

“We are making breakthroughs in terms of sales capability. CHPD is an incredibly professional organisation. You get that from the word go.”

**Neil Tanner**

Partner Lead, Microsoft Ireland

CHPD case studies



## CHPD inspires sales for Microsoft Ireland

An innovative three-year sales programme is transforming how Microsoft and its partners do business.

## The challenge

Improving sales performance today is a complex business. It's not just about pushing products and services but increasingly about selling solutions.

Microsoft Ireland had the ambitious vision of wanting to double its sales revenue in three years by using an innovative partnership model to inspire solution selling. A sales programme was needed to engage their business partners, develop sales capacity and achieve their vision.

## The solution

They approached the Centre *for* High Performance to create a three-year sales programme that would take people from product pushers to solution sellers.

**“Our research gives us a unique understanding of what great sales people look like in the consultative sales environment.”**

### Keith Liddiard

Centre *for* High Performance Development

Keith Liddiard from CHPD explains: “Customers are demanding more from Microsoft partners, not only high quality products and services at the lowest price but increasingly they are asking for real solutions to their business problems. The partner sales professionals must now be consultants. This demands new skill sets and importantly a sales team with very different motivations.

“With this in mind, we created a programme that would deliver sales capability rather than sales training with a focus on individual skills assessment, personal development and coaching.”

For CHPD, the best development starts with self-awareness. To launch the programme, partners were asked to complete a series of questionnaires designed to measure their sales capacity. This personal profiling identified people's sales strengths and weaknesses, giving them real insight into their motivations and fitness to be working in a solution selling environment. This work was further supported by sales assessment centres to measure and benchmark partners using business sales simulations to measure sales behaviour and performance.

“We got some phenomenal feedback about the skill set that existed in the market place”, says Neil Tanner, Partner Lead, Microsoft, on the results of this first stage of the programme.

“By assessing sales capability, workshops were then designed by CHPD to bring the skill base of our sales people to another level. This really enabled us to engage with customers and position our solutions in a way that they should be positioned.”

Over six months, partners participated in workshops on high impact sales communications, infrastructure optimism for small business, empathy and the customer, sales leadership, account and sales training, and successful selling skills (benefit vs. solution).

Partners were also assigned a dedicated coach for the six-month programme. This support helped partners use the feedback from their personal profiles and apply approaches explored in each workshop back into their business.

Increased confidence is the consistent feedback received about the programme with business partners enthusiastic about the focus on individual development.

“The biggest impact for me personally has been the individual development programme. The ability to tailor the programme towards an individual is what makes the difference,” is how Lorne Chedzey, business development manager for Dell Ireland describes his experience.

Similarly, Mary Ellen Gribben, business development manager for Ethos Information Ptd Ltd, reflects: “The CHPD course will have an impact on selling in the future. I can now quickly make a decision when I first meet people. I know what to look for. This will give me a more positive opportunity to build a relationship from the first point of contact.”

In addition to the positive feedback from business partners, the Inspiring Sales programme has helped Microsoft Ireland develop its partnership engagement model.

“CHPD has allowed us to come up with a common language that is not only relevant from a Microsoft perspective but also a partner perspective. We wanted to take our business planning to the next level in terms of a common business plan that partners help us create and implement in the market place,” says Neil Tanner.

## The future

After a successful year one, Inspiring Sales is transforming how Microsoft and its partners do business. Design for year two is now underway. This second stage will be field-based with a focus on the use of Microsoft's infrastructure optimisation tool and masterminding sessions looking at the sales cycle and coaching through sales.

*This case study is based on a transcript of Inspiring Sales, a collaborative film between the Centre *for* High Performance Development and Microsoft Ireland (2007).*

## Further information

To speak to one of our consultants about talent management or any other of our leadership solutions, please contact us at [info@chpd.com](mailto:info@chpd.com) or 020 7940 5120.