

How a Program Management Office (PMO) Improved Go to Market Impact for Microsoft Sales Operations

The Challenge

In 2010, the Microsoft Enterprise Products Group (EPG) began pivoting to Azure, including launching several products and services, and introducing two new Azure-specific roles to the 35 roles already established in their 36,000-person global sales team. The business group, which closed \$26 billion in 2009, needed more visibility, better coordination, and better results from go to market campaigns and programs.

The Sales Operations team was tasked with establishing a go to market prioritization and oversight process, to complement the existing business review processes already established for Marketing and Sales. In particular, the business group needed to address:

- Poor timing and coordination: many projects and programs were planned by many contributing teams, and a sensible order of execution needed definition.
- Over-consumption of sales time: while the urgency to execute the pivot was high, sales management wanted to protect time available for selling the existing product portfolio.
- Poor program execution: too many programs were not being adopted by Sales, due to poor project planning, coordination and execution.

The Solution

Bay Sales Partners was hired as a consultant by Microsoft Sales Operations to perform two functions:

1. Establish a regimen for prioritizing and planning programs, and for overseeing programs in flight. Key deliverables: 1) a template for rating proposed go to market programs, 2) a catalog view of proposals for prioritization, 3) a standard status report for programs in flight, and 4) a Gantt chart (calendar) view of programs planned and in flight.
2. Facilitate a monthly, cross-functional Program Management Office meeting for planning programs and or overseeing program execution, using the content captured in the templates and views listed above.

Working with a Sales Ops Senior Director to produce the templates and initial reports, BSP then worked with leads from several departments to capture all the content for all programs using the templates. Adherence to the new standards was achieved through a mix of carrot and stick: working one-on-one to fill in the content, while conveying the message that programs would not be approved without the necessary content and participation in the review process.

BSP then facilitated 4 monthly, executive-level, PMO review sessions attended by 30-40 people from across contributing teams. Decisions were made on which proposed programs would be executed - and which would be delayed or shelved. For programs in flight, dependencies were identified; issues were resolved; and milestones planned.

The Impact

The consulting engagement produced relatively simple information necessary for decision-making. The key take-away, though, is that cross-functional leads and executives were willing to use the information to gain perspective, compromise, and agree on priorities and tactics.

At the conclusion of the consulting engagement - when BSP turned over responsibility to the Senior Director of Sales Operations - 48 projects and programs had been vetted. 22 of the 48 were in process, on time and on budget; 11 programs were planned; and 15 had been postponed or rejected.

In 2022, Microsoft Cloud Computing, which includes Azure, produced \$57 billion in revenue.

About Bay Sales Partners

Bay Sales Partners (BSP) is a professional services firm focused on meeting the needs of B2B sales leaders. BSP is both a sales recruiting agency and a sales consulting firm that works with client leaders to understand the goals and needs of our clients; develop solutions to meet the most pressing needs; and deliver candidates and consulting services that produce measurable impact.