

Master VAR Program Offers Opportunity for Partner to Stay Small, Think Big



Overview

Partner Profile

SBS Group Denver, formerly known as Cardamel Consulting, consisted of two principals and focused on Microsoft Dynamics SL and Microsoft Dynamics GP for the homebuilders market.

Business Situation

Cardamel wanted to retain the benefits of running a small consulting practice, but knew they needed to change to remain competitive and profitable.

Solution

In 2010 Cardamel joined forces with SBS Group through a program that is now part of the Microsoft Dynamics Master VAR program, allowing them to focus on selling while taking advantage of the SBS Group's organizational strengths and national reach.

Benefits

- Grew revenue by 35 percent.
- Closed eight new deals despite a serious down market in homebuilding.
- Closing larger, more complex deals.
- Saving at least \$50,000 per year and eight hours per week on marketing.

Situation

As is the case with many smaller Microsoft Dynamics partners, the principals at Cardamel Consulting found themselves facing a dilemma. How could they best continue to run their small consulting practice the way they wanted, while remaining competitive and profitable?

"We were looking at our options," said Carolyn Chasteen, Cardamel's founder. "We knew the certification requirements were changing, but we wanted to remain a very small organization. We knew if we wanted to keep our margins up, we were going to have to increase revenue."

One of the options Chasteen analyzed was partnering with a Microsoft Dynamics Master VAR, which could provide greater marketing power and administrative efficiency, without requiring her to sell the business or give up control of her customers.

Chasteen reached out to SBS Group, which at that time was building a network of service providers. "We've had a long-standing relationship with Jim Bowman and SBS Group, and when we researched their offering, we said 'Why wouldn't we do this?' We get to use all the resources SBS has, but at the same time we still own our own business. We still have total control."

Solution

In 2010, Cardamel Consulting officially became part of the SBS Group, and rebranded as SBS Group Denver. They are the national partner for SBS Group's homebuilding practice.

Through its affiliation with SBS Group, SBS Group Denver has been able to strongly grow its business, while reducing overhead and streamlining practices at the same time.

"It's a win-win situation.... The Master VAR partner does the marketing, they do a lot of the admin work, and that allows me to go out and do a lot more selling. We're winning more deals, and bigger deals."

Carolyn Chasteen
General Manager, SBS Group Denver

FEATURES

BENEFITS

Increased Marketing Exposure

SBS Group has a nationwide presence and focuses intensely on marketing, which is a tremendous benefit to SBS Group Denver and other SBS Group affiliates. SBS Group maintains a full marketing calendar, including webinars, emails, and other marketing tools. Leads coming from marketing efforts in multiple geographies can be fed quickly to the affiliate with the skills needed to close that deal.

Reduced Marketing Costs

SBS Group Denver also has seen a substantial reduction in the cost and time commitment they previously had been expending on their own marketing efforts.

"We used to have a full-time employee that did nothing but marketing, so our marketing save is at least \$50,000 per year, just for that one employee. In addition, I probably spent at least 10 hours per week on marketing, and that has dropped to about two hours a week, which gives me a lot more time to focus on selling."

Broader Offering

Being part of a nationwide organization with competencies across the broad range of Microsoft technologies and services has given SBS Group Denver a tremendous advantage over their previous situation.

"We now have the ability to sell all Microsoft, the entire stack, so whether the customer solution requires Microsoft SharePoint, custom programming, infrastructure, cloud services, we can represent those services to the customer and know that SBS can back us up. We don't have to hire and maintain all those capabilities on our staff."

Strengthened ERP Practice

Chasteen has been able to expand her practice to also offer Microsoft Dynamics GP, and Microsoft Dynamics NAV, and soon will be representing Microsoft Dynamics AX, as well. This gives her organization a tremendous advantage when consulting with prospects, because they can effectively position the relative benefits of each of the Microsoft Dynamics ERP solutions, then recommend the one solution they feel will best meet the customer's business needs.

"I just closed a deal yesterday, and the reason they were comfortable with us is because we sell everything. In my presentation I was able to talk about the benefits of each Microsoft Dynamics solution, which was a real eye opener for the customer, and helped them make the decision."

Reduced Administrative Overhead

In addition to managing marketing activities, SBS Group also handles many of the day-to-day administrative operations, such as billing and collections, reducing the amount of time Chasteen spends managing her business and freeing her up for more time in front of the customer.

Because SBS Group has all the required certifications on staff to qualify for a Gold ERP competency from Microsoft, Chasteen no longer has to worry about trying to keep up with certification requirements that aren't related to her core practice.

Access to Consulting Resources

Chasteen also appreciates the depth and breadth of consulting resources available to her as an affiliate of Master VAR SBS Group. Chasteen uses the SBS Group's infrastructure resources to handle installations, custom programming, and help desk.

"We really utilize all the resources at SBS. We want to work smarter, not harder, and by using SBS infrastructure, we're freed up to work on big deals."

"We get to use all the resources SBS has, but at the same time we still own our business. We still have total control."

Carolyn Chasteen
General Manager, SBS Group Denver

"The first year we were in the program, we grew our business by 35 percent. We closed eight new deals in a very tough market, and we're also closing much bigger deals."

Carolyn Chasteen
General Manager, SBS Group Denver

Results

Chasteen's affiliation with SBS Group has resulted in a win-win situation for her business. Revenue increased 35 percent in the first year, and Chasteen credits SBS Group with helping her to focus her practice, resulting in her ability to close eight new deals despite an extremely tough market in the homebuilders' industry.

"It impacted our bottom line almost immediately. SBS Group handles the marketing, and a lot of the admin work, which allowed me to go out and do a lot more selling."

As an example, SBS Group Denver recently won a deal involving a large homebuilder in California, which in the past might have been outside the scope and reach of Chasteen's organization. "I was able to put in the time that allowed us to win that deal. We beat SAP and Oracle, and it's proven to be a huge implementation."

Key Takeaways

Chasteen says the decision to join forces with Microsoft Dynamics Master VAR SBS Group was ultimately made due to the fact that Chasteen would be able to gain access to resources without giving up control of her business. "Once we really understood how the relationship worked, and realized we didn't have to sell our customer list, that was huge in our decision."

For more information about the Microsoft Dynamics Master VAR program, visit <http://aka.ms/MasterVAR>