Resellernews

Familiar names and new contenders among IBM finalists

Five new categories meant plenty of opportunity for partners to showcase their projects this year

By Chris Bell, Auckland | Friday, October 30 2009

The list of finalists in this year's IBM Business Partner Awards, held in association with Reseller News, includes some familiar names. Many are former award winners recognised in 2006, 2007 or 2008; such as Gen-i, Crossware, Integral Technology and Maclean Computing. First-time contenders this year include Cortell, Digiweb, Oxynet, Plan-b and ViFX.

The addition of five new award categories mean even greater opportunities for IBM Business Partners to shine this year. The additions are Smart Work, New Intelligence, Dynamic Infrastructure, Green and Beyond and The People's Choice Distributor Award (last year the only individual award was for an IBM reseller).

The awards will be presented in a ceremony on Wednesday, 4 November, 2009, at Auckland's Heritage Hotel Grand Tearoom. The next issue of Reseller News will contain a special supplement with details of the award winners.

"Congratulations to all the 2009 IBM Business Partner finalists, who have continued to deliver sustained innovation, return on IT investment and business value to their clients," says Raymond Skoglund, IBM New Zealand channels manager.

"It's good to see partner organisations continuing to invest not just in innovative IT solutions, but also business-orientated plans to enhance their client's competitiveness in the marketplace. Many of the entries this year included the strategic use of innovation in business intelligence/analytics, virtualisation, SOA/web services and green IT across public, private and community sectors."

Skoglund says many of the partner organisations that were successful in previous years are again finalists this year, and this success is due to their continued investment in training and building skills in IBM products.

"We have also seen a number of partners selected as finalists for the first time. Many of these organisations are offering managed services and on demand solutions which clearly represents an early adoption of emerging technologies such as cloud computing in the business partner community.

"It's also great to see partner organisations already delivering client success in our four new Smart Planet categories, particularly in the Dynamic Infrastructure category which attracted more than 20 entries," says Skoglund. "Because of the quantity and high quality of these entries, I'm delighted to announce that there will be both a winner and a highly commended award in this hotly-contested category."

New Intelligence
This new category showcases organisations that are helping their customers to take advantage of real time information. Intelligent systems provide access to information stored in a range of formats and locations, and ensure data is turned into productive information in a timely manner. The judges paid particular attention to offerings that predict outcomes and optimise performance.

FINALIST: CDP Group
CUSTOMER: Advanced Metering Services
PROJECT: CDP implemented a data warehouse (DW) using IBM InfoSphere DataStage and IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence to help Advanced Metering Services (AMS) with its data and reporting requirements. AMS's previous method involved manual processes that had been susceptible to error and inefficiencies. The DW provides AMS with an automated system delivering statistics and KPIs. AMS enjoyed early benefits from the implementation, including faster data access, enhanced information quality, improved management decisions and the ability to share key metrics. AMS now has a platform to capture and deliver usage information every 30 minutes or, potentially, on demand.

FINALIST: Cortell New Zealand
CUSTOMER: Wendy's
PROJECT: Fastfood chain Wendy's New Zealand head office staff use a business analysis tool to keep tabs on which burgers sell best in which stores. The software is IBM Cognos TM1, which Wendy's says bridges the information gap that once existed. It provides managers with sales data within a day that they used to wait a week for. The chain's marketers are now able to make decisions about future sales promotions. With phase one of the project completed, feedback from users is the IBM Cognos TM1 tool is providing sales information that was previously unobtainable.

FINALIST: Cosyn Software
CUSTOMER: Konica Minolta
PROJECT: The goal of Project Sentinel, which went live in January 2009, was to automate the delivery of

Konica Minolta's copier and printer consumables, reduce cost and improve customer service. There are now 10,000 multifunction devices connected to Konica's IBM iSeries-based system, capable of delivering "Consumable Low" messages. By analysing trends and patterns of usage, Cosyn was able to implement a method of automating consumable delivery from device to customer.

