



ICS LAUNCHES PARTNER PROGRAMME TO BRING MICROSOFT BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TO THE MASSES

...Targets recruitment of 50 new partners in UK over the next 18 months...

Manchester, UK, May 3, 2006 - A new partner programme to enable the channel to create a new generation of Microsoft-based Business Intelligence (BI) solutions is being launched today by business data specialists ICS. This creates a new opportunity for consultancies, independent software vendors (ISVs) and Microsoft application partners to offer affordable, enterprise-wide BI solutions that deliver business results in weeks.

ICS recently launched its RSinteract product for Microsoft SQL Server, a flexible, intuitive and interactive web-based reporting tool providing self-service, up-to-the-minute business information. Building on Microsoft SQL Server 2000 and 2005, this enables partners to offer affordable BI solutions for users at all levels of the organisation. The programme will enable ICS partners to create a new generation of interactive BI solutions.

The ICS partner programme consists of full pre and after sales support, sales training, full technical support, and a flexible pricing structure to suit every partner. The product is extremely easy to install - a matter of minutes – and delivers tangible results rapidly. It does not require expensive per seat licences or costly BI skills, and brings greatly reduced cost of ownership.

ICS, a Microsoft Gold partner itself, is primarily looking to partner with Business Intelligence consultancies, Microsoft Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) and Microsoft Dynamics partners.

ICS's partner launch programme is fully supported by Microsoft. Karl Noakes, Director Partner Development said; "We are delighted to see the continued growth and success of one of our Gold Partners in the UK. This is a great opportunity for ICS to further grow their business by partnering with other Microsoft Partners and

illustrates how organisations can increase their reach and profitability by connecting and collaborating with other companies via the Microsoft Partner Programme.”

New market opportunity with Microsoft SQL Server: BI for the masses

Cost and complexity means that business intelligence has previously been confined to specialist analysts and senior management. For the first time, it is now affordable to extend BI to all users with RSinteract in conjunction with Microsoft SQL Server. This means greatly improved decision-making, leading to cost savings, increased customer satisfaction and higher revenues.

"It has been clear for some time that business intelligence has not been hitting the people that need it most: the average business user," said Philip Howard, analyst, Bloor Research. "Further, despite their best efforts the mainstream business intelligence vendors have found it difficult to extend their offerings to suit the needs of these non-specialists, so it is good to see companies like ICS addressing the needs of this wider community."

Rapid implementation and ROI

A recent implementation of the Microsoft SQL Server BI solution including RSinteract for a major UK retailer demonstrates the low total cost of ownership and the ease of implementation. This retailer is on track to complete implementation of a full BI solution to manage all their warehouse operations in the UK within 2-3 months. Return on investment targets for this project are anticipated to be met within 4-6 months.

Opportunity for BI consultancies: use Microsoft BI stack with low TCO

With RSinteract, BI consultancies can now create self-service BI solutions using Microsoft SQL Server, and take advantage of greatly reduced cost of ownership. This gives consultancies an affordable route to extend solutions beyond technical business analysts to enable operational end-users to interact with the data.

Microsoft SQL Server 2000 already provides the bedrock for effective enterprise business intelligence. SQL Server 2005 extends Microsoft's BI tools to provide a fully-fledged suite of enterprise reporting software as part of the solution. The platform includes DTS/SSIS for Extract, Transform and Load (ETL), Analysis Services for OLAP and Reporting Services for Reporting.

RSinteract now extends the Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services engine to deliver a truly interactive self-service BI tool for the masses. This provides consultancies with a ready-made BI solution with very low cost of ownership.

Opportunity for ISVs: extend applications to enterprise

ISV partners will be able to incorporate RSinteract in their own solutions, either using the RSinteract brand name or by embedding the product in their own applications and selling it under their own brand name. This will enable ISVs to extend their applications to the wider enterprise at greatly reduced costs. ISVs can also take advantage of the flexible pricing structure, bringing good additional revenue opportunities.

Opportunity for Microsoft Dynamics partners: customised reporting templates

Microsoft Dynamics partners have a opportunity to add value for customers with tailored reporting packages built on Microsoft Dynamics applications which will enable them to create additional margin. Partners will be able to create a number of customised vertical market or horizontal reports, for example, warehouse stock levels, and sell it as a package including the RSinteract product to their customers.

Diego Gagliano, SQL manager of Vorsprung, a leading Microsoft Dynamics partner, said; “RSinteract slashes the time it takes us to create reports for our customers from about four hours to a matter of minutes. Moreover, high level IT skills were required to create a report - whereas now a business user can create a report, without the need for any special IT skills.”

“We are committed to the channel as our primary route to market,” said Marcel Bonfrer, VP Channel Sales, ICS. “With the investment we’re making in this programme, we’re looking to increase our revenues significantly, building both our business and that of our partners. By bringing BI to the masses, RSinteract allows our partners to create a new generation of BI solutions – with great opportunities to add value and create margin.”

- ends -

About ICS

ICS - The Microsoft Business Intelligence Expert

As a leading Microsoft Business Intelligence consultancy ICS (www.icsltd-uk.com) is focussed on helping mid-market and enterprise organisations better exploit their investment in BI technology. ICS offers a unique blend of business and technical consultancy coupled with innovative software products to enable us to rapidly deliver effective Business Intelligence solutions. Customers include Heinz, DHL (Exel Logistics), Unisys, the Co-Operative Bank, the Ministry of Defence, and CMGL.

Microsoft now offers a comprehensive Business Intelligence stack that challenges the position of the established BI vendors such as Business Objects and Cognos. Using Microsoft technology, it is no longer necessary to pay for additional complex and expensive tools - Microsoft's stack provides everything needed to deliver BI to the entire organisation, as well as to business partners and customers.

To complement Microsoft's BI toolset ICS has developed RSinteract. The award winning RSinteract works with SQL Server 2000 and 2005 to complete an important part of the solution by delivering intuitive self service reporting to make delivery of Business Intelligence to the masses a reality. In June 2006, Boston USA, RSinteract was awarded the accolade, 'Best of Tech-Ed 2006' in the BI category. Sponsored by Windows IT Media, the award recognises RSinteract's pivotal position in bringing business intelligence to the masses For further information, see: www.RSinteract.com.

ICS media contact

Huzmah Ahmed
ICS Ltd
pr@rsinteract.com