he'd made it through the golden gates was Julian Datta.

"Julian works in a pre-sales technical environment for Microsoft. He is in an ideal position to recommend partners. Thanks to Mark and Sandra's great work at spreading the POSTCTI word, Julian knew about us, so, when on a pre-sale visit to the international firm of solicitors, DLA Piper, he saw a fit, he recommended they speak to us as a UC specialist.

"Julian put us in touch with Victoria Yates, DLA Piper's account manager. She subsequently introduced us to more solicitors. 'Aha,' I thought. 'Here's a pattern we can repeat. Get to know the account managers for the verticals and see if we can get in through the back door.' It worked."

Helped by his new Partner Account Manager (PAM) Glynn Henry, Neil had soon been put in touch with all the relevant Microsoft PAMs serving sectors in which POSTcti had experience. Soon its name became synonymous with UC within the legal, financial and public sectors.

Neil suddenly found himself alongside the CEOs of Intel, HP, SAP and Computer Associates on a Microsoft video which Steve Ballmer presented at the global launch of Microsoft Exchange and Windows Vista®. He was invited to present at numerous events on partnering and filling the skills gap in UC. Microsoft even funded a case study of POSTcti's UC implementation with Tayside Fire Brigade, which it broadcast at the Worldwide Partner Conference.

"POSTcti's professional services business has quadrupled in the last year. I put that down to the power of Microsoft's partner ecosystem. I feel like we have being lifted up by a whirlwind and taken to where we want to be, bypassing all stop-offs and avoiding wrong turns," concludes Neil.

Making the Case for Unified Communications

Summary

- The challenge:** Gaining early entry and share of the unified communications (UC) market
- The solution:** Marrying in-depth technical and commercial expertise with blue sky thinking to deliver a detailed business plan
- The team:** Sandra Peignaux
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity and growing the business

The UK market for delivering unified communication (UC) solutions to business is sized at over £250m in 2008 and conservatively forecast to grow at between 7 and 11% over the next 3 years.

BT Lynx's unique blend of skill and expertise, coupled with its early embracing of Microsoft's UC vision, meant it was perfectly positioned to take an impressive share of it.

The question was "How?"

Adam Collins, BT Lynx's solutions development manager had been tasked to work out the answer. Working collaboratively with Sandra Peignaux, Microsoft's UC Channel Development Manager, he pulled together an internal white paper. That document became the blue print for BT Lynx's new UC business.

"Sandra collaborated with her team at Microsoft to provide validation, discussion, market analysis and introductions to new partners (to compliment our portfolio). Her sound understanding of the UC product stack and its integration with other products brought technical depth to the report. Her detailed insight into the market as a whole, across vendors, but directly relevant to BT Lynx, brought commercial relevance," advises Adam.

The report grew from a discussion document to a definition of the UC market place and a detailed market report on BT Lynx's position within it. It became the framework around which BT Lynx is growing its UC business and a source of information and evidence to help both partners generate and close new business.

Match making at Static Burst

Summary

- The challenge:** To help Static Burst grow
- The solution:** Proactive account management
- The team:** Jason Goddard
- The benefits:** Generating joint demand, closing deals together and growing the business

Based in Plymouth and Taunton, with engineers across the region, Static Burst has established a firm presence in the South West providing superior IT installation and maintenance services for organisations that have anywhere between 2 and 500 PC users.

Specialising in retail, manufacturing, professional services, Local Authority and education, Static Burst provides businesses with the IT infrastructure they need, fully managed and supported, for a fixed monthly price.

Professional and affordable, Static Burst is helping its growing client base to run their businesses without worrying about IT or the cost. Experienced, dynamic and in-touch with technology and their client-base, Static Burst knows how to spot hidden opportunities and turn them into big business. So much so that it is spinning out two new companies this year.

This is the story of how Microsoft introduced Static Burst to one of these opportunities and helped it become a reality:

"Jason Goddard, our Partner Account Manager, is one of those quiet, dependable people who quietly and consistently 'just gets on with it'. He's like the Cox in a very powerful rowing team. With his eye always clearly on the finishing line, he positions information invisibly, makes introductions at exactly the right moment, sees the big picture as well as the small details, guides business plans to meet all stakeholders' objectives, forges relationships with customers and their Microsoft account managers and creates buy-in from different Microsoft business units and new channels.

