March 18, 2011

AIIM'S NEW CAPTURE COURSE

AIIM has launched a new training program focused on document capture. The program went online this month and follows the same structure as AIIM's other Certificate Programs, which the Washington, DC-based trade organization began offering in 2006. According to Atle Skjekkeland, a VP for AIIM International, who oversees the training initiatives, more than 20,000 individuals have gone through AIIM's training programs since they were launched. In addition to capture, AIIM offers Certificate programs in areas like ECM, SharePoint, BPM, and records management.

"Our ECM course touches on capture, but only covers a fraction of what's in the new course," said Skjekkeland. "The capture course focuses on a much broader set of topics, including scanners, file formats, recognition, extraction, meta data output, and retrieval. It's focused on explaining best practices for scanning and imaging, and we have kept a close eye on providing value for a range of organizations, including users, service bureaus, resellers, and MFP providers."

The course was developed through a partnership with **@doc Consulting** and Brian Tuemmler. "It was our opinion that [CompTIA's] CDIA+ [Certified Document Image Architech] certification was becoming outdated and disconnected with the current developments in the market," said AIIM President John Mancini. "We also felt it was too focused on the test. We have tried to put our emphasis on delivering content that can help people address the kinds of problems they are facing with capture."

Like all AIIM Certificate Programs, there are three levels to the Capture course. "There's a Practitioner level that's primarily focused on

Is SharePoint for ECM Nearing a Tipping Point?

By their nature, 8,000-pound gorillas move slowly. And **Microsoft** certainly fits this bill. We've been talking about SharePoint as a threat to the document management/ECM market since at least 1999 (back when it was known as Tahoe). However, just with last year's release of SharePoint 2010, are we beginning to see the potential effect Microsoft could have on the ECM market as we know it. This effect could be game changing, if not devastating. The basic proposition comes down to this: is Microsoft commoditizing the ECM market?

"Traditionally, Microsoft has lowered the costs in markets where it competes," said Owen Allen, a former Microsoft senior product manager for SharePoint ISV partners and now the principal at **SharePoint Directions**, a consulting firm that helps ISVs develop SharePoint integration strategies. "I won't say that Microsoft is bundling SharePoint with its enterprise agreements (because of potential legal ramifications). But I will say that it is often attractive for customers to purchase SharePoint from Microsoft along with their operating system and desktop software."

Because of this, we've all come to the realization that it's very tough for traditional ECM vendors to compete with SharePoint on the price of software licenses. "If an organization has an enterprise agreement with Microsoft, chances are it has SharePoint," said Chris Riley, senior ECM and image capture architect for the SharePoint services firm **ShareSquared**. "Any organization with 250 or more employees probably has an enterprise agreement with Microsoft that includes SharePoint.

"So, you can't really argue licensing costs vs. traditional ECM software. Most decent sized companies already own at least the Standard version of SharePoint—which is the level above Foundation, and the one needed to do any serious ECM. It's just a question of whether they are using it or not."

It's the cost of services needed to get SharePoint into a

usable configuration for ECM that has seemingly held back mass adoption of the platform in our market. However, with the introduction of more out-of-the-box ECM functionality in SharePoint 2010, and an increasing number of service providers focusing on delivering ECM solutions through SharePoint, that may be about to change. Yes, we may finally be reaching a tipping point when it comes to adoption of SharePoint for ECM.

2010 closes the Gap

"Historically, there have probably been enough differences between SharePoint and traditional ECM software that in most cases it warranted using SharePoint for simple collaboration, and dedicated ECM software for ECM," said Riley. "Even SharePoint 2007 had a list of missing features that were perceived as being core to ECM," said Riley. "You could do ECM implementations with SharePoint 2007, but it wasn't as straightforward.

"With SharePoint 2010, unless you require DoD 5015.2 records management certification, the gap between SharePoint and traditional ECM software has been closed. I can say with confidence that SharePoint 2010 has as much core ECM functionality out of the box as any other ECM software—with the exception of a robust workflow. And the cost of licensing an advanced workflow engine that can be integrated with SharePoint is significantly less expensive than licensing an entire third-party ECM suite."

Riley, who worked extensively in the document capture space prior to joining ShareSquared, acknowledged that users also need to acquire capture software to do any significant document imaging with SharePoint. But, he argued, the same is true for any ECM platform. "Capture is not the core business of most ECM software developers," Riley said. "As a result, even though many ECM systems offer capture, users are typically better off utilizing a third-party specialist anyhow."

