



Microsoft Partner Program Partner Solution Case Study



Partner: Knight Enterprises Inc.

Web Site: www.kei.ca

Customer Size: 1-99

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Professional services

Partner Profile

Based in Calgary, Alberta, Knight Enterprises Inc. is an IT provider with seven employees and 21 years of experience in delivering network consulting and other IT solutions to small and medium businesses.

Software and Services

- Network Infrastructure
 - Windows Server 2003
 - Exchange Server 2003
 - Small Business Server 2003
- Network Design, Implementation & Support
- WebArmour® High Security Internet Services
- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0

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IT Provider Increases Profits by 85 Percent in One Year with Microsoft Technologies

“Microsoft realizes that its success as a company depends on the success of its partners, and that knowledge is evident in how partners are treated and in the quantity and quality of support that we receive.”

David Kampel, President, Knight Enterprises Inc.

In 2005, Knight Enterprises Inc., a long-time Novell partner, chose to add Microsoft® technologies to its offerings after attending a Microsoft partner event. As a result of the event, Knight adopted the new business strategy of joining the Microsoft Partner Program and focusing primarily on Microsoft products. The company's major accounts have opted to make the move as well, and Knight now expects its revenue to double in two years' time.

Business Needs

Knight Enterprises Inc. provides IT services—from design and implementation to training and ongoing support—to small and medium businesses in the Calgary, Alberta, market. Specializing in network infrastructure projects, the company is one of Calgary's oldest authorized resellers of Novell technology.

In the last few years, however, Knight noticed that its annual revenue was stagnating and predicted that maintaining its revenue level might become more challenging. “Many of our customers were reluctant to upgrade their Novell networks

until they could see exactly how Linux technology would affect Novell products,” says David Kampel, President of Knight Enterprises Inc.

Knight decided to investigate the possibility of broadening its services to incorporate Microsoft® technologies, which previously had received less focus. “We considered cross-training so that we could offer and support both Novell and Microsoft products but were concerned about the strain that that would place on our resources,” says Rose Crowley, Vice President at Knight Enterprises Inc.

Solution

Kampel attended the Partnering Executive Summit that was part of the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference in July, 2005. He returned to the office with the conviction that Knight would include Microsoft as a cornerstone for its future business development. "I was especially impressed by the emphasis that Microsoft places on small businesses," says Kampel. "Microsoft is dedicating a lot of research, thought, and development effort toward small business customers like ours."

Part of the resolution to move to an entirely Microsoft-focused business strategy had to do with the Novell move toward Linux technology. "It felt like Linux could be a big support burden to carry. While it looks inexpensive to implement, Linux is not cheap—the costs of supporting the product are hard to predict," says Kampel. "We determined that deploying Linux might not be a sound business decision for our customers."

Knight knew that its decision would catch many long-time customers by surprise, so the company made sure that it finished replacing its own systems with Microsoft products before talking to customers. "It's been a 180-degree turnaround for us to go from Novell to Microsoft, but we explained to our customers that we evaluated Microsoft offerings and concluded that the functionality and integration of the entire stack of products makes migrating such a smart move," says Kampel.

In December 2005, Knight achieved Microsoft Certified Partner status with a network infrastructure competency. The company has added the Small Business Specialist designation and currently is working toward additional competencies in the advanced

infrastructure, information worker, OEM hardware solutions, and Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM areas. "We're particularly interested in the Microsoft Dynamics CRM competency because its functionality is perfect for our small business clients," says Crowley. "Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides so much value that it inspires customers to improve their infrastructures."

As a partner, Knight receives help from Microsoft in training, co-marketing opportunities, access to specialized sales tools and technical support, and customizable marketing materials. Perhaps the most important way in which Microsoft lends its support to Knight, however, comes in the form of visits with customers. "There's nothing more powerful than having a Microsoft specialist with us when it comes to explaining the value of a particular technology to a customer," says Crowley. "And Microsoft is always available to answer our questions, whether they're about a technical issue or the best way to sell a specific product."

Benefits

For Knight, partnership with Microsoft has really paid off. In fact, the company has experienced a 116 percent increase in new customers since it focused on Microsoft technology, and average revenue per customer is 21 percent higher than it was with Novell products.

- **Increased profitability.** "The transition from Novell to Microsoft has had an absolute net positive effect on our revenue," says Kampel. "Our future growth potential before was flat, but now all signs conservatively indicate that we'll be able to double our size in two years!"
- **Availability of Microsoft expertise.** "One of the best things for our customers about

our relationship with Microsoft is that Microsoft stands shoulder-to-shoulder with us, supplying us with information that helps our customers," says Crowley.

- **Improved value for customers.** "As a Microsoft partner, we're able to deliver more value to customers because of the integration of the applications," says Kampel. "That integration makes a huge difference, especially to small businesses."
- **Time-saving marketing support.** "We've done three marketing campaigns this year just using Microsoft materials that are waiting for us on the partner Web site, which accelerates our process and relieves us from producing materials ourselves," says Crowley.
- **Extensive partner ecosystem.** "With other vendors, all the other dealers are essentially competitors," says Crowley. "But with Microsoft, we get advice and assistance from other partners who see the value in supporting us and each other. Our customers benefit because they receive the highest degree of expertise available for each component of their business."
- **Range of third-party technology choices.** "Our customers' business success rides on a lot more than just file and print," says Kampel. "There's such a variety of third-party products built on the Microsoft platform, from point-of-sale applications to accounting programs. We're able to offer our customers easy-to-integrate tools that exactly meet their business needs."