By just "getting on with it" Jason drives forward and delivers new business, day in day out," explains Justin Pirie, operations director at Static Burst.

"For example, Jason introduced us to an 'Office as a Service' opportunity with Office Rental. He then quietly drove this opportunity forward. Identifying the three heads of division whose buy-in was needed to turn this opportunity into reality, he persisted in re-organising their diaries until he got all three into the same room with the key players from Static Burst – something which may never have happened without him.

Continuing to help by building the business case and forging other new relationships, Jason was determined to deliver.

Persistence pays. The deal is about to come off and as a direct result Microsoft will net £177 million over five years and we are setting up a joint venture with another Microsoft Partner, Endeavours Technology," concludes Pirie.



Migrating Deltascheme

Summary

- The challenge:** Migrating core product to Microsoft SharePoint
- The solution:** Fast-track gold certification
- The team:** Christian Longstaff, Shy Quereshi and Jo Carpenter
- The benefits:** Increased capability

Formed in 1986, Deltascheme is an established business solutions and technology provider, with a customer list that includes some of the UK's top organisations and brands. Providing information technology strategies, management and applications to meet the enterprise content document and records management (EDRM) needs of corporations, government, educational and not-for-profit organisations, Deltascheme prides itself on helping its clients to find new ways of working.

It is perhaps this skill that led them to help themselves when in 2005, after carrying out a competitive analysis of the future release of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS07), Deltascheme realised that it needed to make some significant changes to its core product strategy if it was to survive in the rapidly changing marketplace.

This is the story of how partnering with Microsoft helped Deltascheme to migrate its core product competency to MOSS07, ensuring its long term health and viability as a business.

"After absorbing the implications from the competitive analysis of SharePoint, we knew we needed to migrate from our existing product platform as quickly as possible to ensure that we could continue to offer the solutions and professional services that our customers require," advises Duncan Williams, Deltascheme's sales director.

"Consulting with Christian Longstaff, former Solution Channel Development Manager (SCDM) for enterprise content management (ECM) at Microsoft, it became clear that the route was partner certification followed by gold partner status. So, guided by Shy Quereshi, our Incubation Account Manager, we set about achieving this. So convinced were we that SharePoint 2007 was the future for our industry that we started selling solutions and services around MOSS07 before the product was even released. With our in-depth knowledge of EDRM, it wasn't long before we started winning projects and building a reputation as a champion in implementing MOSS07," continues Duncan.

Indeed, its experience of selling traditional EDRM systems made Deltascheme an obvious choice for Microsoft to work with as it endeavoured to gain traction in this market. Before long Duncan was supporting Microsoft at a number of key industry events, including Documation, the AllIM Roadshow and the AllIM Champions Workshop.

"Jo has been like our very own police motorcycle out-rider, always one step ahead of us."

"Over the last year there has been one individual, Joanna Carpenter (who was a partner solution sales specialist and is now a SCDM), who has been an absolute star. She has supported us at every turn and in any way she possibly can. No request for assistance from us has ever been too much trouble for her. Although it is a bit of a bizarre analogy, Jo has been like our very own police motorcycle out-rider, always one step ahead of us. With a sense of urgency she has consistently shown us the way to go and cleared a path for us to follow. Her level of engagement has been phenomenal and of immense value in helping us to get to where we are today," advises Duncan.

These are just some of Duncan's experiences of working with the Microsoft team. Such experiences have enabled Deltascheme to replace one income stream with another in a planned and sustainable way, whilst building a reputation which will enable it to grow.

"How has our business benefited from partnering with Microsoft? It has given us a long term future in the UK EDRM market and a real opportunity to grow the business," concludes Duncan.

Right people, right place, right time for ICS Solutions

Summary

- The challenge:** Aggressive year on year growth
- The solution:** Best practice partner account management, technology evangelism and joined up thinking
- The team:** Bradley Malloy, Shailan Chudasama (Data Technology Specialist), Ceri Philpott, Martin Lewis, James Nicholls
- The benefits:** Increasing lead capacity, generating joint demand, establishing, growing and closing deals together, aggressive year on year growth

Catapulting into the Sunday Times Tech Track 100 in 2007 with a sales growth of 54% year on year since 2004, ICS Solutions is a company worth watching. So busy are its staff creating leads and delivering innovative solutions based on Microsoft SharePoint, BizTalk, SQL, Office Communicator, Project, CRM, Windows Server System™ and .Net technologies, that watching is something they rarely find time to do themselves.

