

**HPE Partner**

Founded in 1991, Infotheek Group is a privately held Information Technology and services company based in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Status

HPE Platinum Partner, General Western Europe Partner of the Year 2016

Specialization

Hardware, software, and related services for commercial and public sector customers in Europe

Goals

- Drive increased awareness, competency in HPE solution portfolio among sales reps; pair reps with internal HPE teams for best-practice customer approach
- Build solution-selling skills and improve perception as a trusted long-term adviser to customers
- Increase sales volume and profitability

Solution

QuickStart Onboarding Program

Results

- Individual sales reps doubled their sales volume, revenue, and margins within three months
- Increased competitive advantage through greater understanding of bigger IT picture: customer challenges, solution portfolio, C-level ROI and TCO concerns
- Grew customer trust/wallet share by helping them get the most out of their solutions and accelerate their IT transformation

Infotheek Group

HPE Platinum Partner increases sales, profitability through participation in QuickStart sales-rep training



One of Europe's largest IT resellers, Infotheek Group has been supplying government, education, healthcare, and commercial clients for more than 25 years. The company is a Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) Platinum Partner based in the Netherlands, and in 2016 was named General Western Europe Partner of the Year. Infotheek Group stands out for its ability to take care of the full lifecycle of clients' IT environments from implementation planning to end-of-life removal. With approximately 900 employees in the Netherlands and 12 offices throughout Europe, Infotheek Group sets a high bar for expert and personalized client services. When HPE opened its QuickStart Sales Onboarding program to partners in EMEA, Infotheek Group was the first to sign up.

“The most illuminating thing for me was to learn how HPE uses multiple connections and contact moments from one part of the sales cycle to the next—how to get from suspect to prospect to closing.”

– Wouter Koppenhol, Account Manager, Infotheek Group

QuickStart: solution and selling skills for success

QuickStart is an onboarding training program to help new sales hires become productive quickly. Now, HPE Partners can learn about the HPE portfolio, strategy, selling skills, and tools alongside HPE’s own internal new hires.

Six Infotheek Group sales professionals became the first EMEA HPE Partner representatives to participate in QuickStart. A 12-week program, QuickStart begins with three weeks of training and floor time, which the Infotheek Group team completed at HPE’s inside-sales hub in Barcelona, Spain. By enriching their skills and contacts, they uplifted their sales conversations to close higher-margin solution sales and increase revenue—all while better serving customers.

Arjan Kats: relative newcomer ramps up

Arjan Kats is a relative newcomer to Infotheek Group. Before, he’d worked at a sports retailer for eight years, the last six as store manager. Adept at business-to-consumer sales, he wanted to shift his career into higher-volume institutional sales. He joined Infotheek Group’s education team, which serves mainly primary and high schools.

The opportunity to participate in QuickStart arose when he’d worked at Infotheek Group for less than a year. His sales manager, after making arrangements with Infotheek Group’s HPE Partner Business Manager (PBM), invited Infotheek Group employees to apply, and Kats was one of six chosen. His personal goal was to become better informed about infrastructure—how it works and how it benefits his customers, many of whom need to upgrade their wireless systems because students are bringing more and more mobile devices to school. He also wanted to share the knowledge he gained with his colleagues back in the Netherlands.

Kats at first was nervous about the training. He feared his English wasn’t good enough, and that he wouldn’t understand the technical discussions. All of that apprehension evaporated quickly. He enjoyed the camaraderie and network-building with HPE sales reps, the professionalism of the training staff, the rich content, and the interactivity of the sessions.

The most important thing Kats says he learned—which has changed his approach to customers—is how to talk about total cost of ownership (TCO) and return on investment (ROI). This new skill empowers him to engage with C-level executives about higher volume, and higher margin solution sales. It’s transformed him from an order-taker to a trusted adviser.

“When a customer tells me they need 100 laptops, before I might have just focused on the 100 laptops,” Kats says. “Now, bells start to ring. A hundred laptops must have a big impact on their infrastructure. So I talk to them about that. Most customers appreciate when we take them by the hand and help them with things they might not be thinking about.”

