Partner Goes International, Grows Revenue 25% in One Year with Certified Solution

Overview

Country or Region: Germany
Industry: Professional services—IT services

Partner Profile
Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner agiles provides consulting and deployment support for Microsoft Dynamics® NAV to customers across Germany and resells its workflow solution worldwide.

Business Need
Establishing an international reseller channel for its products posed an opportunity for agiles to expand its business, but first, the company needed to take the initial steps to ensure success in this new area of business.

Solution
The company developed agilesWorkflow for Microsoft Dynamics NAV. The company engaged Microsoft and independent software vendors for their knowledge and support, and achieved the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV logo for its solution to build trust in its brand.

Benefits
- Cost-effectively grow business
- Accelerate growth with community support and certification
- Take advantage of partners' regional expertise and brand

> "As a small company, building a reseller channel has given us a way to grow our business without competing with other Microsoft Dynamics NAV partners."

Mandy Dore, Director of International Partnering, agiles

To grow business and generate new revenue, Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner agiles wanted to establish its own international reseller channel. To do so, the company began with its line-of-business solution, agilesWorkflow, which helps partners eliminate the need for time-consuming custom development or integration work required to provide workflow solutions to customers or extend their own solutions. To accelerate the success of its new channel, agiles engaged Microsoft and other partners for their knowledge and support, and achieved the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics® NAV logo for its solution to build trust in its brand. Over the course of a year, agiles has built 35 new reseller relationships, reaching nearly 60 customers and increasing company revenue by 25 percent.

Business Need

Since its founding in 1989, Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner agiles has developed three add-in solutions for Microsoft Dynamics® NAV. These include the industry-specific solutions agilesFruit and agilesTrade, which serve the needs of international food and nonfood traders who have a complex supply chain for importing those products to the European community, and agilesWorkflow, which extends Microsoft Dynamics NAV with fully integrated workflow functionality.

Based in Hamburg, Germany, agiles has traditionally served its local market with its consulting and implementation expertise. Company leaders at agiles, however, understood that they could grow the business by broadening this customer base and making their solutions available worldwide. To do so, company leaders made the strategic decision to establish an international reseller channel by still providing consulting and implementation locally, but now relying on other partners to drive the success of the agiles solutions in markets outside of Germany.

Says Christian Sega, CEO of agiles, "We identified, based on the projects we had done in the local market, that there was a need for workflow functionality. After market research and strategic meetings with other partners who work internationally, we identified the sales potential of opening a new distribution channel worldwide."

Solution

As it set out to build its reseller channel, agiles determined that its line-of-business solution, agilesWorkflow, would appeal to the broadest number of Microsoft Dynamics NAV partners that could use the solution to extend their own industry-specific solution offerings. Further, because the solution is fully integrated with Microsoft Dynamics NAV, agilesWorkflow would help these partners reduce the costs of deployment by eliminating the need to perform integration work with a third-party workflow solution during customer engagements or develop their own solution from the ground up.

Overview of agilesWorkflow

A lightweight and easy-to-deploy solution, agilesWorkflow helps increase the effectiveness and efficiency of business processes by simplifying and automating routine processes and all associated tasks. Fully integrated with Microsoft Dynamics NAV, agilesWorkflow provides prioritized task lists with an associated workflow. When task status changes, agilesWorkflow can send e-mail notifications to employees and teams through Microsoft Office Outlook®. Tasks in agilesWorkflow can be shared through task lists in Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server, enabling companies to extend the functionality to business partners and customers, and across their supply chains.

Gaining Certification

To help establish traction with potential resellers who might not be familiar with agiles or its solutions, agiles submitted agilesWorkflow for certification through the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics program. Gaining certification, which requires rigorous testing and review by Microsoft, helps build confidence in the solution, demonstrating to partners and customers, that the solution met the requirements of a demanding review process. Says Mandy Dore, Director of International Partnering of agiles, "The Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV logo lets our partners and their customers know that we are serious about the solution. Microsoft tested our software, checked our documentation, and reviewed 10 customer references to ensure that our solution was solid. It gives both partners and their customers confidence to know that Microsoft approves and supports our solution."

In addition, the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV logo helps agiles differentiate agilesWorkflow from competing solutions and carries a range of marketing benefits. For example, the certification secures agilesWorkflow a priority listing in the Microsoft Dynamics Solution Finder, inclusion in a catalog distributed to partners worldwide, and featured placement on a partner-to-partner Web site that markets on certified solutions. The company can also display the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV logo on its own collateral as a stamp of approval for its workflow solution.