"Generating quality leads is always a challenge. Focusing on this has been key to our growth and is how we manage to keep winning clients like Zurich Insurance, Jupiter, Virgin Vie, Warings and Coffee Nation. It is a challenge that we could never have met without Microsoft's support and our Microsoft Partner Account Manager's uncanny ability to introduce the right people in the right place at the right time," advises Duncan Saunders, a key accounts manager with ICS.

Here's his story:

"ICS Solutions has very ambitious growth plans – and a proven approach to realise them. Through our seminar programmes, we engage early with potential customers. Doing so has given us a solid platform for growth," advises Duncan.

ICS runs its seminars from its Solutions Campus in Basingstoke. Having access to Microsoft's seminar facilities in Reading and in London triples its capacity to run these seminars. This increase has been crucial in allowing it to meet demands. There have been many other benefits too," explains Duncan.

"Running our seminars at Microsoft's facilities gives us 'kudos'. Having Microsoft specialists present enhances our credibility further. Timing the seminars to align with the audience's needs or the launch of new Microsoft technology completes the picture: right place; right people; right time."

Contacts who come through these programmes continue to experience high class, high speed engagement as a matter of course. The next touchstone is ICS's comprehensive scoping workshop offering.

"People coming out of seminars have high expectations. We meet these at our scoping workshops. Here we clarify project requirements and scope and to reassure customers of the appropriateness of technologies which are new to them," advises Duncan.

Such high level engagement from the pre-sales stage is not risk free. Duncan explains.

"Of course, when you grow as quickly as we have and are running to full capacity, you could leave yourself open to exposure if your key product specialists are otherwise engaged and you have no back up. Having Microsoft to support you is a safety net.

"Running our seminars at Microsoft's facilities gives us 'kudos'."

"On one occasion, we realised just prior to a four day scoping exercise for an aggressively growing organisation that its future depended upon complete re-platforming. This was a larger opportunity than we had expected. However, with our internal specialists busy with other customers, we were short on key skills and expertise to fit the schedule.

"I called Brad Malloy, our Partner Account Manager (PAM). Within an hour he confirmed that Shailan Chudasama, a data technology specialist, would attend the next day.

We were nervous. The revenue opportunity was magnificent. We were presenting to a CEO – a businessman, not a technologist. All we knew about Shailan was that he was a technology specialist. 'Please don't go off on one,' we politely requested.

We needn't have worried. Shailan performed admirably. He quickly grasped the business perspective. Asking the CEO a few pertinent questions he got an instant insight into what might excite him. He then engaged him in a surprising way. Without once opening his own laptop, he got our guest to visit sites from his own. Enthusing about Silverlight technologies, he followed the flow of conversation leading him to test sites for other emerging technologies. He gave our guest a tantalising glimpse of the future and helped to take our relationship to another level. Before we knew it the CEO was addressing us on a peer to peer level, as if the deal was done," explained Duncan.

"To make a call and have someone from Microsoft turn up in such a timely manner instils trust. When that someone delivers, it helps win deals. Right people, right place, right time again."

'Right people, right place right time.' This could be ICS's PAM Bradley Malloy's mantra.

"Pulling something like this off wasn't a one off for Bradley. I've witnessed him pull out the right person in the right place at the right time on many occasions.

One time I mentioned in passing that ICS was involved in a government opportunity. 'We're one of two Microsoft partners. The others aren't going for the MOSS part though,' I said, thinking nothing of it."

"You've just told me of an opportunity where there's products about to be bought which we don't know about," interjected Brad. "This is important. You need to keep me in touch with things like this."