A third-party image viewing and mark-up package may also be required, but Riley said, "This has been a consideration on all projects I've done, but not a major hurdle."

Roger Tausig, president and CEO of document imaging and ECM systems integrator **Imaging Solutions**, said that end users are sometimes surprised at the need for third-party software to enable ECM applications in SharePoint. "Many customers perceive that they can do the same things with SharePoint that they can do with a **Hyland** OnBase or an **EMC** ApplicationXtender," he said. "They are partially right, but to achieve ECM functionality in SharePoint, you typically need to do one of two things.

"One is to bring in a programmer to build some functionality using Visual Studio and/or SharePoint Designer. The second option is to utilize third-party products from vendors like **KnowledgeLake** [for capture and other imaging-related functionality] or **K2** [for advanced workflow]. There are hundreds of products that provide a level of

functionality not inherently available in SharePoint."

However, Tausig added, the more third-party products users add, the more they are paying for software licensing, which starts to bring them closer to the cost of just licensing a complete third-party ECM solution. "Still, even with some third-party add-ons, SharePoint is probably less expensive in most cases," he said.

Core ECM tenants the same

So, if the software licensing costs are less, how come we've seen statements from the likes of Alan Pelz-Sharpe of the **Real Story Group** like, "What surprises both us and our customers is that SharePoint can sometimes present the most expensive short-listed ECM option after a full cost analysis is undertaken."

Basically, in addition to the third-party software costs, it seems to be Pelz-Sharpe's contention that the services related to configuring, and the ongoing management of, a SharePoint system are higher than those related to traditional ECM implementations.

Chris Riley, senior ECM and image capture architect, ShareSquared

Riley countered that he has not seen this dynamic. "No matter what ECM system you use, there are going to be services associated with tasks like planning taxonomies, managing meta data, setting up document imaging, etc." he said. "These are core tenants of ECM, which any services or consulting firm should address before deploying a system. They are the bulk of what I do related to deploying ECM on SharePoint. And much of this is based on best practices that could be applied to any ECM system."

So, basically, according to Riley, professional services costs related to deploying ECM on SharePoint, and deploying it with traditional ECM software, should be similar. Of course, the cost of transitioning documents from a legacy system into SharePoint can add considerable expense. "We had one large Hyland user that told us they wanted to put everything in SharePoint," said Tausig. "It was their philosophy that they had a Microsoft stack and wanted to do as much with their Microsoft platform as possible. We gave them a price for licensing and implementation, and it was within their budget.

"However, they were not prepared to spend an equal amount on conversion services to move their existing documents over to SharePoint. I really think that for larger companies, which need to uproot large ECM implementations, switching to SharePoint is a tougher sell because of conversion issues. And, if they're storing COLD [ERM – enterprise report management] files, well, those are difficult, at best, to move into SharePoint."

It's Tausig's opinion that SharePoint will be most disruptive to the current ECM landscape in the mid-market. And this is not just because of lower licensing costs. Somewhat contrary to Pelz-Sharpe's opinion, Tausig believes SharePoint consultants have the potential to significantly drive down costs related to configuring and deploying ECM. This is a trend that he does not see as a positive one for his business.

"Generally speaking," Tausig said, "users expect services costs to be significantly lower for a SharePoint implementation than they do for a Hyland installation," he said. "I think it's because the typical Microsoft partner's rates for professional services are substantially lower than ours."

Differentiating levels of service

Tausig's comment about a "typical" Microsoft partner opens a can of worms. As there are 10s of thousands of Microsoft partners out there, it's kind of hard to settle on what typical means.

"There are certainly a lot of architects out there that may know how to set up SharePoint, but don't know ECM," said Riley. "Like in any other market, your less experienced and less specialized professionals are going to be less expensive. But, there are a handful of higher-end SharePoint services specialists that are typically used in discreet scenarios. They are expensive and would be brought in to oversee larger projects or to solve difficult problems."

By Riley's estimation, at the upper end of the SharePoint services spectrum, there are approximately 120-140 Microsoft Most Valuable Professionals (MVPs) and a fewer number of Microsoft Certified Masters (MCM) that focus on SharePoint. "And there are only a handful of folks that have done true ECM implementations with SharePoint," he said. "There are a few who have started with other areas of SharePoint and expanded into ECM. And, there are some guys, like me, who have come into SharePoint from the ECM side."