Vidyadhar Gandikota (VG), President and Chief Architect of One Business Solutions—a reseller of agilesWorkflow—explains the importance of certification. "The fact that agilesWorkflow is Certified for Microsoft Dynamics means that the product is of a high quality and that standards are in place," he says. "It has proper manuals and online help, and the code is good, which means that upgrades are easier and customizations on top of the product are as simple as making them on top of Microsoft Dynamics NAV itself."

VG also finds that the benefits of certification extend to his customers as well. "Customers can get the true value of the solution, because of the manuals and online help," he says. "They are empowered to train themselves and support the solution, which is important as their staff may change over time."

By offering agilesWorkflow, One Business Solutions now has a formal workflow offering in place, and over the course of one year, has provided the solution to three customers totaling around 300 seats.

Turning to Guidance from the Experts
Before bringing agilesWorkflow to international markets, agiles consulted with other Microsoft Gold Certified Partners to establish best practices around building a reseller channel. Says Dore, "We met with partners that we already knew had been successful in establishing a reseller channel to learn as much as we could about their experience."

The company also engaged with Microsoft, attending a two-day workshop hosted by the York Group, which discussed how to build an international business and set up a partner network. Following early partner interest in

A sample to-do list with agilesWorkflow

agilesWorkflow, Dore fielded frequent questions regarding the solution's readiness for Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009. Through a Microsoft ISV beta program for Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009, agiles developers received the objects and guidance needed to upgrade agilesWorkflow for Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009 and ensure that the agiles solution was fully compatible with the most recent version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV before it was released. Since then, agilesWorkflow has received the updated certification for Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009.

Reaching Out to Resellers

Dore has found conferences revolving around Microsoft Dynamics to be the most effective means for establishing agiles's international reseller channel. Over the last year, the company has attended Convergence®, Partner Days in Switzerland and Sweden, and Directions—a partner-hosted conference exclusive to companies focused on Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

Says Dore, "Conferences are the best way to meet with partners and build our reseller channel. We can hold a session, present our solution, and build the initial relationship." Dore notes that conferences provide over 50 percent of the business for agiles. In fact, after a Directions conference in Atlanta, Georgia, three new partners signed up to be resellers immediately after a one-hour presentation.

After partners sign up to resell agilesWorkflow, agiles provides one or two days of training. The company also provides its resellers with training manuals, reference guides, and demonstration scripts with accompanying sales collateral and presentation materials to help its resellers close more deals.

Benefits

By building agilesWorkflow for Microsoft Dynamics NAV, agiles has taken advantage of the existing Microsoft Dynamics partner community to bring its solution to market worldwide. Says Dore, "As a small company, a reseller channel has given us a way to grow our business without competing with other Microsoft Dynamics NAV partners." At the same time, the broad applicability of agilesWorkflow has enabled agiles to attract a large reseller base by providing them with a means to offer more value to their customers.

Cost-Effectively Grow Business

The company has developed a solution that helps partners easily extend Microsoft Dynamics NAV with full-featured workflow functionality, thus adding more value to their customer offerings. Over the course of only one year, agiles has grown its reseller channel from 0 to 35 partners and increased revenue by 25 percent. Because much of the business can rely on resellers, agiles can focus on research and development, and manage its partner accounts with only one full-time staff member. The agiles partner channel is currently growing by two partners a month.

Accelerate Growth with Community Support and Certification

By achieving Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV status and turning to the expertise of Microsoft and other partners that have brought their solutions international, agiles approached the development of its new reseller channel with confidence.

"Developing a new solution and establishing a reseller channel can be expensive and time consuming," says Dore. "But, if you learn from others, use all the resources that Microsoft provides, and qualify for the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV logo, you can overcome many of these challenges."

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:
www.microsoft.com

For more information about agiles products and services, call 49 40 30 95 33 extension 0 or visit the Web site at:
www.agiles.de

Take Advantage of Partners' Regional Expertise and Brand

Because many of its resellers focus on regional markets or have a strong regional presence, agiles can use its resellers' brands and expertise to build on the success of agilesWorkflow.

Says Dore, "In some countries, our documentation and materials need to be in another language other than English. In that case, we must work with partners to localize our content, provide training to other partners in the region, and act on our behalf."

Dore adds, "Other partners have combined our solution with their own, and because they were well established in the region, it enabled us to reach all of their customers with their brand."

Get Ready for Future Growth

Following the success of bringing agilesWorfklow worldwide, agiles looks forward to future expansion. "After one year in that new sales channel, we now plan to grow with our partners more," says Sega. "Our next steps will be to further enhance the solution for our partner channel and extend our existing market position through different marketing and sales activities worldwide."

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to:
www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Software and Services
- Microsoft Dynamics
  - Microsoft Dynamics NAV
- agilesWorkflow