

A) Customer & its Backdrop:

Ascent Informatics Pvt Ltd, Pune.

Ascent is a leading Technology Consulting & Services organization with strong prowess in Data Acquisition & Automation space. Service division of Ascent purely focuses on PLM Services and Managed Team offering. In product development they have developed standard solutions / platforms for the purpose of Remote Data Acquisition primarily for providing an ability to acquire and analyze the data collected from semi / fully automated manufacturing equipments for the purpose of monitoring their health. They have a ready and industry accepted solution on Air Quality Monitoring allowing the Central Government to create a centralized platform for AQM where all the vendors and suppliers of gas analyzers connect and provide data on near real-time basis.

After developing the basic platform PlantConnect, Ascent tried to take it to the market with the focus on the Manufacturing segment. However they wanted to check out the feasibility & relevance of the same platform with the OEM segment.

The mandate from the client to TekEdge was twofold.

1. Create perfect positioning within the target audience and test market PlantConnect with the OEMs.
2. In the process enable possible sales pipeline for the product.

Project Details:

- a) Duration 9 calendar months.
- b) Period: In the financial year 2012-13 from July 2012 to March 2013.
- c) Markets covered: Pune & Mumbai.

Product Details:

- d) Domain: Maintenance & After Market Support.
- e) Category: Different.
- f) Nature: Enterprise Class.
- g) Intended Benefits:
 - 1. Enabling Equipment health monitoring to support TPM methodologies for maintenance.
 - 2. Enabling the support and maintenance teams of OEMs in providing value added services to the existing customers.
- h) Readiness to deliver: The horizontal platform was ready.

What Ascent on its own has done up to that point?

- 1. Sporadic attempts to talk with a few OEMs through personal network.
- 2. Reach out to many manufacturing industries with maintenance teams for possibility of using PlanConnect as Remote Monitoring tool.

Against the above backdrop TekEdge with its team of Strategic sales consultants, Product Evangelists, Technological consultants & Product sales specialists ventured into offering its uniquely poised OEPS(Outsourced Enterprise Product Sales) services to Ascent with an eye to freeze or understand the potential of the available Indian market opportunity.

B) Landscape of TekEdge's activities performed during the assignment:

Go to market preparation:

- 1. Domain understanding of data acquisition, automation and other related topics.
- 2. Functional understanding of PlantConnect platform.
- 3. Technical Architecture understanding of PlantConnect platform.

4. Research & understanding of OEM's after market services as a domain.
5. Understanding how the leading OEMs provide value added services to their customers and their expectations & more importantly what are relevant to the end customers.
6. Study of domestic leading OEMs to understand the overall maturity of the AMS offerings
7. Preparation of data acquisition sheet and survey points / questionnaire and generation of qualified database of OEMs fit to talk
8. Planning of field activities to meet and understand the OEM's mindset on upgrading their AMS infrastructure to provide value added services.
9. In the process generate qualified leads.

Analysis:

1. Compared to overseas market, domestic OEMs don't focus on sustained revenue from AMS.
2. One of the major reasons is clear qualitative advantage of their spaces and product performance in the eyes of the customers.
3. OEMs are not thinking on innovative AMS / business models.
4. Maintenance teams with the manufacturing segment are not sufficiently geared up to practice TPM like maintenance methodologies.
5. Organized knowledge base for the equipments is not available with OEMs for further analysis & prediction of performance of the equipment based on the data collected in PlantConnect.
6. Some innovative entry & pricing models needs to be evolved to address visionary prospects needs.
7. From the end customer point of view they were clueless about how to use the data collected from PlantConnect for the purpose of maintenance related reporting, forecasting & predictions in day to day business process.

Value Addition by Team TekEdge:

1. Evangelization of likely value added services with the owners / senior management of leading OEMs.
2. Restructured collateral to depict the right positioning of PlantConnect with OEMs.
3. Helped connect with domain experts (Equipment categories / types ... e.g. boilers, HVAC systems etc.) to enable verticalization of the horizontal PlantConnect platform.
4. Enabled cluster of 4 entities in Reliability Maintenance domain to enable end to end offering for the end customer.

Market Feedback:

1. The product need assessment in the market on the lines of Showstopper / Essential / Good to have, clearly demonstrated the maturity of Good to have credentials for PlantConnect which meant the revenue generation cycles will be unpredictable and average sales cycles will be very huge & complex.
2. Many of the prospects showed initial interest, however they were not clear about their ability to derive ROI from the investments & spending on PlantConnect.
3. Considering the tight competition and lack of vision on competitive advantage, OEMs were reluctant to pay for the subscription for the assets getting connected to PlantConnect. According to them the cost of subscription should be borne by the end users of equipments rather than OEMs themselves.
4. Prospect with advance sales stages failed internally to demonstrate the long term value of the investments to the management to arrive at a business decision.

Strategy suggested to the customer:

Considering the slow response from the market, TekEdge suggested following strategies ...

1. Create the visibility of product through seminars & promotional events.

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2. Evangelize the concept at appropriate forums of OEMs.
3. Increase the activity on PULL Sales that to aid DIRECT Sales.
4. Create the network of system integrators of mid to large size.
5. Build relationship with global brands for generating enquiries and projects based on PlantConnect.
6. Build a cluster of entities with complementary skill sets in Reliability Maintenance domain where in end to end offering can be offered to the end customer.
7. Partner with domain experts and OEMs to enable some projects around PlantConnect.

Current status of the product:

1. The product has become defacto standard in Air Quality Monitoring due to initiatives taken by the top management to promote PlantConnect with gas analyzer manufacturers supported by the stringent compliance needs from CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board).
2. Continuous leads from the system integrator network though the conversion ratio is still very low.
3. Through the RCM Cluster, four leads got generator from US global OEM giants.
4. As a company they have got fair visibility into the market with positioning as **THOUGH LEADERS IN CONVERGING AUTOMATION & IT.**
5. The cost of sales has significantly reduced compared to the number of leads they generate month on month.
6. In the first edition of the NASSCOM Product Conclave, 2013 at Pune the product was one among the 5 chosen for the company showcase.