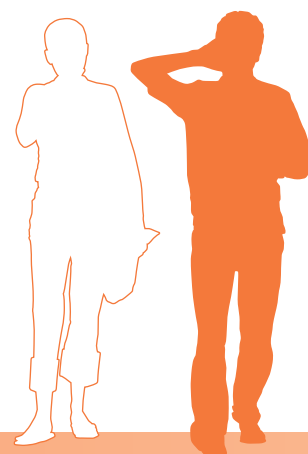
By the Monday morning Bradley had alerted Account Managers aligned to the governmental sector. Duncan was contacted by Ceri Philpott, who put him in contact with James Nicholls, a sector specific Collaboration and Productivity Lead, who put him in touch with Martin Lewis, another governmental sector Account Manager.

"Between us we joined up the sales activities, jointly coordinating with the customer and closing the loop between ICS' live project and the pending deal for Microsoft license sales," Duncan advises.

"This was just the start though. Brad continued to be proactive on our behalf and has found us access to funding for a case study of the implementation, which has led to more leads for us in this sector," he added.

Increasing capacity; closing deals; generating joint demand – the benefits of partnering with Microsoft have been plentiful for ICS Solutions. The secret, according to Duncan, is to keep Microsoft in the loop.

"Feed them information they may find helpful and before you know it, they'll have paid you back many times over. You don't need to kiss many frogs before you find a prince," he concludes.



Seeding success at Concentra

Summary

- The challenge:** To gain gold certification within 18 months and sustain this pace
- The solution:** Evangelising successes and proactive early engagement across all points of contacts
- The team:** Shy Qureshi, Mike Pallot and James Senior
- The benefits:** Increasing capacity, generating joint demand, closing deals together and growing the business

Doubling in size year on year since its inception in 2005, the technology and business consulting firm Concentra knew the path to take from day one.

Set up by six Microsoft consultancy veterans who had already served time in the partnership community, Concentra made one of its first key business objectives 'to gain Microsoft gold certification within 18 months. This would be their 'golden seed.'

Concentra achieved this goal within 14 months. The new goal? To sustain this pace without compromising the stability for which Concentra was to become renowned.

Concentra, a technology and business consulting firm specialising in the delivery of Microsoft-based technology solutions, is well known within Microsoft and the wider partner community for the depth and range of its consultants' technical, industry and delivery expertise. That and the speed at which it moves.

Evolving from a software development company to a business consulting and software firm with a belief in using technology to 'get the job done', Concentra's modelling techniques help enterprises deal with large volumes of complex information. The result: a growing list of clients who are enjoying better management and increased profitability.

'Getting the job done' is something for which Concentra is legendary. Gaining gold partner status within 14 months of setting up shop, Concentra wasted no time in leveraging the associated benefits.

"Gold partner status, treated properly, is a golden seed. Take it. Plant it. Nurture the associated benefits and grow. Take it. Plant it. Stand back waiting for something to happen and you may be disappointed," explains one of the founding directors, Goetz Boué.

For Concentra, the associated benefits of gold status include:

- New business – evolving from the credibility and 'comfort value' customers perceive
- Recruiting and retaining talent – technical staff prefer to work for companies offering the continuing professional development opportunities associated with Microsoft gold certification
- Upskilling – the gold programme makes a lot of information accessible online which enables Concentra to upskill very quickly. It also enables early entrance onto training programmes for new technology
- Speed to market – access to the Microsoft evangelists enthuses Concentra's technical team. This helps with recruitment and retention and enables Concentra to deliver first to market solutions

"He infected them with his hallmark enthusiasm and ability to think on his feet, quickly pulling out realistic situations where they could apply this new technology, making it real."

Golden seed in hand, Goetz set about preparing the ground. Involving his Microsoft Partner Account Manager Shy Qureshi was the starting point.

"Shy has been a key enabler. Helping with defining a joint Microsoft/Concentra business plan, she gained a real understanding of our goals. Raising our profile within Microsoft and the wider community, consistently introducing us to the right people, at the right time, she has worked wonders," advises Goetz.

Indeed, it was Shy who introduced Concentra to Mike Pallot, Microsoft's search and high performance channel development manager, in advance of the SearchServer launch. This led to Concentra becoming the UK's first partner to receive the Search competency and one of the key Search revenue generators within the partner community. In fact, beyond SearchServer, Concentra has deployed all Microsoft's latest technology internally – a great story to be able to tell their prospects and one which did not go unnoticed within Microsoft.