Allen agreed that ECM experience should certainly be valued in the SharePoint space, but he also recognizes the dynamics that have created confusion and downward price pressure. "I believe there is value associated with understanding ECM implementations—whether it's an EMC Documentum, Hyland, **Oracle,** or **Laserfiche**

system," said Allen, "That knowledge comes through experience, and that experience has a cost. You really can't install a comparable ECM system on SharePoint without that experience.

"However, costs related to Microsoft products and services have traditionally been lower than costs related to ECM products and services. End users often carry these cost expectations over into SharePoint implementations, and when they encounter something different, they are surprised."

Allen feels some of the confusion is the result of ECM people quoting the cost of collaboration-focused SharePoint implementations. "There's certainly a larger quantity of portal-type SharePoint implementations in the market," he said. "But those aren't comparable to ECM implementations in terms of professional services."
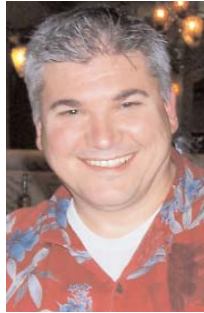
Owen Allen, principal, SharePoint Directions

Tausig agreed. "The problem is that if you are doing anything related to SharePoint, you get lumped in with other Microsoft service providers that might specialize in SQL, Exchange, or Dynamics," he said. "They kind of set the bar for the pricing in the Microsoft market."

Bracing for the onslaught

Tausig is currently trying to bridge the gap between traditional ECM and SharePoint services through partnerships. "We've offered ECM services related to SharePoint for more than three years," Tausig told *DIR*. "The couple of successes we've had have been through working with a partner who built out the initial SharePoint infrastructure. Then, we came in and installed KnowledgeLake and some process management on top of it.

"It's our longer term goal to become fully proficient in SharePoint ourselves, because there's always the worry that our SharePoint partners will start expanding their businesses to include ECM and process management services. And we're really dreading the day that more Microsoft partners start focusing on those areas. That could really put downward price pressure on our services."

And that is when we will likely reach the tipping point. "The market will certainly change as the number of people with both SharePoint and ECM expertise increases," said Riley. "For one thing, professional services associated with SharePoint are less proprietary than those for legacy ECM products. Development in a Microsoft environment is all based

on technology like Visual Studio and SQL Server. These are de facto standards. I think this will eventually make deploying ECM on SharePoint easier than working with traditional ECM systems."

None of this will happen, of course, until SharePoint 2010, which was only released towards the middle of last year, becomes more prevalent. "We haven't even seen the big wave of SharePoint 2010 adoption yet," said Riley.

Allen added that because SharePoint is so broad-based in terms of functionality, 2010 will enable end users to look at ECM in a different light. "To date, ECM has been primarily focused on managing document processes," he said. "But, SharePoint is able to manage electronic processes too. Utilizing it will enable customers to think more about business processes and not worry whether they are driven by documents, electronic data, or something else. With SharePoint, they can address all these processes with a single platform."

So, where will this leave traditional ECM vendors? "I certainly don't believe there will be only one repository to rule them all," said Allen. "I think the business requirements of a customer will continue to determine what product is implemented."

Riley leans toward the view that the number of viable vendors offering repositories will contract, similar to the way the database market shank a number of years ago. "Companies like Microsoft, **Oracle**, EMC, and **IBM** are competing at a different level than their smaller competitors in the ECM market," he said. "To them, ECM basically serves as an on-ramping tool for their databases and storage systems. For smaller ECM vendors to remain relevant, they are going to have to leverage features like integration with third-party applications and/or a vertical focus."

Allen concluded that the best strategy for many smaller ECM vendors may be to map their business process automation and domain expertise on top of the SharePoint repository. "I think there are higher margins in owning business processes than owning the repository," said Allen. "It's going to be very challenging for some ISVs to give up their repository revenue streams. But, if they don't, someone else will step in and fill their niches while leveraging the SharePoint repository.

"It's my impression that the SharePoint ecosystem is growing at such a rate that it would be smart to try and take advantage of the increasing number of systems integrators working in it. Sure, ECM vendors can try and do that through Web parts integration with their repositories, but that forces SIs

to learn two repositories. That isn't something they're going to want to do if they can avoid it."

