

No Value!

CASE STUDY: IBM

by Scott Hornstein

IBM has been at the forefront of deploying VOC Research as “standard operating procedure” prior to launching significant projects

One initiative focused on introducing IBM’s comprehensive new hardware/software solutions to private medical practices ranging from three to 49 physicians. The solution, when compared to the competition, appeared to be robust with important benefits for the practice. Yet the sales force had characterized this marketplace as “hard to see the decision maker.”

VOC Research results gave important direction to the effort:

Contrary to sales force assumptions, all interviews (which included the Docs) identified the Office or Practice Manager as the decision maker versus the traditional contact – the Doc. Physicians, especially in the larger more lucrative practices, had decided to hand off office and technology responsibilities to concentrate on the practice of medicine.

There was confusion and some irritation regarding the roles of IBM Reps and IBM’s third-party sales partners — the VARS or Value Added Resellers.

- *“I don’t know who all these people are or what their roles are, but I do know I’m paying their salary. No value.”*
- *“Too confusing, too many layers. The division of responsibility is not clear and is not satisfying my needs.”*

- *“Flatten the organization — get closer, increase your knowledge of the marketplace. Manage your business partners better, more closely.”*

Customer responses also helped IBM prioritize its sales efforts. Analysis indicated that practices which focused solely on the software solutions viewed IBM as a commodity vendor. However, practices that recognized the importance of the hardware viewed IBM as a partner.

IBM an 800+% improvement in response over previous programs. We received more qualified inquiries for this initial phase than we had projected for the entire pilot, with an increase in leads of more that 400+%.” ■



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