The system automatically orders more than 4500 consumables (including toner and image units) per month, without customer effort. Emergency inventory held in nationwide branches has been reduced by more than 30 percent. The value of toner on customer premises has been reduced by nearly 50 percent and waste toner has been reduced by 20 percent. Konica Minolta has experienced significant savings as a result.

Best Co-marketing
IBM views marketing as a key business partner skill. This award is presented to a business partner who, in the judges' view, makes the best use of their marketing dollars. In selecting the finalists the judges were looking for impact, creativity, clarity of offer and measurable return.

FINALIST: Aiscorp
CAMPAIGN: Aiscorp's IBM BladeCentre S for Schools Campaign combined market awareness and telemarketing with a seminar series. Aiscorp's pipeline increased as a result of the campaign.

FINALIST: Axon
CAMPAIGN: The "Sweat Your Assets" campaign created market awareness of both Axon and IBM. It urged customers that believed they had "sorted" their virtualisation environment to rethink. A targeted offer invited companies to attend workshops to optimise their virtualisation environment. CIOs and IT operations managers were targeted. The campaign combined advertising in Reseller News' sister title Computerworld with Axon website information, culminating in June 2009 workshops. The return on investment included the generation of a substantial number of leads.

FINALIST: CDP Group
CAMPAIGN: CDP's Information Management Symposium 2009 took the form of a lead-generation event staged in Auckland and Wellington in March 2009. C-level executives, business intelligence and planning contacts from its customer-base and New Zealand accounts were targeted in this campaign. It was augmented by advertising in Computerworld and resulted in high registration numbers for Auckland and Wellington. From those attending, sales were closed and new licences delivered.

FINALIST: Maclean Computing
CAMPAIGN: Maclean Computing and IBM partner Realtech implemented an SAP project based on IBM infrastructure with local design company Framecad. Maclean then developed and promoted a case study to Auckland and Wellington CEOs and CFOs. It sent out personalised direct marketing, following up with phone calls to make appointments. The ROI included leads and a healthy sales pipeline.

Rookie of the Year
Growing a reseller business isn't easy, but some newcomers succeed quickly. This award recognises an up-and-coming reseller's excellence in delivering and supporting IBM's offerings and services. The judges look for new IBM reseller businesses that satisfy customer needs, promote IBM in the market and provide excellence during the year.

FINALIST: Cortell New Zealand
PROJECTS: Cortell is a business intelligence consultancy that has been operating in New Zealand for 12 years.
It has secured more than 70 customers and, since joining the IBM family, has added Wendy's, Animal Health Board and Industrial Research to its client list.
Cortell focuses on a small number of IBM products and is expanding its technical and sales capabilities.

FINALIST: Oxygen IT
PROJECTS: Oxynet provides website and email hosting, filtering, collaboration, hosted Exchange, virtual private servers, dedicated servers, co-location, online backup services and hosted Citrix, all on IBM Blade Server and 1U server technology. Oxynet's email customers have also benefited from the reliability of its IBM platform. Web design company Wired Internet Solutions has praised Oxynet's IBM-hosted platform for its speed, reliability and end-to-end performance.

FINALIST: ViFX
PROJECTS: ViFX has a strong relationship with IBM, continuing to invest in its technology knowledge and in talent and skills development around IBM products and offerings. It ensures multiple contact and touch-points in each customer engagement and its partnership with IBM continues to mature. Its customers include Auckland City Council, the University of Auckland and Genesis Energy.

SmartWork
SmartWork honours companies working smarter on behalf of their customers, using dynamic business processes. Other success criteria in the category include personalisation and collaboration; offerings that

embrace change and empower employees, customers and suppliers and that drive profit.

FINALIST: Crossware
CUSTOMER: National Research Bureau
PROJECT: Social and market research company National Research Bureau (NRB) had been using a web-based interviewer application to record responses and return data to its Auckland office.

The project's goal was to lessen reliance on phone calls between supervisors and field workers and allow field workers to submit surveys and timesheets electronically. NRB specified a field worker portal. Crossware proposed Lotus Foundations Start.

