

One-on-One

One-on-One with Spectrum Training Brokers

An IBM Premier Business Partner

IBM provides the missing piece of the pie for Spectrum Training Brokers.

Why partner with IBM? Ask Spectrum Training Brokers

As a true broker focused on meeting customer needs rather than selling specific products or services, Spectrum Training Brokers wants to offer clients the broadest possible range of IT education service. With this in mind, Spectrum turned to IBM to complete its portfolio of offerings.

This energetic, solutions-oriented company became an IBM Premium Business Partner in June 2004. Within a year, IBM accounted for some 20 percent of the seven-year-old company's sales. Here Spectrum Training Brokers' owner Nat Emery and senior sales executive Kathy Tarter share insights about this winning relationship.

Why did Spectrum Training Brokers team with IBM IT Education Services?

Our goal is to be a single source for all of our client's training needs and IBM IT Education Services helps us fill gaps in our portfolio. More than 85 percent of our customers come to us for IT training. So when clients ask us if we offer training in, say, Linux or Tivoli, we need to say, "Yes." For Spectrum Training Brokers, IBM training was the final piece of the pie.

What strengths does IBM bring to the table?

IBM brings credibility and a true commitment to education and partnering. As big as IBM is, its people are still willing to look at individual situations and make adjustments. That flexibility is important. Education is typically about five percent of an IT project budget, and many companies don't see the value

of spending the time to find the right programs and often don't realize how many options are available. We want them to feel confident that we can find a solution that fits their needs. It's great to have IBM to back us up.

What differentiates IBM training capabilities from others?

IBM's reputation for quality, instant name recognition, breadth of programs and global reach sets it apart. And that reputation gives us instant credibility.

How has selling IBM training helped you grow your business?

If we meet with a client or government entity that already uses IBM training, our IBM relationship gives us a bigger foot in door. People know IBM has been around a long time and is going to continue to be around, so they think

of us for future needs. We did a significant amount of business with IBM IT Education Services in our first year as an IBM Premier Business Partner – that's all business we won because of our relationship with IBM.

You have a phenomenal track record – what's the key to your success?

The key is listening to our customers and being able to offer the full range of technical courses – we currently offer clients more than 6,000 courses in instructor-led and elearning formats, and the largest single slice is from IBM. The other key is our knowledge of the marketplace – that is, knowing what courses are available, at what locations, and at what price.

The ability to give our clients what they want – vs. what's out there to be sold is paramount. For example, we pointed one client to the IBM Education Pack – Online Account program that we knew she could use. It ended up saving her over \$7,000, and, more importantly, it fit her needs.

Tell us a little more about Spectrum Training Brokers.

Our expertise is knowledge of the training marketplace, so our business is focused exclusively on service – finding the best instructors, the right location, and the best price for our customers. We look at ourselves as an extension of the IBM training sales force and a staff expert for our clients. With a very focused, lean operation, our background is in sales, business

administration and accounting, with knowledge of various technologies, plus strong communications skills. We feel that combination gives us an advantage in being able to offer strong recommendations when individualizing training strategies for our clients. Of course, we're familiar with education and training, but we trust IBM to provide that. Our job is to find what's best for our customers.

What is your key value to your clients?

Our clients value our honesty, efficiency and how we micromanage their accounts. For example, the IBM Ed Pack is a great money-saving offering, but many clients don't want to keep track of the details. So we take care of it for them, showing them how to get the most for their purchase, reporting how many training dollars remain in their account, reminding them when their account is about to expire and providing regular statements showing how much they've saved.

What about your value to IBM?

We take service to the extreme, and that extends to end-users – providing them a completely satisfying training experience. We give them all the details they need, let them know terms, cancellation policies, send out reminders. As a result, we rarely have students who are unhappy with their experience. Students and their employers walk away happy with IBM and eager to take more classes.

In what ways has your relationship with IBM helped make Spectrum Training Brokers more successful?

Again, it's the missing piece of the pie for our customers, from startups to mid-size and large companies as well as to the government. They now see us as a true single source for all their training needs. Having IBM next to us on our letterhead, documents, proposals and marketing materials sends a very powerful message. With the addition of IBM offerings, we know we can deliver clients what they need. IBM has opened doors that wouldn't have been opened to us without this partnership.

To learn more about IBM authorized training, visit:

ibm.com/partnerworld/services

Learn more about Spectrum Training Brokers by going to

www.spectrumbrokers.com



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