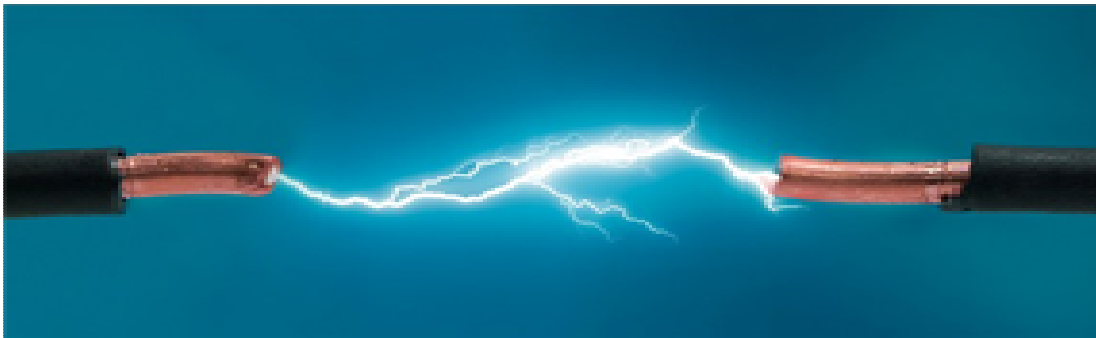




The SPARC Programme

Case study



Ian Jordan, Executive Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Alliances at Avanade, wanted to prepare his phenomenally successful company to transition its sales focus from technology excellence to customer business value.

To seed this change, he developed a programme to locate, repackage and publicise field-originated selling ideas that exemplified the new approach. This created new sales assets that made an immediate impact with customers, increased respect for the sales team, and demonstrated the benefits of a business-value led approach to the rest of the company.

Most important, the activity created the cross-functional coalition of people that subsequently led the change.

Introduction

Avanade provides Microsoft-focused business technology solutions and managed services. The company was founded in 2000 as a joint venture between Microsoft and Accenture, and has grown rapidly since its beginning. Today, Avanade has 60 offices in more than 20 countries, with 16,000 professionals. In 2011 it exceeded \$1bn (USD) in revenue. Many of the company's people work in a "Global Delivery Network" in India and the Philippines where customer systems are developed and hosted.

The Business Imperative

Avanade has built its success on technical excellence and employs many of the best software engineers and technical visionaries in the Microsoft market place. But the executive team, led by CEO Adam Warby, realized that to keep meeting their demanding growth targets the company also needed to develop its capability to sell more explicitly the business value of the technology solutions the company provides.

The executive vision

Ian Jordan, Executive Vice President of Global Sales, Marketing & Alliances understood the implications of this change of focus. He explained his vision to *ChangeBEAT*.

"We are going to make significant change in our organisation, and we need to demonstrate what the shift to business-value focus really means. I want to find the best examples of value based selling that have been created in the field and share them within the company.

At the same time we can make heroes of our sales professionals, increase awareness of what we need to do and start to build the team of people we are going to need to drive the change."

The SPARC Programme

Working with *ChangeBEAT*, Ian's team developed the *SPARC* programme, short for Sales People, Assets and Resources Connected. The tag line "... by the field, for the field" was chosen to emphasise that the valuable ideas were arising from the sales teams in response to customer demands.

First there was a consultation process to understand better the support the sales teams felt they needed. They asked for short "conversation pieces" that could be used across the desk with customer executives, focusing on an identified business issue, and supported with a succinct account of how Avanade could help.

An appeal was then made for good ideas and, after a triage process, the best were packaged into *SPARC-Flashes!* – concise PowerPoint presentations that could be used to discuss the business issue in customer terms and clearly explain Avanade's credentials to help.

Every sales professional who submitted a successful idea was appointed a *Bright SPARC!* and given the recognition of a public award and a place in the SPARC “Hall of Fame”, a part of the intranet site where SPARC materials were made available.

As Ian said

“The SPARC programme identified some excellent selling ideas that made an immediate impact with customers.

“We found new ways to show customers how we can add value in each phase of the technology adoption cycle. We picked up very early the opportunity presented by the emerging user-driven workplace. We identified new approaches to customers when there is a particular trigger, such as Mergers and Acquisitions or when Application Development productivity is an issue.

“But the main benefit was to galvanise the rest of the company to ask itself hard questions about how best to respond to the business value agenda. Most important of all, we saw the emergence of the cross-functional team who will now carry our company through the next stage of our development.”

How did ChangeBEAT help?

As Ian said

“ChangeBEAT helped me to turn my vision into reality. They built the “straw man” for the SPARC programme, helped me to get the agreements I needed, and then applied their understanding of business value to enhance and package excellent sales materials.”



ChangeBEAT defines, develops and executes change programmes that help achieve enduring business benefit rapidly and reliably. Our people have practical field experience, and are equipped with WingBEAT, our proven change methodology, and our extensive tools. We are professional, pragmatic and action oriented.

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