NRB became one of the first New Zealand organisations to deploy the complete hardware and software package, in a project costing between $50,000 and $60,000. NRB is confident the investment will pay for itself within two years, with annual projected savings thereafter of up to $30,000.

FINALIST: Datacom
CUSTOMER: New Zealand Lotteries Commission
PROJECT: The MyLotto website allows the Lotteries Commission to manage its online Lotto, Big Wednesday and Keno offerings, supporting customers' increased use of the internet.

Usability, systems interaction, branding, ease of maintenance and support, as well as a secure environment, were named as key success factors, combining to provide an excellent user experience.

Lotteries aimed to implement a new sales channel but one that would have a minimal impact on its traditional channel. The ability for non-technical staff to manage the website was an important performance indicator. MyLotto allows the commission to more closely monitor and manage player behaviour. It has recently been enhanced to provide customers with a digital draw.

FINALIST: Gen-i
CUSTOMER: Banklink
PROJECT: Banklink offers tools to help accountants and businesses work better together, streamlining the accounting workload. Effective process improvement and real time access to key performance information is delivered into a Microsoft SharePoint portal.

The project has delivered cost savings in the region of $60,000. The project involved multiple segments of Gen-i — including technical consultants, security and solution architects — to deliver its offering on time and under budget.

FINALIST: Solnet Solutions
CUSTOMER: Ministry of Health
PROJECT: Solnet was tasked with helping the Ministry of Health upgrade its Cancer Registry (NZCR) system. The Registry team interprets pathology reports to maintain an electronic register of cancer occurrences.

Its existing system was based on legacy technology. Solnet's offering was tailored to users' needs, and the team experienced an immediate increase in productivity.

The system allows it to streamline processes, reducing backlogs. Reports are processed faster and it provides tools to improve legacy data quality.

The NZCR project has improved alignment with business processes, provided stronger and more rigid validation rules for higher data quality, completeness and accuracy, as well as improving usability and addressing current issues. Pathology reports are processed faster and data quality is significantly improved.

Green and Beyond
This category rewards companies helping customers to compete more effectively and respond faster by taking action on energy, the environment and sustainability. Energy efficiency enables organisations to reduce power, decrease floor space and cooling costs, gain greater computer power per unit of energy consumed, as well as comply with asset disposal and recycling legislation. The judges focused on offerings where customers found business value through smart systems and corporate social responsibility.

FINALIST: Digiweb New Zealand
CUSTOMER: Digiweb New Zealand
PROJECT: Digiweb was striving to reduce power consumption and carbon emissions through physical server consolidation, by moving to an IBM virtualised server environment. More than 20 servers were removed from the datacentre and replaced with four running Xen virtualisation software. As well as improved energy efficiency, customers benefit from a lower price point, and a dedicated server hosting offering becomes a more attractive proposition.

FINALIST: Integral Technology Group
CUSTOMER: Tower
PROJECT: Tower's main application was 20 years old, others resided on legacy servers and its architecture had grown unplanned. The project driver was to replace legacy applications with an insurance packaged

offering, overhauling hardware and network connectivity. Tower selected the Harlosh Insurance Faces application. It cites as benefits consolidation of its mainframe through virtualisation, workload partitioning to reduce physical space, power and cooling requirements, as well as reduced IT operating costs.

FINALIST: Maclean Computing
CUSTOMER: Mathias New Zealand
PROJECT: Meat exporter Mathias New Zealand was running applications across eight servers, connected via a virtual network to other branches. These legacy servers were costly to maintain and did not accommodate its growth plans. Mathias wanted stability and scalability without impacting on export food miles. Maclean proposed a virtual server offering. Mathias was able to reduce its environmental footprint and realise hardware cost savings of around $42,000.

FINALIST: VT Solutions
CUSTOMER: Airports Fiji Ltd
PROJECT: Airports Fiji's mixture of IBM and HP servers ranged from two to eight years old. Users were unhappy with the frequency of downtime. VT Solutions provided round-the-clock service and support on its infrastructure to ensure minimum downtime until the upgrade. The key business benefit gained from the upgrade was a 30 percent power and cooling saving. VT Solutions harnessed the old servers for disaster recovery, replicating its production environment to its DR centre over high-speed wireless.

