

knowledge management in winning deals

Is 'winning deals' a big deal in IT?

Yes, indeed it is. In this sector competition is fierce and winning 'deals' is a critical element of the growth strategy for most IT suppliers. Atos Consulting and Systems Integration (C&SI) business has 3.1 billion Euro businesses spanning across continents with its primary presence in Europe, USA and Asia.

Atos offers IT solutions and services to various sectors such as financial services, energy & utilities, manufacturing, retail, transportation, public health services, telco, media and technology markets, to name a few. Atos pitches for hundreds of bids every year to maintain its organic growth rate in all geographies across markets.

There is an initiative at a global level aimed at boosting capabilities in areas of sales, bid and deal solutions. In this context, the most essential ingredient for success has been the ability to develop 'winning' proposals. This entails the need to integrate learning about each successful and failed bid effort in every new proposal so as to offer differentiating value to the customers.



Introduction

C&SI global and local bid and deal solution teams had been working based on a dispersed and fragmented knowledge base.

Was their success rate 'good enough' for the organic growth targets of Atos?

The teams had achieved substantial successes across the board. But the success rate was not yet up to the management's expectations. In order to achieve our goal of being a Tier#1 player in the industry by 2016, Atos needed to prove its mettle by winning some really large deals, which would herald its arrival into

the big league. Hence, the focus of business development was to improve the customer-win ratio and be perceived as a benchmark by our peers.

So what was going wrong?

Interviews and surveys run with the bid teams globally and locally revealed some facts which startled everyone. Knowledge assets required to handle a bid were not centrally located in a global database. Knowledge was not being captured through an industrialized process, resulting in poor efficiency and inadequate knowledge distribution. Users were exploiting personal networks for content whilst responding to bids. Risk of the users approaching each other through word of mouth/emails resulted in poor

quality and obsolete/redundant content being circulated. In the absence of a global platform, people were resorting to re-inventing the wheel which cost us precious time.

Also with fewer bid experts at a global level, leveraging their time across geographies was a huge challenge to our capacity. And it often resulted in us opting out of bids, which ultimately resulted in C&SI losing business.

Sometimes we failed to capture and integrate customer feedback regarding our solutions and proposals, and all of this ultimately resulted in the 'cost of bids' skyrocketing.



Industrialized approach to boost customer-win ratios

On introspection, we realized that having an industrialized Knowledge Management (KM) approach towards improving the customer-win ratio could certainly reduce, if not eliminate, the current crisis faced by the global and local bid teams.

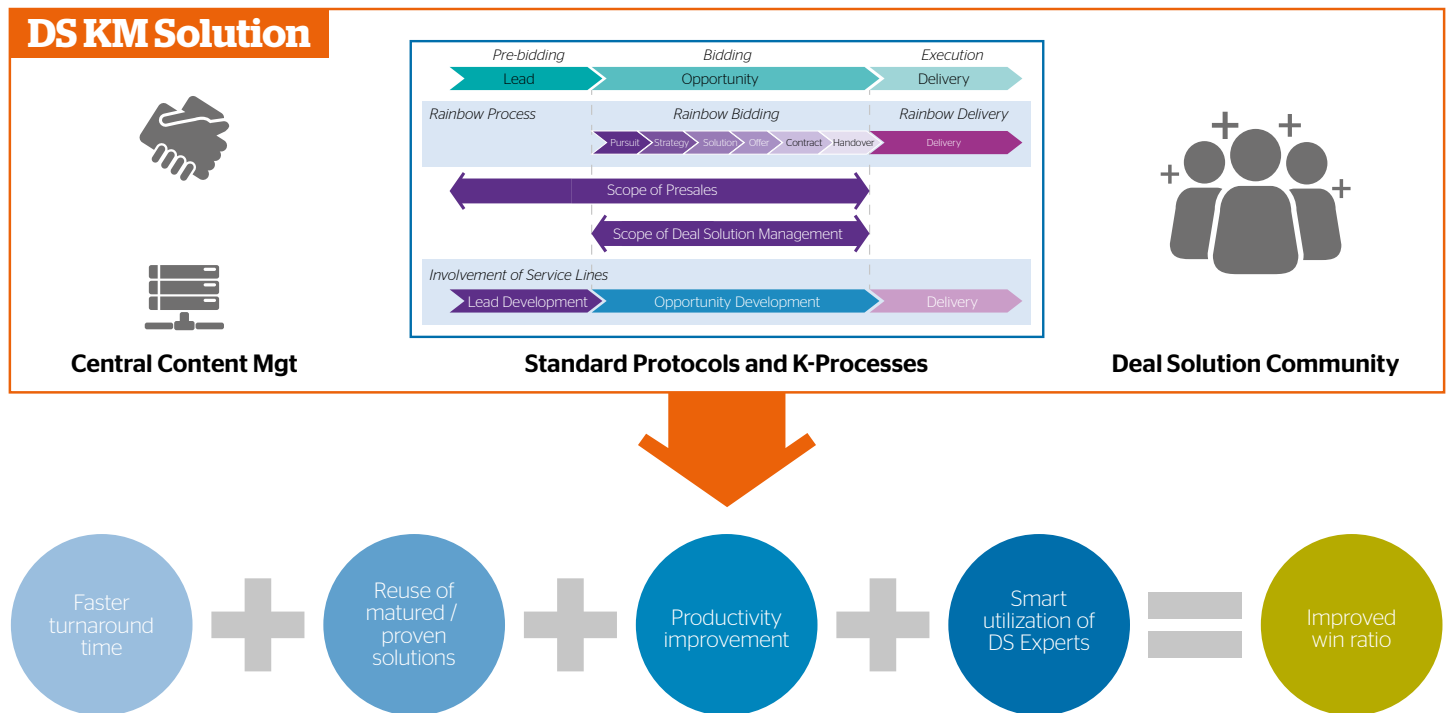
And hence Atos C&SI successfully set-up a KM practice to address these challenges at a global as well as local scale to help improve quality of the bid-responses, their speed and effective utilization of the experts' time. This enabled Atos' geographies to cast its net wider with improved customer-win ratios.