For more information:
http://www.sharesquared.com/Pages/default.aspx;
http://www.imagingsolutions.com/;
http://www.sharepointdirections.com/;
http://owen-allen.com/

IBM Announces New Version of Datacap Taskmaster

When people talk about SharePoint leading to a contraction of the ECM market, **IBM** is always listed as one of the vendors who will remain standing. And why not, with $100 billion in annual revenue, Big Blue certainly has enough resources to compete in a market that it certainly appears to value. IBM's most recent ECM acquisition was capture specialist Datacap, which was completed last summer [*see DIR 8/2/10*]. IBM recently announced the first version of Datacap's product line that has been tightly integrated with its ECM suite.

Datacap Taskmaster 8.01 features improved standard recognition features, thick and thin clients bundled in a single package, and release into all three of IBM's document image and management repositories. It can also be integrated with the IBM's FileNet Capture platform.

"Basically, we've included more standard functionality to position Taskmaster as an enterprise capture product," said Scott Blau, the founder of Datacap, who is now IBM's worldwide director of ECM capture solutions. "While Taskmaster has always had the capabilities to address enterprise capture, before the IBM acquisition, Datacap did not have the delivery mechanisms, sales force, or organizational capabilities to really sell into that market. Of course, the enterprise capture market is also just starting to emerge."

"I think capture is finally reaching the level of maturity where people think of it as an enterprise value proposition," said Reggie Twigg, IBM's global offering manager, ECM capture and content integration. "In the ECM space, we have been selling enterprise systems for quite some time. An ECM platform is often considered the system of record for unstructured content, much the same way as an ERP system is the system of record for financial and procurement data. I think we're going to start seeing organizations standardizing on systems of record for capture."

Taskmaster 8.01 has been integrated with IBM FileNet Content Manager (P8), IBM Content Manager (CM8), as well as IBM FileNet Image Services. It is also being offered as an IDR (intelligent document recognition) option for FileNet Capture Professional. "This is the first time IBM has had a capture application that could feed all three of its repositories," said Twigg. "FileNet Capture was developed as a dedicated application for FileNet repositories. When FileNet was acquired by IBM [in 2006], we made a conscious decision not to port Capture over to CM8. At that time, IBM had a partnership with **Kofax**, and for a long time, IBM punted its CM8 capture business to Kofax.

"This is the first time IBM has had its own capture offering for CM8, and we think that creates a big opportunity for us with new customers, as well as our large install base. On the FileNet side, there is probably some overlap between FileNet Capture and Taskmaster. In net new opportunities, we'll likely lead with Taskmaster. For existing FileNet Capture customers, we'll offer Taskmaster as an IDR option instead of ADR—a product we OEMed from Kofax prior to the acquisition of Datacap."

IBM will also continue to offer connectors from Taskmaster into document repositories from **EMC**, **Open Text**, and **Microsoft**.

Ramping up for enterprise capture

IBM has made improvements to the way Taskmaster environments can be tested and subsequently deployed. "We put a lot of work into making it easier to make the transition from a development and testing environment, to a production application," said Blau. "In the past, there were more moving parts and manual steps to this process. We've greatly simplified it.

"These are the types of improvements we will continue to make to ensure that our software is enterprise-capture ready. We already had a lot of features at the architectural level that we thought were the best in the market. However, many of our previous customers weren't taking full advantage of our architecture, because they weren't thinking on that level. Our message of running our capture rules separate from our capture process is a much bigger deal when talking to the IBM customer base. They like the option of using Taskmaster's SOA functionality, for example, to capture documents outside of the traditional capture process."

Out-of-the-box production imaging

In conjunction with the release of Taskmaster 8.01, IBM has introduced a new software bundle it is calling its Production Imaging Edition (PIE). PIE includes Taskmaster, P8, and a viewer based on Daeja ViewONE Pro, licensed from a U.K.-based

ISV **Daeja Imaging Systems**. "PIE is designed to make it easier for customers to buy a production imaging system from a single vendor," said Philip Page, IBM's worldwide offering manager, imaging, ECM content. "PIE takes some products that had been previously only available through smaller vendors, like Daeja and Datacap, and enables users to receive IBM's 24/7, around-the-world support for them.

"PIE is targeted at larger installations—by that I mean 20,000 to 50,000 users. It's priced on a per user basis and is less expensive if purchased as a bundle than if you buy each of the components separately. Also, all the pieces have been pre-tested and pre-configured to work together out of the box."

IBM will be showcasing PIE at next week's **AIIM Info 360 Expo** being held March 22-24 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. "In many ways, IBM will be reintroducing itself to the AIIM community at the event," said David Jenness, marketing manager for Datacap, an IBM company. While Datacap has exhibited annually at our industry's largest trade show, it has been a few years since either IBM or FileNet have had booth space.