Dynamic Infrastructure
This category rewards organisations that help their customers drive down cost with infrastructure that is as dynamic as the current business climate. Among the finalists the judges look for infrastructure offerings that are cost-effective, service-oriented, secure and resilient.

FINALIST: Gen-i
CUSTOMER: Genesis Energy
PROJECT: Replacement of Genesis Energy's storage platform. Technology was only one part of the offering, so building a joint strategy with the support vendor was critical to the bid's success. The outcome enabled Genesis to meet its compliance requirements for data storage and removed significant business risk.

FINALIST: Gen-i
CUSTOMER: Baycorp
PROJECT: Replacement of Baycorp's data warehouse and analytics platform while adding server capacity. Using partnerships with IBM and Datastor, Gen-i offered value and delivered the project on time and within budget. The project enabled Baycorp to centralise storage management and easily move data without the need for downtime.

FINALIST: Integral Technology Group
CUSTOMER: Tower
PROJECT: Replacing legacy applications with an insurance packaged offering, while overhauling hardware and network connectivity. Tower cites benefits including consolidation of its mainframe via virtualisation, less physical space, power and cooling.

FINALIST: Maclean Computing
CUSTOMER: Sime Darby
PROJECT: Sime Darby Automobiles sought to increase reliability and availability, lower total cost of ownership and centralise its datacentre. Maclean proposed virtualisation to consolidate and centralise infrastructure. Under the virtualised environment a new Chrysler franchise was integrated in a matter of days.

FINALIST: Plan-b
CUSTOMER: APN
PROJECT: Plan-b's server recovery product, which uses IBM xSeries servers and IBM SAN Infrastructure, replicates APN's servers, allowing for a recovery timeframe objective of a few minutes per server. APN has chosen an appropriate recovery service for each business system, while remaining within its disaster recovery budget.

FINALIST: VT Solutions
CUSTOMER: Airports Fiji Ltd
PROJECT: Airports Fiji's servers were up to eight years old and users were unhappy with the frequency of downtime. The server upgrade realised a 30 percent saving in power and cooling. Satisfaction with VT Solutions' ability to design and deploy a cost-effective and resilient offering led the customer to select it as its support, security and desktop management vendor.

People's Choice Reseller Award/People's Choice Distributor Award
There are some outstanding people working in reseller and distributor organisations, and the IBM Business Partner People's Choice Award recognises individual performances in these partner firms that go beyond the call of duty.

The reseller finalists are:

David Bird, Cyclone Computers

Dom Pringle, Gen-i

Grant McKenzie, OSS

Karthik Subramanyam, Aiscorp

Martin Smithson, Integral Technology

Mike Balk, Gen-i

Paul Tomlinson, Spectrum Consulting 2008 Ltd

Peter Molyneux, Convergence

Rana Stephan, Gen-i

Ross Mitchell, Convergence

Russ Rutan, OSS

Russell Derecourt, Fujitsu

Steven Pyne, Eagle Technology

Susan Mowbray, Gen-i

Vince Hagon, OSS

Warren Tuck, Gen-i

The distributor finalists are:

Abhay Daga, formerly of Express Data

Anatole Perry, Ingram Micro

Jason Molloy, Datastor

Jeff Maslen, Ingram Micro

Kelly Eyerman, Ingram Micro

Mark Baker, Datastor

Matt Harrison, Ingram Micro

Rudi Van Emmenes, Ingram Micro

Siva Ratna, Express Data

Terry Sheehy, Ingram Micro

Best Non-IBM Business Partner Solution
In the Best Non-IBM Business Partner Solution award category, IBM aims to encourage non-IBM contracted resellers that are providing outstanding IT products and services to the local market.

This year, instead of selecting finalists, the judges put the spotlight on one Highly Commended entry.

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