"It was this proven ability to blaze the trail that encouraged me to introduce Concentra to our team of evangelists – Steve Clayton, James Akrigg and James Senior," advises Shy.

Goetz picks up the story: "Contact with these guys really enthuses and excites our technical department. To know that whenever Microsoft has a new product, they will be made aware of it and can get to trial it first is considered 'cool'. This is helping us to attract and keep great people. It is leading to first to market solutions and associated revenue and credibility.

Six months ago, for example, James Senior led a product update session with all our senior developers and heads of departments. He infected them with his hallmark enthusiasm and ability to think on his feet, quickly pulling out realistic situations where they could apply this new technology, making it real. He left them with a challenge, a challenge which turned out to be another golden seed: to identify ways to raise the profiles of these technologies and win business for both parties."

Snow-balling IMGroup

Summary

- The challenge:** To help IMGroup set the pace
- The solution:** Aligning the businesses and opening new practice areas
- The team:** Sami Helin and Matt Helsby
- The benefits:** Generating joint demand, closing deals together, increasing capability and helping the business grow

The information management specialist IMGroup has been Microsoft's Worldwide Business Intelligence Partner of the Year for three years running. The relationship between the two companies is a real success story.

IMGroup's business has grown year on year by 30 – 40 % during that time. "The key that unlocked this growth was aligning our business with Microsoft's," claims Garry Miller, IMGroup's business development director.

This is their story.

"Ours is a dynamic market. To keep on the front foot we need to be agile. It is this challenge that we took to Microsoft inviting Sami Helin, our Partner Account Manager, to become involved in strategic discussions about how to re-engineer IMGroup's business. We wanted to ensure that we could not only withstand the constant changes to which it was open, but predict them and set the pace," explains Garry.

"Sami took the time and effort to understand the mechanics of our organisation, our strengths and opportunities and our challenges. Understanding the Microsoft business too, and its future plans, he was able to help us to build a structure we could grow with."

Sami worked within the IMGroup's management team to devise a bi-lateral approach to restructuring. Aligning its business behind specific practice areas, IMGroup organised its technical and support staff horizontally – behind Microsoft's MOSS, Sequel, Predictive Analytics and CRM products, and its sales staff vertically, with specialist sales teams for specific sectors.

"This was just the beginning. Aligning our business to the Microsoft product stack and getting our Partner Account Manager's buy-in has had a snowball effect," picks up Garry.

"It was not long before, thanks to Sami making people within Microsoft aware of our capability, Matt Helsby, a finance sector specialist at Microsoft, contacted us. He was aware of a SQL based opportunity within Citigroup – 'let's try and leverage our contacts and develop the opportunity he suggested.'"

They did, and in their discussions discovered an area of business that Citigroup and other banks had become very interested in – Predictive Analytics (trying to understand customers' behaviour better in order to predict future behaviour). Microsoft had the technology. IMGroup had the ability to implement it.

"Matt immediately saw the potential. 'This is a significant area of opportunity – We need a proof of concept. If you invest in this, we will too' he advised.

"Our partnership works because both parties understand each other's business inside out and because both parties are consistently proactive."

"We did. Ably assisted by Matt, whose presence brought sector specific knowledge and credibility, we presented it to Citibank. Within two months from our first conversation, we had a proof of concept revenue earning project that established confidence in the technology and a keen interest to expand the scope further."

This is not the end of the story though. IMGroup recognised that there was also an opportunity to expand the solution to include CRM. Although IMGroup had a great deal of experience around CRM, based on previous implementation experiences, it was not yet an accredited partner in this space. To maximise the potential of this opportunity, IMGroup needed to be fast-tracked.

"Sami quickly pulled together the right people from within Microsoft to brief us on what was happening in the CRM area. They made us aware of some other very large enterprises also looking at the general area of CRM. Teaming up with Microsoft's consultancy team we came up with a proposition and a model and made the decision to set up a new CRM practice. Within three weeks Sami had helped us get three of our consultants through the Microsoft CRM accredited training programme. Within six weeks we had won two significant deals."