In addition to PIE and Taskmaster, which are aimed at the upper end of the market, IBM Datacap announced a new version of its FastDoc Capture mid-market application. FastDoc Capture 1.2 now includes Datacap's document fingerprinting auto-classification technology. "FastDoc Capture is targeted primarily at IBM business partners," said Jenness.

For more information: http://www.datacap.com/; http://tinyurl.com/Taskmaster8-01

Lexmark Facilitates Rapid International Ramp-Up

With the support of **Lexmark**, **Perceptive Software** is pursuing a very aggressive international growth strategy. The Shawnee, KS-based ISV, which was acquired by Lexmark last May [see _DIR_ 7/2/10], has more than tripled the size of its international sales and marketing team. Perceptive recently named Anthony Giagnacovo as the new general manager of its international operations, which are initially primarily focused on EMEA.

Perceptive has leveraged Lexmark's existing infrastructure to rapidly ramp up its efforts outside North America, its home market, which has historically accounted for 90% of its revenue. "The typical model for a North American ISV expanding into EMEA is to maybe place a couple people in a single office and find some early adopters to help fund localization and expansion into other countries," said Giagnacovo, a U.S. native who has worked in Europe since the mid-1990s with a number of software companies. "When I moved to Europe that is the strategy we followed with PeopleSoft. It may have been effective then, but with Perceptive and Lexmark, we are taking a different approach.

"Perceptive has a more mature product and has already built a solid install base, especially in North America. We decided to immediately put in place a global selling infrastructure that will enable us to achieve rapid growth."

This infrastructure includes directors for the U.K., France, DACH (Deutschland/Germany Austria & Switzerland), and Benelux regional markets, who will report to Giagnacovo. Perceptive has also localized its software in the German, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese languages. "When you're working on sales and dealing on the executive level, many of your international customers will speak English," said Giagnacovo. "However, when you get down to the user level, especially when dealing with distributed deployments, the importance of local language support increases.

"We've also introduced follow-the-sun technical support by adding Perceptive support to Lexmark's Budapest center. Our staff will support customers in their language of choice."

Perceptive now has an international team of more than 90 people, up from 28 previous to its acquisition. "These are mainly sales and support people—centered on execution of our strategy," said Giagnacovo. "We are able to leverage Lexmark's existing infrastructure for a lot of our G&A. It also helps that we're able to utilize Lexmark's office space and its resources in areas like H.R.

"People often underestimate the challenges of trying to go global for matters like contracts, for example. Thanks to Lexmark, if a customer wants a contract in French, we can do that. If they want it in Dutch, we can do that. I think we now have a team that is comparable to those of large ECM players like **EMC** and **IBM**. We expect Perceptive's ImageNow to be viewed as a viable alternative to their applications."

Looking for partners

Giagnacovo estimated that Perceptive currently has 100 customers outside of North America. "The

majority of those are in EMEA, specifically in western Europe," he said. "This includes some very large multi-national customers like **Cap Gemini** and **Harrods** that have expanded their implementations into additional countries since we've increased our international support."

Some of Perceptive's international team is made up of expatriated North American employees. "We feel an important aspect of Perceptive's success is the experience and knowledge these employees bring to the market," said Giagnacovo.

"Lexmark has been very smart in the way it has handled the Perceptive acquisition," he added. "They have looked at what their peers and competitors have tried to do in the past after acquiring software companies, and why, for the most part, their integration efforts have failed.

PERCEPTIVE INTRODUCES DEVELOPER NETWORK

As part of its expansion efforts, **Perceptive** recently launched a new partner program designed at increasing the number of organizations integrating technology with its ECM software. Perceptive has historically developed most of its own hardware and software integrations. According to Sascha Ohler, Perceptive's manager, developer network and worldwide technology partner management, the new program is open to ISV, SIs, customers, and custom development shops.

"There are three developer partner categories," Ohler told *DIR*. "These are 'hardware-centric,' which involves integration with MFPs, object storage devices, e-signature devices and other hardware; 'ERP/core system-centric,' which involves integration with applications from vendors like **Oracle**, **SAP**, **Lawson**, **McKesson**, **Epic**, **Stoneriver**, and **Datatel**, to name a few; and finally, 'custom integrations,' which involve integration with existing or net new niche/sector solutions in areas such as mobile, document output management, contract management, e-mail management, etc."

