Prioritizing Solutions for Rapid Revenue Growth

BEA Systems

A Shirman Group Case Study

The Shirman Group helped BEA identify new solutions that could drive substantial new revenue in the following fiscal year. Evaluating external factors affecting opportunity size, and internal ones affecting company fit, The Shirman Group was able rapidly to create a short-list of the most attractive solutions to take to market. The selected solutions were then defined in greater detail, in order to validate customer pain points, forecast solution revenue, and accelerate time to market.

"The Shirman Group helped BEA identify market opportunities that have the potential to bring significant incremental revenue."

— Sarika Agrawal, Vice President, Solutions,
BEA Systems

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Customer Background

BEA Systems, a leader in application infrastructure software, asked The Shirman Group to help the company identify business solutions that could drive significant net new revenue in the following fiscal year. The company had already launched multiple horizontal and industry-specific solutions, and was looking to build on that success with additional offerings. The solutions already on the market addressed critical business processes and functional areas, such as employee self-service, customer self-service, and multi-channel customer interaction. The success of these solutions demonstrated that by combining the complex and highly technical capabilities of BEA and partner products and the expertise to deploy them in specific business and IT environments, BEA was delivering value beyond its core products.

Solution Evaluation Process

Working with the VP of Solutions, the team developed criteria for identifying and prioritizing future solutions. The new solutions would need to represent large addressable markets for BEA's software infrastructure products and create demand for multiple BEA products within each deal. The sales force would need to readily and easily adopt the new solutions. In addition, BEA wanted to leverage customer successes, and align with the offerings of strategic global system integrator (GSI) partners.

The Shirman Group investigated two types of solutions to balance opportunity and risk in the portfolio of BEA's offerings. The company also wanted solutions for different types of customers, from early adopters to the mainstream. One type of solution enabled enhancements to well-known processes, such as customer service. These offerings would let BEA customers to optimize or automate existing business processes, and were likely to be of interest to a broad range of accounts. Solutions in the second group were new and disruptive. The demand for these would be driven by external events, aggressive competitors, or significant changes in either the business or IT environment, rather than by internal continuous improvement efforts. The disruptive solutions would affect how BEA customers "do business," and could drive creation of entirely new business processes. These solutions would have fewer competitors, but would be attractive to a narrower set of the most innovative, early adopter customers.

The solution identification process began with analysis and short list creation. The team then validated the short list and created detailed solution definitions. To create the short list, the team looked at both external and internal factors that affected opportunity size and BEA "fit,' or ability to execute.

External factors driving the size of the opportunity:
- Market trends and technology developments
- Size of the revenue opportunity in existing and new accounts
- Competitive landscape

Internal factors affecting BEA fit:
- BEA product and technology capability (including leverage of new products)
- Customer references and experience
- Alignment with solutions from strategic system integrator partners
- Ease of sales adoption
- Time to revenue
- Likelihood of world-wide adoption
- Cross-industry applicability

Three solutions emerged as the finalists. The Shirman Group then created detailed solution definitions. For each solution, the team identified target audiences and their key pain points throughout the various affected business activities. The solutions were mapped to the relevant business processes in BEA's top target industries to test relevance to the company's key markets. We also identified referenceable accounts and competitive offerings for each solution. Finally, a detailed three-year revenue forecast helped determine the level of investment that each solution would require and justify.

Results

The complex process of data gathering, interviews with key stakeholder, and analysis might have stretched out over many months. BEA did not have the luxury of time for this planning process. The solution recommendations had to be taken to the executive staff as part of the annual planning process, which was only two months away. In just six weeks, The Shirman Group delivered recommendations, detailed justification, and solution definitions. The analysis provided a basis for a rapid decision by the e-staff about which solutions to take to market. The solution definitions were designed to be readily used as the basis for future marketing and sales tools, further accelerating time to revenue.

About The Shirman Group

The Shirman Group helps technology companies identify and pursue opportunities for revenue growth. Companies looking to expand into new industries, more deeply engage with new audiences, and leapfrog the competition with new business models turn to us for creative ideas and tangible results. Shirman Group clients include industry leaders like Symantec, BEA Systems (Oracle), Intervoice/Convergys, and CA Wily Technology, as well as select new technology ventures. More information about The Shirman Group and our clients is on-line at www.shirmangroup.com