

# One-on-One

## with Blue Connections

An IBM Premier Business Partner

### Blue Connections sees sales grow through Know Your IBM

*Editor's note: Blue Connections is an IBM Premier Business Partner and an award-winning reseller of IBM hardware, software and services in Australia. The 38-person firm prides itself on its ability to deliver complete solutions to clients across many industries in Australia, including life sciences, insurance, education and government. In this interview, Gordon Brownell, the director of sales for Blue Connections, discusses how the firm uses IBM PartnerWorld's® Know Your IBM to help it deliver end-to-end solutions and, along the way, grow its sales.*

*Know Your IBM is a learning-rewards program designed to help IBM Business Partners increase sales by sharpening their product knowledge and skills. Comprehensive e-learning modules offer high-quality, tailored*

*content developed, tested and proven to help sales teams better understand the unique features, key selling points and client benefits of specific products and solutions.*

#### **Blue Connections is an avid user of Know Your IBM. How long have you been users and why?**

We've used Know Your IBM since its inception. It's an effective way to bring our people up to speed on IBM products and services. Information is presented in a very digestible, straightforward manner, so it can be learned quickly and easily. It's a way of acquainting and reacquainting our people with key products and services or directing their focus on new opportunities – for instance, what they can sell along with other IBM technology.

#### **Who uses Know Your IBM in your firm?**

Everyone on our sales team uses Know Your IBM along with people on our pre-sales technical teams. It helps keep everyone one step ahead of what's coming.

#### **What's their reaction to Know Your IBM?**

They love it – they really do. The points and incentives offered for completing education are great motivators. Add to this the fact that the program helps increase their success selling IBM and it's a real winner.

Also, everyone likes the fact that they can complete modules when and where they choose. This is important because it means people aren't up against a deadline. They can acquire



training when it's needed. Think about it from a salesperson's perspective – there are times when they can take time out to learn something new or brush up on a subject. And there are times when it's just not realistic – say, when they are closing a deal. Self-paced, self-determined learning can be quite effective for sales teams.

### Are there new markets Blue Connections has penetrated or new opportunities you've won as a result of Know Your IBM?

Yes, there are several areas where we are seeing growth. Server

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consolidation has become a very important growth area for our business. Our cumulative success can be directly attributed to learning from Know Your IBM. In fact, I'd say that about half of our consolidation business is due to KYI. It has really helped us open doors, giving us expertise we needed to go after and win this business.

Our warranty maintenance business through IBM Global Services has also grown along with sales of IBM Express Managed Services. We are also seeing quite a bit of success adding IBM Global Finance into deals. A salesperson who has completed a quick-learn module on

finance offerings is more likely to go out and successfully sell a lease. In fact, sometimes this is what will close the sale.

### How did Know Your IBM inspire these successes?

Know Your IBM does a great job of keeping IBM top of mind. Salespeople sell what they know. Through Know Your IBM, our people learn more about IBM products and services like maintenance, IEMS or finance. They learn about new offerings. They also are reacquainted with existing products that they may not have sold in awhile.

There's another factor, too. Know Your IBM imparts information that's easy to transfer to clients and an informed customer is a more confident buyer. This is particularly true among small businesses and mid-market companies, which is our key market.

### How does Know Your IBM complement Blue Connections' sales strategy?

We sell solutions at Blue Connections, and offerings like Know Your IBM ensure that our salespeople can sell across all of the various IBM brands that go into a solution. Know Your IBM helps us cultivate knowledge that will enable us to help our customers make the right choices in

buying technology. It supports our positioning as their trusted advisor – so they know they can turn to us for answers on IBM-based technology and that we will recommend the best solution.

### How can Know Your IBM help Blue Connections deliver innovative solutions to clients?

Know Your IBM can help you get to the bottom of a customer's requirements – and that's really where innovation starts. It starts with understanding their business, their objectives and how they use technology in support of those objectives.

To learn more about Know Your IBM, visit [www.ibm.com/partnerworld/knowyouribm](http://www.ibm.com/partnerworld/knowyouribm)



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