

Hewlett Packard Enterprise



HPE Partner

Founded in 1989, SHI International Corp. is a \$7 billion+ global provider of technology products, solutions, and services.

Goals

- SHI aimed to increase its business value to customers by shifting emphasis from transactional product sales to outcomes-based solution sales.

Solution

- Working with its HPE channel team resources, SHI goes beyond minimum certification requirements to embed deep sales and technical expertise throughout its organization. More than twice the required number of sales representatives, pre-sales specialists, and solution architects were HPE Sales Certified—Enterprise Solutions (2016).

Results

- Enable strategic shift from transactional to solution sales
- Synergize communication between sales and engineering staff
- Drive customer business results through HPE Transformation Areas
- Grow business, increase revenue through consultative selling

SHI International Corp.

Sales-enablement program powers strategic growth of HPE Partner



HPE Platinum Partner SHI International Corp. is a \$7 billion+ global provider of technology products, solutions, and services to corporate, enterprise, SMB, public sector, and academic customers. Based in Somerset, N.J., SHI employs more than 3,000 professionals worldwide, including a highly experienced and stable sales force backed by software volume licensing experts, hardware procurement specialists, and certified IT services staff. In recent years, SHI has been shifting its business from transactional to solution-driven sales—a strategy that involves enhancing and aligning the skill sets of its sales and engineering teams. Seeing powerful synergies between this approach and the HPE Transformation Areas, SHI is leveraging its relationship with resources such as its HPE Partner Enablement Manager (PEM), and the HPE Partner Ready Certification and Learning program, to gain competitive advantage, increase sales, and change the nature of the customer conversation.

“HPE trainings align well with our sales vision of going after the full customer solution.”

– Tim Henning, Director of Hardware and Advanced Solutions, SHI International Corp.

The largest Minority- and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise in the United States, SHI strives to deliver exceptional value and experience in helping customers select, deploy, and manage technology. The company has been guided by the same ownership since its founding in 1989, and reports an industry-high annual customer retention rate of 99%. Building on these successes, SHI today is sharpening its competitive advantage through a strategic emphasis on consultative solution sales.

“In the past, a lot of our business was transactional. If a customer needs a configuration or has any questions about a specific product, we’ve always been very good at that,” says Steven Zaslavsky, HPE Pre-sales Support Manager at SHI. “In the transactional business model, however, you work primarily with the customer’s procurement organization which typically thinks it gets the best deal by going out to bid. Our goal is to shift the conversation to business outcomes. That way, we can get in earlier in the sales cycle to help customers define and then execute their technology strategies. This generates more revenue for SHI while at the same time delivering greater business value, including lower costs, for our customers.”

Going beyond certification minimums deepens corporate skills

A cornerstone of SHI’s strategic evolution is staff education. The company goes beyond minimum vendor certifications to instill a high degree of professional knowledge and skill throughout the organization. To accomplish this, SHI collaborates with its trusted HPE PEM, John Falco. “I work with HPE Partners like SHI to make them aware of resources and training related to the HPE Transformation Areas and solutions—all of the enablement resources they can leverage to advance their own initiatives,” Falco says. “SHI has made astute use of sales training, HPE Technical Certifications and HPE Knowledge Credits to hone its sales and technical expertise. They’re a prime example of industry best practice.”

Falco provides SHI with information pertaining to certification needs at the start of every fiscal year and quarter, and remains constantly available to answer questions. “John’s been a great resource for us,” Zaslavsky says. “It’s been great having somebody dedicated who can help us get the most out of the HPE partner programs.”

HPE Sales Certified—Enterprise Solutions training sharpens outcomes focus

A key resource SHI leverages is HPE Sales Certified—Enterprise Solutions training. This web-based course trains partner representatives to identify customers and selling opportunities for HPE solutions and services in the four top IT Transformation Areas: Transforming to a Hybrid Infrastructure, Protecting the Digital Enterprise, Empowering Data-driven Organizations, and Enabling Workplace Productivity. The HPE Transformation Areas align perfectly with SHI’s emphasis on outcomes-based solution sales, Zaslavsky says. Therefore, SHI went beyond the 2016 compliance requirement of eight staff certifications. In addition to Zaslavsky’s team of 12 HPE-dedicated pre-sales professionals, eight SHI solution architects as well as several professional service experts took the trainings. “On my team, we have a variety of resources, ranging from a sales specialist to business-development managers to master certified engineers,” Zaslavsky says. “Having all of these attend the same training fosters communication between the sales/marketing side and the technical/engineering side. It’s important to understand the messaging and solutions on both sides of the fence.”

The eight solution architects who took the training work for Tim Henning, director of hardware and advanced solutions at SHI. “I like to have my engineers go through both the sales and the technical trainings,” Henning says. “When they know our marketing strategy, the solution architects can more effectively help sales reps understand the engineering side of the equation. It’s all about having a more-qualified conversation with the customer, making sure we understand everything HPE has to offer and that we all speak the same language.”

New Customer Innovation Center to provide solution showcase

To showcase the advanced technology solutions available to customers, SHI is building a new Customer Innovation Center at its New Jersey headquarters. The center is built on a backbone of HPE networking and will display HPE as well as other SHI partner solutions. “For any customer who wants to look at new equipment or conduct proof of concept testing or any type of application or hardware testing, we will provide them space to come in, use the equipment and do evaluations,” Henning says. “It’s a state-of-the-art lab for evaluating next-generation solutions.”

On the training front, SHI is already planning to have staff take the 2017 Sales Certified trainings. The company is raising the certification levels of many of its technical team members, some all the way up to HPE Master Accredited Solutions Expert. It’s also cascading knowledge of the two HPE Transformation Areas SHI emphasizes—Transforming to a Hybrid Enterprise and Enabling Workplace Productivity—to hundreds of field technicians.

“We’re challenging ourselves and our sales reps to have the broader solution conversation, the transformation area conversation,” Zaslavsky says. “It’s not necessarily about a product; it’s a conversation about what the customer’s needs are and how we can help solve them.”

Services

HPE Partner Ready Certification and Learning: HPE Sales Certified—Enterprise Solutions. Designed to nurture the success of HPE Partners, this certification ensures partner representatives can:

- Identify potential customers and qualify selling opportunities for HPE solutions and services.
- Leverage the four top IT Transformation Areas: Transforming to a Hybrid Infrastructure, Protecting the Digital Enterprise, Empowering Data-driven Organizations, Enabling Workplace Productivity.
- Use appropriate discovery questions and recognize trigger words; discover customer needs, business drivers, and requirements for each Transformation Area.
- Differentiate the value of key HPE solutions and services targeted to each Transformation Area.
- Develop and deliver a compelling business case for HPE solutions and services to customer persons in the account.
- Leverage authentic use cases to strengthen sales presentations.

To get started transforming your sales organization with the latest HPE Partner Ready Certification and Learning sales certification, visit <http://certification-learning.hpe.com>