C&SI KM practice designed and built a central Deal Solution & Bid Management Knowledge Management Solution (DS & BM KMS) with a vision to enable quicker turnaround of winning solutions based on the collective knowledge of experts through extensive collaboration across the globe.

This DS & BM KMS is available today on SharePoint 2010 SI KM Portal, and is readily accessible to the global and the local Geographical Business Units (GBUs) Deal Solution and Bid Management teams.

It is being leveraged for both small as well as large bids in order to gain benefit from a strong knowledge base of deal solutions and bid knowledge, along with an active community of experts on the Enterprise Social Networking (ESN) platform viz: blueKiwi

DS & BM KMS Business Benefits



Reusable assets deliver bid knowhow on a global scale

Highlights of Deal Solution and Bid Management KMS

- ▶ Dedicated collaboration workspaces with standard design for each client + contract ongoing bids
- ▶ Deal Solution (DS) collaterals area to capitalize knowledge from previous bids
- ▶ DS reusable for best practice / pick-n-use modules
- ▶ Record 'lessons learnt' from previous bids
- ▶ Locate expertise and connect
- ▶ Validation workflow for DS reusable and lessons learnt
- ▶ Smart retrieval system using structured taxonomy (metadata) and 'folksonomy' (social tagging)
- ▶ Access and authorization controlled by the process owners (viz: bid managers / deal solution managers).

Evolution to higher maturity through sustained change management

DS & BM KMS was launched in H1 of 2013 for Global Application Management (AM) Practice, Global SAP Practice and Global Solutions (SOL) Practice. The Deal Solution leads nominated administrators from their respective practices to ensure effective and timely deployment. Multiple live training sessions were conducted for the bid and deal solution teams. Recorded webinar links were provided in the C&SI KM portals and on the ESN platform.

Return on Engagement (Active Participation)

We realized that Return on Engagement (ROE) is the first step towards generating a handsome Return on Investment (ROI) and hence we focused on the quantum and quality of participation among the end-users.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating..... Early signs of adoption

Our first user engagement analysis activity came as a surprise to us. The user engagement was unexpectedly low in spite of having bid workspaces in the DS & BM KMS. To comprehend this situation we ran surveys, and conducted several rounds of interviews with the deal solution managers and bid managers. The feedback we received made us realize that the glue to hold the bid teams onto the KMS was missing. They were looking for knowledge assets or documents which they could find easily and reuse from a central location, instead of having to crawl through multiple bid workspaces, especially during last minute preparations while responding to the client's Request for Proposal (RFPs) queries.

Hey wait! Where is the pudding?

In order to find a way around this stumbling block, C&SI KM practice came up with a concept to design a Global Reusable repository. A 'champion' was nominated within each Global Practice who identified the reusable assets from the relevant practice.

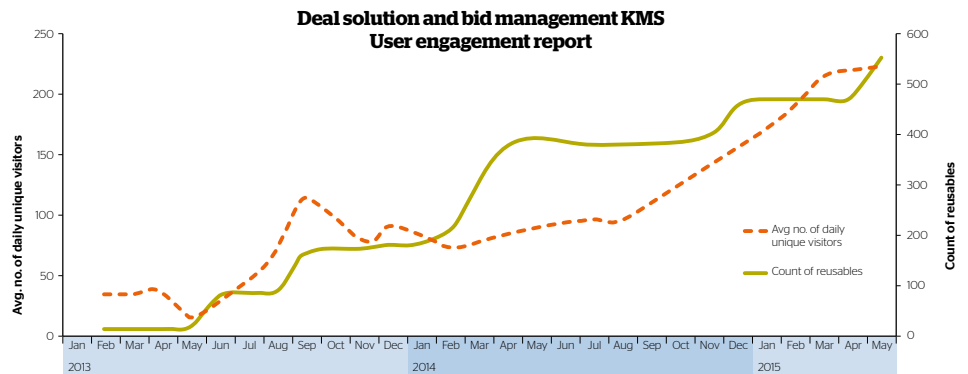
And bingo! We established a centrally located Global Deal Solution Reusable repository, which hosted reusable assets tagged by a structured taxonomy.