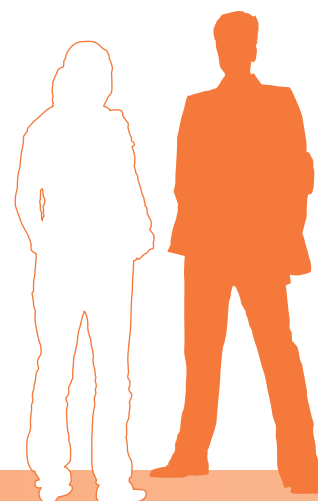
The deal at Citigroup has an estimated value of £800,000 and typifies the infrastructure optimisation approach that Microsoft has been encouraging its partner community to embrace. The deal includes Business Intelligence, Predictive Analytics, CRM and Information Management. It is just one example of what has been made possible through Microsoft and IMGroup understanding and leveraging each other's strengths.

"Aligning our business so closely to Microsoft has undoubtedly led to IMGroup's 30-40% year-on-year growth. Doing so has led to increased credibility in the market place, fantastic training opportunities allowing us to be first to market with new Microsoft applications, and new business.

Our partnership works because both parties understand each other's business inside out and because both parties are consistently proactive," concludes Garry.

Consistent two way proactivity is a theme in all of Microsoft's partner's success stories. For IMGroup, the above story is just one example of how it can benefit all concerned.

Sami's further foresight in getting IMGroup onto the new Redmond, US based Product Advisory Council, advising on the development of surface technology as a tool to present business intelligence is another. But that is another story, for another day...



Taking ICONICS UK to the next level...

Summary

- The challenge:** To make an independently successful business even more successful
- The solution:** Raising its visibility
- The team:** Nigel Turner, Neil Marley, Scott Dodds, Karl Noakes, Peter Cummins
- The benefits:** Creating joint demand, closing deals, increasing capacity and growing the business

No matter how successful your business is, partnering with an organisation like Microsoft can propel you to the next level. ICONICS UK, a leading developer of industrial automation software tools based on the Microsoft platform, is living proof of this. Established in 1991 as a remote sales and support centre for its US parent company, ICONICS UK had experienced 'zero engagement' with Microsoft UK until November 2006. Why should it have? It was already growing at a rate of 15% per year, winning impressive contracts with the likes of BA, Nestle, United Biscuits, Nissan and Heathrow Airport.

So when in November 2006 ICONICS Inc introduced its managing director in the UK to the Microsoft Partnering Scheme, via Microsoft's Open Borders Programme, he was sceptical. Fifteen months later, with business grown by 45% and the pipeline overflowing, his scepticism has gone...

"ICONICS Inc is a well established Global ISV. Our presence in the UK is small. Even so, our technology speaks for itself and for 15 years we have been happily growing at a rate of 15%, winning impressive accounts with some hardcore industrial users," explains Clive Walton, ICONICS UK's managing director.

"So when we were introduced to the Microsoft Partnering Programme we were, at best, sceptical. We were wrong.

Engaging with Microsoft UK has propelled us to the next level. Things started to happen from the moment our Partner Account Manager, Nigel Turner, first walked through our doors. He went out of his way to listen and understand our business, asking: 'How were we winning such big accounts?'; 'How could he help us win more?'; 'Did we know we were more than capable of competing with the big boys in the UK?' His enthusiasm was infectious. But that was just the start of the relationship," continues Clive.

Nigel recognised that the starting point was to raise ICONICS UK's visibility, first within Microsoft UK and then within the market place. He pulled in Neil Marley, an Industry Account Manager at Microsoft UK to help. He introduced Clive and the team to Scott Dodds, general manager of SME partnerships and Karl Noakes, Microsoft's director of partner solutions sales. Before long, anyone within Microsoft who could help grow ICONICS UK's business in anyway, knew about them and was fully engaged.

"We soon found ourselves being introduced to new business opportunities. From environmental projects to the UK Postal service, from building management systems to BP. Where we had previously been cruising along, we were now jet propelled," explains Clive.

"So when we were introduced to the Microsoft Partnering Programme we were, at best, sceptical. We were wrong."

Andrew Mellor, sales director at ICONICS UK picks up the story:

“Take the enthusiasm that we are seeing from accounts such as BP. Peter Cummins, the BP business manager, helped us to understand where opportunities were, what was high on the agenda for BP this fiscal and how to position ICONICS’ solutions to solve those problems. Not only that, but Peter passed on his confidence in ICONICS to BP. We now have some global opportunities within one of the world’s leading companies.