Kats says that within four months of starting QuickStart, he’d more than doubled his sales volume, revenue, and margins. After three weeks in Barcelona, he attended another week of training and presented a business use case he’d developed—one that he hopes to rollout soon

Case study

Infotheek Group

QuickStart Onboarding Program

QuickStart is a 12-week program designed to give HPE inside sales reps and HPE Partner sales reps the HPE solution and selling skills they need to have more successful conversations with their customers. For more information:

Visit **My Learning - Partner Sales Onboarding U**

Read **How to train a new sales hire?** by Mark Boonman, Partner Enablement Manager, EMEA

Reach out to your Partner Enablement Manager or Partner Business Manager.

Industry

Technology

to actual customers. He continues to pursue training opportunities, and maintains ongoing discussions with his HPE counterparts about joint leads and strategies.

“I’m more confident,” he says. “Before, I spoke mainly with IT folks. Now, I can talk with a company director about TCO and ROI. I’m not just selling enterprise equipment; I can help them build and improve their infrastructure.”

Wouter Koppenhol: account veteran learns HPE approach to sales cycle

Wouter Koppenhol has been with Infotheek Group for seven years. He’s an account manager for the corporate and enterprise market, where the main challenge these days is transforming massive amounts of data into actionable intelligence. Koppenhol came to QuickStart already well-versed in the HPE portfolio; he sells a lot of HPE ProLiant servers. What he wanted to learn more about was the HPE sales philosophy: how HPE views the sales cycle, spots opportunities, qualifies customers, works with rejection, and closes deals.

The chance to meet HPE inside sales representatives, and get to know them personally, set the QuickStart training in Barcelona off to an immediate good start, Koppenhol says. Since then, he’s set up collaborative connections between HPE inside sales reps and Infotheek Group, and kept in contact with his PBM. He deals with customer rejections differently, seeing them as potential opportunities to address concerns and questions. He takes his time, does follow-up research, finds the right contacts at HPE, and might approach the customer again at a later date.

“I already knew about the HPE portfolio,” he says. “The most illuminating thing for me was to learn how HPE uses multiple connections and contact moments from one part of the sales cycle to the next—how to get from suspect to prospect to closing.” The training enhanced his advantage over reseller competitors, Koppenhol adds. “Since my level of knowledge tends to be higher than theirs, I can talk more effectively with decision makers and close deals.”

Koppenhol estimates that in the three months following QuickStart, he increased his business by 200%, with several more large deals currently pending. He’s selling more HPE SimpliVity, 3PAR storage, and Apollo servers, as well as ProLiant. Some customers just need to expand existing infrastructures incrementally; those smaller deals close quickly. Others are transforming their businesses or undertaking large projects, and therefore the sales cycle is longer. One, Europe’s biggest supplier of potatoes, is looking at HPE Internet of Things technologies for laboratory research into the DNA of potatoes.

“I’ve learned to speak to the right people at the right corporate level, thanks to this training,” Koppenhol says. “That helps us get invited to participate in requests for proposals, instead of getting bounced off in the prospect stage because they don’t see us as a partner for a particular topic. Since these tend to be more expensive projects that have more revenue and margin, I’m meeting my sales quotas faster and earning more.”

Business advantages to the entire partner company

Kats, Koppenhol, and the other QuickStart participants from Infotheek Group not only have magnified their individual successes, they’ve passed their knowledge and their ability to leverage contacts on to their colleagues, building competitive advantages for all of Infotheek Group. With their deeper understanding of the bigger IT picture, the reps confidently help their customers gain the most out of their solutions to deliver strategic business outcomes. The bottom line for Infotheek Group and its reps: QuickStart enabled them to grow customer trust and share of wallet, and achieve greater profitability.

“This is a big opportunity for Infotheek Group and HPE to work together for our mutual benefit,” Kats says. “I’d recommend it 100%. The benefits continue long after the training is completed.”

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