This was a major achievement and was very well received by the C&SI deal solution and bid management community. It is worthwhile to mention that we fostered healthy competition among practices and GBUs, which was made possible by means of a dashboard reviewed in top-management operational reviews.

Key Performance Indicators for Adoption as on 15 Aug 2015	Practice 1	Practice 2	Practice 3	GBU 1	GBU 2	GBU 3	GBU 4	GBU 5
Avg. no. of page views / day	64	19	135	09	15	13	13	103
Total no. of daily unique visitors	173	68	223	03	05	02	35	151
No. of bid workspace created	95	68	158	6	11	9	28	09
No. of document in DS collaterals / workspace	2763	972	6064	192	279	261	201	340
No. of reusables	132	138	330	84	07	12	18	25

RFP response writing is 30% to 50% faster

Today after almost 2.5 years with sustained governance, publication of dashboards and regular reviews by the leadership, we have crossed many hurdles and are in a commendable position with 520+ high quality reusables.



Success Stories

Quick turn-around: Our sales people had visited a potential customer and pitched our AM services. The customer asked them to revert with a proposal the very next day. While this was a one-off case, the Bid and Deal Solution team took up the challenge of reverting with a full-fledged proposal to the customer in less than 24 hours.

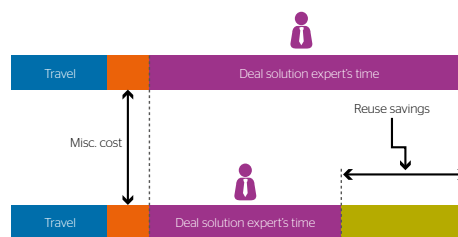
The DS & BM KMS turned out to be a boon to the teams, who reused the knowledge assets stored in the global database with its easy to navigate taxonomy to build an effective proposal document as required by the customer, and more importantly were able to revert to the customer within 24 hours.

Global Application Management (GAM) effort saving: GAM was the first practice to start using the DS & BM KMS extensively.

A short case study based on online discussions revealed that the deal solution managers consider it as an 'amazingly handy' tool and absolutely irreplaceable after two years of evolution. A majority of them concluded that presently up to 60% of bid response content is available in the KMS, and it results in up to 40% time savings as compared to last year whilst responding to the client RFPs.

This is what a senior Deal Solution Manager from the Global Application Management Practice has to say on the value of Deal Solution KMS.

“For solution and response design and for a specific bid, the portal is an excellent source of a quick access to standard and 'validated' responses / artefacts. This saves significant amount of time which would, otherwise have been wasted on searching material from various sources and validating their suitability. I believe it makes the RFP response writing faster by 30% to 50%.”



There are a few more success stories, e.g. in France, where teams have leveraged the KM solution for their advantage. All of the above resulted in good amount of time savings for the bid teams and shorter turnaround times in reverting to the client.

Conclusion

Today after two years of maturity, Deal Solution KMS has evolved to become an integral part of the bid and deal solution processes. Our teams across countries the world over are seamlessly leveraging the content generated in each other's bids. The larger the community, the better we are able to harness economies of scale and economies of scope across the Atos family. The response time is shortening and reuse ratio has been growing consistently, which is directly improving the cost of generating new business.

Today experts are able to spend time on the bids where it matters the most i.e. creating unique differentiators for Atos in a given bid and thereby enhancing the win ratio.

We have thus created an excellent example of how knowledge management contributes to the growth of business!



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About Atos

Atos SE (Societas Europaea) is a leader in digital services with 2014 pro forma annual revenue of €11 billion and 93,000 employees in 72 countries. Serving a global client base, the Group provides Consulting & Systems Integration services, Managed Services & BPO, Cloud operations, Big Data & Security solutions, as well as transactional services through Worldline, the European leader in the payments and transactional services industry. With its deep technology expertise and industry knowledge, the Group works with clients across different business sectors: Defence, Financial Services, Health, Manufacturing, Media & Utilities, Public Sector, Retail, Telecommunications and Transportation.

Atos is focused on business technology that powers progress and helps organizations to create their firm of the future. The Group is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic & Paralympic Games and is listed on the Euronext Paris market. Atos operates under the brands Atos, Atos Consulting, Atos Worldgrid, Bull, Canopy, and Worldline.

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