

Turning Vision into Value-Driven Results

Selling business critical IT solutions to global organisations requires an in-depth knowledge of their corporate objectives combined with a co-ordinated approach to service delivery. When Dutch-owned Origin joined forces with the French company, Atos, creating a solutions provider with a presence in 30 countries, it chose Miller Heiman's Large Account Management ProcessSM (LAMP[®]) to manage relationships with key clients, turning their visions into value-driven results.

Atos Origin provides a range of business solutions that address critical commercial and IT related issues and encompass one or more of its three service areas: consultancy and systems; e-business and managed services. In many cases solutions are delivered globally at a local level via an international team of 27,000 business and technology specialists. However, to ensure the company is creating real value for its clients, everyone involved in specifying and delivering solutions needs to have a comprehensive view of account relationships - wherever they are employed in the organisation.

Peter Overakker, Executive Vice President, Sales & Client Management explained: "The merger brought together two companies with complementary strengths: Atos was more active in the financial marketplace and in Southern Europe, whereas Origin had a track record in the manufacturing sector and in supporting global clients. As a result we have a larger critical mass, a stronger management team and an organisational structure that is more fully aligned to the needs of multi-national accounts."

"Our goal now is to grow the business with the current resources and to create long-term revenues through outsourcing and by becoming the integrator of choice," says Mr. Overakker, whose responsibilities include Atos Origin's relationship with nearly 50 leading global clients.

A central objective, therefore, is to understand the business needs of these organisations. To support its business strategy Atos Origin uses a number of sales processes, including Miller Heiman's Large Account Management Process (LAMP[®]), which encourages the teamwork necessary to deliver the value added contributions that clients need, and to a lesser extent the Strategic Selling[®] programme. In larger countries account activity is 100 per cent based on LAMP[®] whereas Strategic Selling is used more for local sales situations.

It was Origin that first introduced the LAMP[®] process in 1995, having recognised that to grow it would have to broaden its horizons beyond the Dutch market and also become more project-orientated. As the company expanded, partly through acquisition, and became a leading player in the outsourcing market it was also obvious that it would need to focus on clients' long-term business plans. LAMP[®] provided the consistent framework and language needed to align the company's changing organisational structure with its clients.

Today LAMP[®] continues to perform broadly the same function, as a key component of Atos Origin's 'Global Account Strategic Planning Approach' (GASPA) which has been implemented in 30 countries. The company has a dedicated Global Accounts team in

the Netherlands and operates the model at a local level. The Miller Heiman process brings together team members with dedicated or part-time delivery stakeholders to ensure a more solutions-orientated approach.

LAMP® enables Atos Origin to position itself as a joint venture business partner rather than simply another supplier, reducing its vulnerability to losing key accounts. By focusing on what the client wants to accomplish - rather than the services the company is trying to sell - the aim is to establish an action plan that will produce measurable results in terms of increased revenues and reduced cost of sale.

Global Account teams follow a clearly defined series of steps: analysing the current situation; setting goals; focusing sales resources where they are most effective; eliminating effort where pay off is marginal; and establishing and implementing essential sales and support programmes. All these elements come together in the Gold Sheet, which is used to plan 1-2 years ahead by defining tasks, timescales and responsibilities.

Atos Origin uses a mixture of paper-based and computerised versions of the various Miller Heiman templates. For example, account teams find it more convenient to pin up the Gold Sheet for more productive and effective group discussion and input.

"It is not mandatory for countries to use LAMP® but the process gives everyone a framework to be organised and disciplined," says Peter Overakker. The fact that the process is so widely implemented, however, is testament to its universal nature although in the company's experience there are regional variations in take-up of the concepts. Nevertheless he believes that LAMP® continues to have a positive impact on the business.

"Although the increase cannot be wholly attributed to LAMP®, it is possible to say that revenue from virtually all the top clients has risen by 20 per cent. There is also a generic acceptance that the hit rate is higher in accounts managed using LAMP®, and in future we will have the means to quantify this," he explains.

"It is also clear that LAMP® promotes a higher level of co-operation between sales/account management and delivery teams in the various service organisations. A common sales approach and language means that everyone is better prepared for meetings and is able to do their job well. The teams using LAMP® are more satisfied with their colleagues which translates through to the client."

Already it is acknowledged that completing LAMP® documentation is an essential step to getting delivery teams involved but there is a strong case for the process becoming mandatory for all large clients. In the meantime, the priorities are to continue embedding the LAMP® concept into the culture of the company. To ensure ongoing top down commitment, Peter Overakker recognises the need to update senior management (it was last done prior to the merger) and to develop greater in-house expertise in implementing Miller Heiman through 'train the trainer' programmes. The next phase will also involve using more web-based reinforcement methods and integrating the programme more closely with their Customer Relationship Management (CRM®) processes and systems. Consequently LAMP® will continue to play a vital role in enabling Atos Origin to win business consistently by providing its global accounts with seamless global services.