Winning Combination

Cisco Partner Ecosystem

Partners Work Together to Land Big Customer

Sometimes, there's more at stake than a big contract. A global manufacturer of medical robots was looking for a better way to manage its data. Business was growing and customer demand was on the rise. The manufacturer's immediate goals were not so different from those of any leading company in any growing industry: harness the data-analytic potential of the Internet of Everything (IoE) to speed supply chains and improve success rates. What was different, in this case, would be the end result: better surgeries, faster recoveries, and patients healed. Lives saved.

So there was a lot at stake. The manufacturer opened a competitive bid process to identify the best path forward. It had legacy systems in place and legacy vendors it was accustomed to working with, but none of that would determine its decision. Its commitment was clear: it would select only the best solution and hire only the vendors best equipped to deliver it.

Two Cisco® partners bid for the business, one for the software side of the solution, the other the hardware. Each partner had a longstanding relationship in place with the manufacturer. But it would not be these relationships with the customer that mattered in the end. What mattered, instead, was the relationship they had with each other. Not directly. In fact, they had had only minimal interaction in the past; however, that was as common members of the Cisco Partner Ecosystem.

"It was a very highly contested, competitive situation," says Ramey Stevens, an account executive at SAP, a strategic partner with Cisco. The customer already warehoused most of its data on an SAP platform, SAP Business Warehouse, which it used for reporting and limited analytics. But SAP Business Warehouse could not support the simulations, predictions, and real-time analytics that the company now needed.

There was another SAP platform that could. "SAP HANA," says Stevens, "is a real-time information delivery and analytics platform, meaning you can access that data the second a transaction hits." SAP HANA could deliver everything the customer was looking for. But SAP's competitors offered solutions that made similar claims. How would the customer decide which solution was best? And that wasn't the only point of competition.

Whichever solution the customer picked, running a new business analytics platform would require purchasing and deploying a new server platform as well. That's where a second Cisco partner came into the picture: Nexus IS, a Dimension Data Company, is a Cisco Gold Certified Partner.

Nexus IS was well entrenched with the customer as well. "It's a long-standing relationship that we have with their IT department," explains Nathan Kochly, Cloud and Data Center sales specialist at Nexus IS. "We've been doing a whole range of networking, unified communications, telephony, and WebEx® deals with them."

> "We were all on the same page. Everybody played their part. Everything flowed freely between us. And this is what the customer needs and wants."
>
> – Nathan Kochly, Cloud and Data Center Sales Specialist, Nexus IS, a Dimension Data Company

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When it came to computing, however, Nexus IS had always had trouble making inroads. Nexus IS is primarily a Cisco reseller, and this was not a Cisco shop. "It's been quite a few years that we've been trying to entice them over to Cisco UCS®," says Kochly, "but they just weren't at a place where they were looking to consider that."

Now, however, the customer was considering everything. Bids were invited. Evaluations were rigorous. In the process, the customer found out how well SAP HANA, Cisco UCS, and Nexus IS each performed, compared to its competition. But it got a window into something else, as well. The evaluation process showed them just how easily and seamlessly these Cisco partners performed together.

When the customer needed evidence for how SAP HANA operates in a real-world implementation, SAP brought in a real-world customer. That customer was Cisco itself. "Cisco does all its own forecasting internally through HANA," says Stevens, "and that's all done in real time all the way up the chain for every division."

When the customer needed to measure SAP HANA against its leading competitor, it turned to its long-term vendor Nexus IS to conduct the analysis. "IT reached out to us, as their trusted partner, to put together the two options," says Kochly. "We were able to sit down and lay out the entire SAP landscape from a hardware and an architecture perspective on what that would look like and what the cost structures would be. "

Behind the scenes, Nexus IS called in Cisco to help with the analysis. "Cisco was there every step of the way for us," says Kochly. "Their expertise was invaluable." So with Cisco's help, Nexus IS was able to give the customer the information it needed to reach its decision about SAP.

When Nexus IS put together its own bid for the customer to adopt Cisco UCS, it depended on Cisco's expertise, again, and reached out to SAP as well. SAP helped Nexus IS build the best, most accurate presentation of what it would mean to run SAP HANA on Cisco UCS.

With each instance of cooperation, the picture became clearer: not only were the individual members of the Cisco Partner Ecosystem bringing the right solutions to the table, but each one was bringing a demonstrated ability to collaborate freely and easily. Given the kind of open-ended, long-term solution the customer was looking for, this natural compatibility was a big plus.

"We were all on the same page," explains Kochly. "Everybody played their part. Everything flowed freely between us. And this is what the customer needs and wants."

The customer liked what it saw. In the end, it selected SAP HANA, Cisco UCS, and Nexus IS. They selected the parts—but they were also selecting the whole. For its administrators, engineers, and ultimately, patients, they had found the right solution. And for the Cisco partners, the deal opened doors to more work down the road—both with this manufacturer and with each other. They worked well together. They would do it, again.

"If I could have every deal work like this," said Kochly, "I would be in heaven."

For More Information

For more information about the Cisco Partner Ecosystem, visit www.cisco.com/go/partnerecosystem.

For more information about SAP, visit www.sap.com.

For more information about Nexus IS, visit www.nexusis.com.

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
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