The program will offer APIs for Web Services, iScript, and COM/.NET integration, with a mobile API coming in the future. "The Perceptive Software Developer Network is a 'pay-to-play' program with annual fees ranging from $4,000 to $20,000 annually," said Ohler. "We offer three levels of membership, and each one provides a well-defined set of benefits to the member that increases as the partner moves up."

For more info: http://tinyurl.com/PerceptiveDN

Lexmark has by and large kept Perceptive alive as an individual company and given it the ability to be creative and dynamic. There is clearly a different model to selling software than hardware, and Lexmark respects that."

While Perceptive's North American sales have historically been primarily direct, the international ramp-up is relying more heavily on partners. "In EMEA, while we have a direct sales team, we are very much focused on a 'sell with' strategy. Our partners include the Lexmark sales team, as well as Lexmark partners. It also includes partners that specialize in certain verticals that we want to be in.

"We're seeing a lot of systems integrators that want to make their money by focusing on process change. We want to be their go-to software partner for affecting that change."

In North America, Perceptive has focused primarily on the healthcare, education, government, and financial services markets. According to Giagnacovo, in Europe, depending on the country, some of the vertical focuses may be different. "In Europe, you have to consider both verticals and countries," he said. "We can start by looking at verticals where Lexmark has had more success. We've identified some countries, for example, where we may go after the telco and utility markets and others where retail and distribution are more attractive."

Giagnacovo concluded that Perceptive will continue to stress its strength in easy integration with third-party applications [*see DIR 11/17/06*], including ERP systems. "Perceptive has a strong partnership with **Oracle**, which is helpful, and in Europe, our partnership with **SAP** should be valuable, as it controls most of the ERP market. We also have patented technology for quickly integrating with any Windows-based application. Basically, to be successful, we need to maintain our focus on our core strengths, including the ability to deliver a rapid and impressive ROI."

For more info: http://tinyurl.com/Perceptive-EMEA; http://www.perceptivesoftware.com/

AIIM CAPTURE, FROM PAGE 1

concepts and technology," said Skjekkeland. "There's a specialist level that's more focused on how to implement capture. [Both of those Certifications can be earned online or in a classroom.] Finally, there's a Masters level, that's typically only available in a classroom setting and combines the focus of the prior two levels, while adding some case study exercises."

The cost starts at $650 for an AIIM member for a complete Practitioner level course taken online. Private group training sessions are available. "We think it's important to have some vendor neutral training for capture technology," said Mancini. "It helps organizations develop a conceptual framework of what is possible and appropriate."

Mancini concluded that the launch coincides with a renaissance in document imaging interest. "On the top end, we are seeing more sophisticated users on their second and third generation systems pushing more aggressively into areas like automated data capture," he said. "But, there is also an entirely new appetite for capture technologies among mid-sized organizations. And they're asking questions that sound like the ones we were answering 10 years ago for the more advanced users."

For more info: http://www.aiim.org/Training http://www.aiim.org/Resources/Press-Releases/41675

TIS Formalizes Channel Program

Top Image Systems (TIS) has launched a new Global Partner Program designed to enable it to be more strategic when working with resellers and systems integrators. "Because we are a public company, historically, we've been very quarterly driven," said Omri Gelb, executive VP for the Tel Aviv-based capture ISV. "This has forced us to go after large deals every quarter while somewhat ignoring proper support of our partners.

"We are now a more mature company, and we understand that a nice percentage of our revenue comes from our partners. To maintain this, we've decided we need to ramp up our ability to provide them with support and training on new features and to work with them on defining benefits that can be achieved with our software. We want to share, across countries, some of the reasons we've had success in certain areas."

TIS has brought in former **Kofax** field marketing manager Elke Matz as its new channel manager for EMEA. "Elke will be in charge of formalizing our channel processes and enabling our partners to serve the market better," said Gelb. "We are a relatively small company and realize that we can't be in every location. We need to have strong partners across the region to provide local support and manage some of the nuances that different countries and verticals have in our core markets like accounts payable and mailroom automation."

Gelb added that partners can help TIS with smaller deals, as well as regional deployments for larger customers. "When we engage on the enterprise level, it's very rare to see an organization with operations only in one country," he said. "Being able to serve multiple countries, through our partners, with the same software product is a big advantage to us.

"For example, we recently had a customer we were working with through a partner in Austria that wanted to introduce our software into its Czech operations. To do that, we utilized a different partner, based in the Czech Republic."

For more information: http://tinyurl.com/TISpartner

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