

"Knowledge management simplifies the complexities for sales representatives, enabling them to easily obtain the information they need so they can spend more of their time capturing sales."

–John Olds, Program Director, IBM PCD Worldwide Sales Operations

IBM PERSONAL COMPUTING DIVISION HELPS SALES REPS SIFT THROUGH DATA SOURCES

Selling fast-changing technology in the highly competitive personal computing environment requires access to an immense amount of information and sales support materials, such as product brochures and customer case studies.

But imagine having to wade through several, voluminous databases to find the information you need, eating up chunks of time that could be spent preparing for a presentation or meeting with a prospective customer. This was once the reality for the more than 1,500 sales representatives in the IBM Personal Computing Division (PCD), who are responsible for selling IBM personal computing technology. From entry-level mobile systems to sophisticated workstations and related services, the technology that this team sells generated \$16 billion in revenue for IBM in 2000.

During sales calls, customers often ask for product specification sheets or other materials. And sales representatives, especially those who are new, seek examples of sales proposals and other information. But, with precious time ticking away, sales representatives found themselves searching through more than 20 different databases and intranet sites for the documents they needed. What's more, these normally mobile workers often had to return to the office to do this tedious work.

"We've invested substantially in the data sources our team uses, so we wanted to make them easier and quicker to search," explained John Olds, program director, IBM PCD Worldwide Sales Operations.

Olds and his team put their heads together and developed the Sales Deliverables Navigator, an intelligent search engine based on Lotus Domino Extended Search. Says Olds, "The real value of this tool lies in its ability to categorize the information sales representatives have told us they need every day. Searches now yield highly targeted, relevant documents, thus minimizing the amount of extraneous materials the team used to encounter."

IN, OUT AND BACK TO WORK

Whether they're working from their desktop PCs or offsite on notebook PCs, PCD sales representatives conduct document searches by clicking on appropriate categories, defined by product brand, document type and so on. Within seconds,

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Enhance productivity and effectiveness of IBM personal computing technology sales representatives

USER COMMUNITY

1,500 sales representatives, with potential to support many more in the future

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Sales Deliverables Navigator, an intelligent search tool developed with Lotus Domino™ Extended Search

BUSINESS VALUE

Enhanced productivity, effectiveness of sales representatives and content developers





Whether they need a product specification sheet or a sales proposal sample, IBM sales representatives need only turn to the Sales Deliverables Navigator, an intelligent search tool developed with Lotus Domino Extended Search, to find the documents that can guide them along the sales process.

Domino Extended Search searches PCD's numerous back-end databases as well as intranet sites to find the most relevant content. Information is then accessible to sales representatives through a Web or Lotus Notes based interface.

"The rep no longer has to figure out where the desired specification sheet resides, or waste time with multiple search tools. By better managing our information assets for our sales force, Sales Deliverables Navigator is enhancing productivity immensely," notes Rick Silvers, program manager, IBM PCD Worldwide Sales Operations.

In the same vein, those who develop content for sales representatives are experiencing similar productivity gains. Explains Steve Loeschorn, program manager, IBM PCD Worldwide Sales Operations, "Our content developers have grown much more knowledgeable about what our representatives need to close deals. So they are narrowing the scope or number of deliverables they create, and better focusing their materials, as well as ensuring their timeliness."

Much of this insight comes from discussions about what documents sales representatives use the most. In addition, Sales Deliverables Navigator features reporting capabilities to generate system usage statistics, enabling PCD to uncover which documents and areas receive the most hits.

INFORMATION, AT THEIR COMMAND

Sales Deliverables Navigator was developed within three months, according to Olds. PCD is now encouraging more of its sales force to work smarter by using the tool.

Concludes Olds, "Considering the volume of information that's constantly being unleashed, selling in the personal computing industry will continue to become more complex and challenging. We think that knowledge management simplifies the complexities for sales representatives, enabling them to easily obtain the information they need so they can spend more of their time capturing sales."

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