



Systems Integrator Steps Confidently Into Competitive Market

Steps to Success helps BMB Egypt impress customers in major market sectors, and use internal resources more efficiently.

Executive Summary

BMB Egypt

- Technology Sales and Integration
- Cairo
- 80 employees

Business Challenge

- Successfully penetrate untapped markets and beat established competitors in mature markets
- Drive revenue and improve profitability by reducing the time and money associated with sales, design, implementation, and support
- Consistently meet goals for customer satisfaction in complex advanced technology implementations

Network Solution

- Use Cisco Steps to Success to propose and deliver advanced technology solutions with greater network-centric expertise, productivity and efficiency

Business Results

- Comprehensive proposals have differentiated BMB from competitors, helped the company win major contracts, and reduced proposal development time by 50 percent
- Internal productivity gains have allowed the company to grow by over 40 percent year over year while keeping headcount low
- Meticulous documentation has facilitated sales and delivery of new technologies to existing customers

Challenge

BMB Egypt is one of several BMB systems integration companies in the Doumet Group, a highly diversified industrial holding company based in Lebanon. While BMB Egypt is one of the newest of the BMB subsidiaries, the company is already the top BMB revenue producer and has one of the most proficient, highly trained technology teams.

In 2004 Hany Refaat joined BMB Egypt and rose quickly through the ranks to become the first Egyptian to hold the position of Operations Director. As a former salesperson, Refaat retains his strong customer focus. He spends as much time in the field as possible meeting and talking to customers.

Egypt is an intensely competitive market and BMB's strategy was first to target untapped sectors, such as the hospitality area. It expanded rapidly into other areas, including manufacturing and retail, and in less than two years has captured over 35 percent market share in the financial services sector. Refaat sees Cisco advanced technology solutions benefiting even more sectors, including real estate and the growing service provider market.

Refaat recognized that the ability to sustain the company's momentum in so many emerging and mature markets depended on taking steps to improve efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of sales, proposal development, design, implementation, and support. "We were prepared to invest a great deal of time and money in developing more detailed and meticulous documentation, tools, and processes," says Refaat. "However this type of undertaking, while necessary to our future growth, would have been a tremendous drain on our resources."

Solution

Sherif Lotfy, Cisco Channel Systems Engineer, had been working closely with Refaat and his technical team on training programs for Cisco advanced technology. At one of the regular team meetings with BMB, Lotfy introduced the team to Steps to Success, a strategic business-building resource in the Cisco Worldwide Partner Enablement portfolio designed to accelerate partner capabilities and help them achieve increased profitability.

Steps to Success is an online resource that helps partners take advantage of proven Cisco intellectual property and methodologies covering the complete Prepare, Plan, Design, Implement, Operate and Optimize phases of the customer service lifecycle. Steps to Success is designed to help partners avoid costly tactical errors by incorporating Cisco recommended methodologies for selling, delivering, and supporting Cisco advanced technology solutions. "By using the content available on Steps to Success, BMB could avoid wasting valuable time and energy reinventing the wheel," says Lotfy. Some of the examples that Lotfy showed BMB were:

- Templates and questionnaires for understanding a customer's business requirements.
- Best practice processes for reviewing a customer's technology requirements and strategy.
- Project plans, site surveys, and network readiness assessment tools.
- Detailed design templates and design checklists for both high level and low level design.

When Refaat reviewed the wealth of information available on Steps to Success, he knew immediately that this Cisco resource would save his company an enormous amount of time in refining BMB's approach to all new sales opportunities.

One example is the Statement of Work (SOW) template. In Egypt a typical customer proposal consists solely of things like a bill of materials, pricing and currency, and terms and conditions. "Using the SOW template from Steps to Success, we now describe the exact features and capabilities we are proposing to solve the customer's problem," says Refaat. "With advanced technology solutions, if you're not clear about what you're going to provide at the time of implementation, you risk not setting customer expectations properly."

Providing this level of information as part of a response to a Request for Proposal has made a strong impression on customers. "Now we look more professional in every competitive situation, and customers appreciate the level of transparency we provide," says Refaat. "It took almost no time at all to incorporate the SOW template into our sales efforts, while the contribution it has made to winning sales has been tremendous."

BMB believes that using proven methodologies is essential to delivering advanced technology solutions to customers. "Advanced technology projects are extremely complex," says Refaat. "With the tools and methodologies we are using from Steps to Success we can define every phase of the project, including resource allocation and time to completion. As a result we are using our internal resources more efficiently for every project and providing greater transparency to our customers. Having a more structured approach and detailed documentation not only impresses customers, it increases their comfort level with the technology that we are proposing and with BMB as a partner and trusted advisor."

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Hany Refaat
Operations Director
BMB Egypt

Within a short amount of time, Steps to Success was being used by the pre-sales, sales, technical, and project management teams at BMB Egypt. "It has fundamentally changed how we do business," says Refaat.



Results

Using the tools on Steps to Success has resulted in measurable improvements in productivity. Refaat estimates that using the SOW template alone has reduced proposal time by at least 50 percent. "We have the framework and it is easy to adapt to different proposal situations. We do not have to create something from scratch each time we do a proposal."

He estimates that the project management department has reduced the workload of each person by at least 10 hours a week using Steps to Success content, freeing up valuable time for new projects without increasing headcount. "We are growing our business by 40 percent a year," says Refaat. "The tools we have found on Steps to Success have helped us to achieve that growth without adding a lot more staff. So we are not only winning more business, we are doing so more profitably."

BMB recently began using a set of documents on Steps to Success called the Network Readiness For Use (NRFU). The NRFU provides a set of tests that the partner conducts and then presents to the customer to certify that the network has met the agreed-upon goals. "Setting up testing scenarios can be very complex and time-consuming," says Refaat. "Having the NRFUs allows us to construct tests quickly, and to go through the results with customers so they can feel confident that everything is in place and working."

Steps to Success was also instrumental in helping BMB win one of its most important accounts to date. "We won a major bid from Al Ahram Beverages, a subsidiary of the Heineken company," says Refaat. "There is no question that the quality of our proposal helped us beat out much larger companies for this prestigious contract."

BMB initially won the data infrastructure project from Al Ahram, and subsequently won additional contracts for Unified Communications (UC) and security. The UC project involved over 1,000 IP phones, with a contract value for the voice and data infrastructure of over \$1 million. The project was a showcase for BMB, and Al Ahram's network manager received a promotion in recognition of the exceptional quality of the project.

Having a clear, well-documented process has helped BMB to continue to win add-on business for customers. "We don't waste time trying to figure out how we set up everything in the last implementation, and the customer is much less worried about disruption to their existing operations. We are finding that follow-on projects with customers have a much shorter cycle time from proposal to completion," says Refaat.

All of this has added up to a new level of trust with customers. "We are more confident about our processes," says Refaat, "and our customers feel that they are in safe hands when they do business with us. In just a short period of time we can see that we are doing more vertical business with existing customers. We can propose new technology and they are not afraid to try it."

“The way Cisco supports us with resources like Steps to Success has given us a tremendous competitive edge, and made it very hard for other vendors to match us.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Steps to Success, visit

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