We are only fifteen months into our relationship with Microsoft in the UK. When it began, nobody had heard of us there. Now we feel like we are on show. With our sales up by 45% and our pipeline bursting, Nigel and the team have done far more than raise our visibility. They have placed the wind behind us and attached a motor,” concludes Clive.

Winning ways with Client Profiles

Summary

- The challenge:** To help win a landmark account
- The solution:** True collaboration
- The team:** Matt Ackersall and Phil Rawlinson
- The benefits:** Closing deals, increasing capacity and growing the business

Based on over 20 years of input from more than 1200 law firms that use their software every day, Client Profiles delivers the most adaptable and easy-to-use case, financial and client relationship management systems available in the marketplace.

Client Profiles takes great pride in providing to clients the very best legal technology tools for their practices. So, when it received a request for proposal from the leading global-relationship law firm Reed Smith Richards Butler, it saw a chance to win an account that would truly define it as the market leader.

Reed Smith Richards Butler advises many of the world's foremost companies. One of the fifteen largest law firms in the world, recognised internationally for its relationship focus, the winner of this account would win far more than simply another deal...

This is the story of how Clients Profile's collaborative approach with Microsoft won them this landmark account.

"When we received a request for proposal for a CRM solution for Reed Smith Richards Butler, the excitement around the office was palpable. Such an account would give the solution provider the "best of breed" stamp in the legal sector," explained Paul Tilling, Client Profiles' sales and marketing director.

"Soon after, a phone call from Matt Eckersall, a business manager at Microsoft, to ask me whether I knew about the opportunity, set off a chain of events."

Knowing how Reed Smith preferred to work and that they wanted a vendor who would do more than simply install a solution and leave, Paul was aware that a collaborative approach would be key to winning this account. It wasn't long before he, Matt and Microsoft's partner technology specialist Phil Rawlinson were pooling their expertise.

"Matt and Phil contributed from day one. With them came a passion for the Microsoft CRM solution that was infectious. With Matt came commercial acumen and an extraordinary ability to get his head around the legal market, a tough market to do business in when you're not from it. Phil brought product knowledge, the ability to answer questions from any level – technical or commercial – in a language lawyers could understand. That and sustained enthusiasm," explained Paul.

They worked together tirelessly to produce the perfect proposal, matching every requirement of the request, including a 20 minute demonstration based on 'a day in the life of a lawyer'. When the day came, Matt and Phil went with Paul and his team to Pittsburgh to help present the proposal.

"We did not just win an account. We won recognition as 'best of breed'."

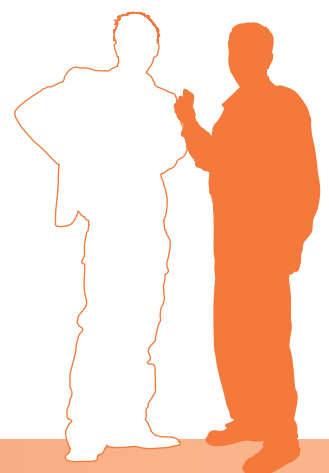
"It was a thing of beauty. From day one we had worked together as a single unified team and that is what Reed Smith saw. One unit. Not several moving parts. They saw the passion, recognised quality and began talking as if they were part of the team too, before we'd even finished the presentation. Ideas began emerging, plans began to be formulated, the dynamics were powerful," Paul continues.

Reed Smith did become part of the team. Client Profiles won the account. The reasons were clear:

"From the beginning of the client selection process we felt that Microsoft and Client Profiles communicated with us as if we were already part of a single team. Their highly customisable system would allow us to tailor our solution around the way we work and a relationship with Microsoft would allow us to advise on development initiatives to suit the legal industry, again, fitting with our collaborative culture," advises Victoria Gregory, **Reed Smith's client relationship manager**.

Paul concludes: "We did not just win an account. We won recognition as "best of breed". We did not win just because our solution was based on the best technology, or because we had the best knowledge of how legal practices use technology. We won because we acted as one.

Market leaders in all sectors work collaboratively now. They lead because they leverage the strengths of their partners. Microsoft has been partnering for a long time and has some very rich experiences. They really know how to do it. Our experience is that it helps you win business."



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