IMD Creates Seamless Learning Partnerships With Siebel Sales

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—Xavier Gilbert, Faculty Member and Co-ordinator of Information Systems, IMD

IMD, the International Institute for Management Development, is one of the world’s leading business schools with over 50 years’ experience in developing the leadership capabilities of international business executives at every stage of their careers. The majority of program participants for its open enrollment Executive Development Programs, Partnership Programs, highly regarded MBA and EMBA degrees, and other programs come from medium to large corporations, and all have an international orientation to their businesses. Many companies, who begin by sending their managers to IMD programs, go on to develop their relationship with the institute to a closer level and become part of the IMD Learning Network, which provides still further learning advantages. The IMD campus is located in Lausanne, Switzerland.

IMD focuses on providing customer-centric, tailored management development solutions for these large global organizations, and its key account focus is on the Human Resources (HR) departments of such organizations. IMD strives to create loyal, ‘life-long’ learning partnerships with these important HR customers, as they have a strong influence on whether staff within the organization attend IMD programs, when they attend, and how many attend.

Customer Responsiveness

“IMD is respected globally for the quality and breadth of its learning programs, its customer responsiveness, and implementation of a real world learning community,” says Xavier Gilbert, Faculty Member and Co-ordinator of Information Systems, IMD. “Prior to the introduction of our CRM strategy, our customer value creation was perceived as being too ‘inward-focused’, owing to our fragmented view of the customer. Our contacts database had reached its limits, in terms of scalability, integration, and information sharing, and our sales team used a variety of home-grown systems to manage customer relationships. We struggled to efficiently capture and track opportunities derived from the sales calls, mailings, our Web site, and referrals from other customers, owing to the lack of a consistent, consolidated customer understanding.”

To develop a deep, business-wide understanding of the customer’s strategic challenges, priorities, processes, and HR needs, IMD implemented Siebel Sales, Siebel Systems’ product which helps selling organizations grow revenues more quickly, predictably, and profitably by providing the means to focus on the right deals at the right time. IMD is using the software to integrate customer information across
improve customer service, and maximizes customer retention. “By moving away from discrete value-creation silos, and aligning our sales processes, program administration, admissions, online communities, and alumni services, IMD is creating a highly effective key account focus, which delivers real value propositions, in terms of learning solutions. Ultimately, this CRM capability builds a seamless learning partnership and improved customer loyalty,” says Gilbert.

**Solid, Convincing Solution**
IMD was impressed by Siebel Systems from the very first presentation the company provided. “We investigated other CRM vendors, but no-one could match Siebel Systems’ solid, convincing solution,” he continues. “The functionality of the software, its rapid implementation, and ease of customization, coupled with Siebel Systems’ CRM vision and many years experience in deploying CRM programs worldwide made them the undisputed choice for our customer-centric strategy,” he says.

Siebel Sales has transformed IMD’s sales effectiveness. When a customer first contacts IMD—either by registering interest on the Internet for a particular program, speaking in person to an IMD sales professional, or by calling the program administration team—all their contact details and profile are captured in Siebel Sales. This single, complete view of customer information is shared seamlessly with IMD’s field sales professionals, who use the intuitive customer insight to build their understanding of individual customers, and enhance their sales effectiveness.

“Our sales team are often more aware of the magnitude of the relationship than the customer is,” says Gilbert.

When an IMD sales person visits one of their key accounts, they are equipped with a comprehensive overview of the customer relationship to assist with cross-selling and up-selling. This includes which IMD programs the customer has expressed an interest in, which ones their members have already attended, details on any virtual learning networks within the company, and a list of events the customer has been invited to and attended.

Using Siebel Sales, the sales person can also suggest alternative programs which enhance the customer’s business. If there has been recent merger and acquisition activity within the organization, the sales person may propose a tailored IMD program, based on the product information at hand, which helps mixed teams blend into a single, unified team. Or, if it transpires during the meeting that the customer is experiencing a challenging business climate, the sales person may recommend an IMD process rationalization program, to improve competitiveness.

**Reinforcing Customer Relationships**
Besides enhancing sales effectiveness and efficiency, Siebel Sales is also assisting IMD in reinforcing customer relationships. “We have a multidimensional customer relationship,” he says. “Owing to the size and global reach of the customers’ business, they may not be aware of all of the IMD programs which their company is using around the world. The united view provided by Siebel Sales enables the IMD sales person to provide invaluable assistance here.

They can guide the customer through the company’s total program registration, or the number of IMD events and Web casts the customer’s staff have attended. By delivering a total picture of their training activities—as opposed to a corner of it—the customer can determine whether their strategy is on track, and whether it is meeting its objectives.”

**Siebel Sales**
Siebel Sales enables field sales organizations to sell collaboratively across geographies, time zones, and currencies, and scales to meet the needs of even the largest global deployments. With Siebel Sales, field professionals can accurately forecast future business, generate customized presentations and proposals, and easily produce customer communications such as personalized invitations, thank you notes, letters, and other correspondence.

Sales organizations can use Siebel Sales to seamlessly share information across sales teams, manage sales pipelines, rapidly create customer quotes and proposals, easily configure products and services to meet the unique needs of each customer, and provide superior after-sales service and support.