

Big Sur Technologies

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PARTNER SUCCESS STORY

Through its focused efforts as a Novell Partner, Big Sur Technologies built a sales model that increased its software sales revenue and developed long-term customer relationships that have had a lasting positive effect on business.

OVERVIEW

Located in Tampa, Florida, Headquartered in Florida, Big Sur Technologies provides information-technology solutions to commercial, government and higher education accounts in much of the eastern United States. Due to its outstanding performance as a true “go-to-market” leader for Novell, Big Sur Technologies was named the overall North American Novell Partner of the Year for 2003.

CHALLENGE

As a relatively small but aggressive solution provider, Big Sur has strived for the past four years to grow its business as the single point of contact for all of its clients’ software licensing, consulting and hardware needs. In the past, the company worked hard to develop relationships with a large variety of technology vendors. Unfortunately, Big Sur found that its efforts to win large customer accounts were not rewarded with new business. Other well-known vendors had established direct-purchasing relationships with

customers, often creating direct competition for projects that Big Sur had worked for months to develop. Frustrated with the lack of compensation for its labors, the company narrowed its vendor-partner list to a few vendors that had both outstanding products and a clear channel strategy.

BIG SUR AND NOVELL SOLUTION

Like most companies, one of the biggest concerns for Big Sur was the need to create a model that perpetuates new business. “We needed to get in line with partners that respected the hard work that we were doing in the field,” says Sam Sandusky, president and CEO of Big Sur Technologies. “It’s very frustrating to watch your employees work for months on a project, only for the manufacturer to introduce a competitor at the 11th hour, or to sell the deal direct. Novell is dramatically different. Only a small percentage of their sales are handled through a direct relationship. The bulk of their business is driven through the channel.”

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“We always knew that Novell was a great company with best-in-class products, but then we also discovered their rewarding partner model and competitiveness to win.”

—Sam Sandusky,
President and CEO,
Big Sur Technologies

Novell.

As a Demand Agent in the Novell PartnerNet Program, Big Sur can forecast its sales opportunities and then be protected on those opportunities by Novell, even if they take 12 months to close. "As a Novell Partner, I am totally protected," says Sandusky. "Even if for some reason we lose a deal to another partner or if Novell takes it direct, we still receive compensation for our influence on the deal. I don't receive that same level of protection from any other software vendor."

By focusing its efforts as a Novell Partner, Big Sur has successfully increased its revenue and forged long-term customer relationships that have an ongoing positive effect on business. "By aligning ourselves with Novell, we can work deals that perpetuate new business," says Sandusky. "It's key for us. One sale leads to another, and that's what helps us grow."

A critical part of the success that Big Sur sees with the Novell PartnerNet Program starts with the individual relationships that the Novell Partner model fosters. "Our Novell Business Partner Executive is very much engaged with us," says Sandusky. "He spends time with us. He helps us with our marketing programs, and has created a very proactive and strategic relationship with our company."

Novell provides Big Sur access to key personnel for assistance during the different stages of the sales cycle. Local category specialists also offer pre-sales support for many Novell business-

technology solutions. In fact, Big Sur has a direct line to the Novell help desk and maintains many contacts among senior management at Novell.

"I have access to all the executives I need," says Sandusky. "They can open doors to some of the bigger partners. Or if we need to make something happen, we can turn to them to escalate things."

An important aspect of the relationship has been the respect that Novell gives to Big Sur employees as a whole. "There's a real good give-and-take relationship with Novell," says Sandusky. "It not perfect, but Novell encourages its sales people and category specialist to be open with us. There's a lot of integrity with Novell. They have always treated us like a big player. It's been well worth the time and effort."

RESULTS

After a tough year in 2002, Big Sur made a concerted effort to grow its business through an improved partner relationship with Novell. As a result, Novell solutions drew almost three times the revenue for Big Sur in 2003 that competing solutions did the previous year. "Novell made it clear that they were going to be even more loyal to those partners who went to the wall for them," says Sandusky. "So, we made some commitments and Novell made commitments back. Then Novell just kept answering on those commitments. It's been a great relationship, and it just gets better and better."

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