

# Service Training Integral to Partner's Culture of Excellence

Operations staff of LaSalle Solutions wins big with proficiency and prizes using Cisco Services Accelerate Program.

## Challenge

LaSalle Solutions, headquartered in Rosemont, Illinois, has undergone a complete transformation in the last decade. The company started out in financial management over 30 years ago, specializing in leasing equipment to large enterprise customers. LaSalle's management team recognized that there was an even larger opportunity helping customers manage the full lifecycle of technology assets, from acquisition to disposition.

By 2004, the company began offering an asset management product called Tracker. It provided an entry into the mid-sized market, and accounted for about US\$6 million in new revenue. However, the technology was owned jointly with another company. When Steven Robb joined LaSalle as vice president and general manager to grow the asset management business, his first executive decision was to start the development of LaSalle's own asset management tool.

The LAMP product suite was launched in 2005, and within seven years, the company's asset management business has grown to over \$100 million, with no acquisitions. The suite continues to grow, and today includes LAMP Scan, LAMP LOOKUP, LAMP Mobility, and several other tools.

In addition to designing LAMP, Robb and his team developed an entire business model to support the LAMP suite, including initiating a business relationship with Cisco. In the last few years LaSalle has consistently ranked as one of Cisco's top 25 partners, and LaSalle is on track to become a Cisco Gold partner.

The company has pursued Cisco certifications aggressively, but ongoing training can be a challenge for fast-paced companies. This is especially true for LaSalle because of its strong customer service principles and business model. "A traditional value-added reseller sells a project and then leaves," says Robb. "We are involved with our customers over the entire lifecycle of their technology assets. We

are available to our customers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Central Standard Time, and customers have 24-7 access to our people online via desktop, smartphone applications and other mobile devices."

Delivering the highest levels of service to customers is core to the company's culture. LaSalle has won a Customer Satisfaction Excellence Gold Star every quarter since Cisco began measuring the company's performance. "We have an absolute passion for doing what's right for the customer," says Robb.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Customer Name:** LaSalle Solutions

**Location:** Rosemont, Illinois

**Number of Employees:** 100 Employees

#### CHALLENGE

- Support aggressive growth in asset management business
- Encourage and help ensure highest level of proficiency to provide top service to customers

#### SOLUTION

- Cisco Services Accelerate Partner Sales Training and Incentive Program

#### RESULTS

- Improved team's solution selling skills and positively contributed to its professional development
- Brought higher levels of expertise to customer engagements, contributing to LaSalle's above-average customer satisfaction and loyalty scores
- Increased overall services attach rates and revenue

One day, someone on Robb's team asked him to check out "a cool training tool for services" from Cisco. Robb says, "As soon as I looked at the program, I had one thought: why isn't everyone doing this?"

## Solution

The Cisco Services Accelerate Partner Sales Training and Incentive Program is an e-learning and incentive program that helps partners grow their services business. The training is self-paced and available at no cost. By taking short topic quizzes and obtaining a pass score of 80 percent or higher each quarter, participants can accumulate points towards the chance of winning a prize<sup>1</sup>.

Robb knew that leading by example was essential to building curiosity about the Accelerate Program, and, hopefully, a healthy spirit of competition. "I dove into the training, took the tests, and won a television. When the television was delivered to my office, you can bet that everyone wanted to know how they could get into the program and win a television, too."

"Our above-average customer loyalty scores are not just the result of offering a great product. Having such service-oriented people, who are educated by programs like Cisco Services Accelerate, is what separates us from the crowd."

— Steven Robb, Vice President and General Manager, LaSalle Solutions

Robb is proud that his operations staff is consistently at the top of the Accelerate leader boards, making LaSalle one of the top companies training on Cisco services. "It can be very difficult to keep people motivated about constant training, especially on top of the demands of their existing jobs," says Robb. "With Accelerate, my staff actually gets excited when they find a new program to take, and they become very competitive about winning prizes. And, frankly for some people, it is a matter of pride to see their names up there at the top of the list."

Robb describes one employee who had a simple goal: she wanted to be number one on the Accelerate Program leader boards. "What I think is remarkable about this program is that it inspires people to be at the top in the industry, not just pass a course. This particular employee is probably in the top five or ten in the country already," says Robb.

After three years, Robb says that everyone on his staff is still an enthusiastic user of the Accelerate Program. But he also makes sure that everyone is aware of who is participating and how each person is performing. "We log in every quarter to see what tests we can take and if there are any new opportunities for us. I always take a snapshot of the people in our company and where they rank and send that out to everybody on the team. I make sure to highlight the people who are in the top-producer range."

Robb is proud to say that there are people in his organization who have performed better than he has, and he is still an active competitor. "In the beginning, leading by example was important. But today Accelerate has become part of our culture."

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<sup>1</sup> **Note:** Incentives are only available in the Americas and APJC.

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## Results

LaSalle's operations team has realized a multitude of benefits from participating in the Accelerate Program, from improving solutions selling to setting the bar even higher for customer satisfaction.

"We have seen an overall increase in our services attach rates and bookings. We also continue to see high renewal rates," says Robb. "LaSalle has very aggressive growth expectations for our asset management business, and Accelerate is helping us meet those goals."

Robb believes that the Cisco Services Accelerate Program has also contributed to LaSalle's distinction of achieving some of the highest customer satisfaction ratios in the industry. The training topics in Accelerate have improved the operation's team's knowledge of how to effectively position and sell Cisco Services using a solution-sales approach. The LaSalle team is able to maintain a high level of expertise in its customer engagements, further strengthening the company's role as a trusted advisor. "Our above-average customer loyalty scores are not just the result of offering a great product. Having such service-oriented people, who are educated by programs like Cisco Services Accelerate, is what separates us from the crowd," says Robb.

One of the first things that Robb did after he saw Accelerate was to create "Race For Gold," an internal program that pays bonuses to LaSalle employees if they earn specific technical certifications. "I created a map that said, 'Here is what the Accelerate Program does. Now I'm going to add all of the other certifications that are important to our business, and see who wants to be in the top spots.' Part of working in my group is that you must have Cisco Services Expert Professional (CSEP) certification, which is part of Accelerate."

Cisco Accelerate has also become a formal part of the new employee orientation process. "We always team new employees with one or two mentors. We have a system for exposing new employees to our tools and processes. And for the past three years, we have used the Cisco Accelerate Program to get them right into our training culture. It's a double win: they are learning new skills and compensated for doing it. The feedback I get is that it makes them even more excited to be part of the LaSalle team."

Robb is particularly proud of the fact that the Cisco Services Accelerate Program has helped contribute so significantly to professional development across his whole team. "We have fostered and grown people's careers, and that has given them and their families more opportunities. As a manager, that is one of my greatest sources of pride."

Robb is equally keen about spreading the word about the Accelerate Program to other Cisco partners. "If we are getting value, I want other partners to participate and get value out of the program as well."

"I think what Cisco understands so well is that this is not just a 9-to-5 job for partners that want to be the best. They are giving us the tools like Cisco Services Accelerate to push ourselves, to help us learn and grow," says Robb. "At LaSalle Solutions, we look for partners who are not just going to tell us what to do, but are willing to share the information that we need to be innovative."

## For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Services Accelerate Partner Training and Incentive Program, visit:  
<http://www.cisco.com/go/accelerate>.



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