

SCOTT BEKKER



Semantra Signs Up Major Partners for Dynamics CRM Add-On

And here's Scott Bekker with some channel news.

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Semantra, which aims to make the data in Microsoft Dynamics CRM easier for non-technical business users to search and analyze, [launched a partner program](#) Wednesday that already includes some high-profile Microsoft partners.

The initial batch includes Tectura, ePartners, Hitachi Consulting, Quest, First Tech Direct and I.B.I.S. The Dallas-based startup has about eight partners lined up and is looking to eventually have about 20 partner relationships with Microsoft National Systems Integrators and leading regional VARs.

The company has been engaging with the channel since April, and in May announced the hiring of two executives to build its channel -- former Teradata executive Kurt Pimental as vice president of business development and former ePartners vice president Travis Grubbs as vice president of channel operations for Microsoft Dynamics.

"We are 100 percent focused on channel sales," said Cody Aufricht, vice president of marketing at Semantra. "Even though we'll do some of our own demand creation, we will introduce a partner into any deals we take down."

The new channel program includes a co-marketing program, sales incentives and business development funds, among other benefits.

Semantra's channel buildout comes as the company prepares for the Oct. 1 release of Semantra 2.5 for Microsoft Dynamics CRM, which Chris Davis, CEO of Semantra, jokingly described as the "check-writing" release -- or the first version that customers are expected to pay for -- of the product for the five-year-old company. The private equity-backed firm with about 30 employees, mostly developers, has spent part of the time since its inception finding the right market for its technology.

The business intelligence technology allows users to enter common business terms into a simple search box. Semantra requests clarification from the user on vague terms, then translates the natural language request into a SQL query to pull data from databases. The company optimized its product for Dynamics CRM first, Davis said, because "we wanted to target an application of record, one of import."

Semantra can also be integrated with Oracle and SAP, although Microsoft is the major ISV partner at this point. Davis said Semantra has plans to optimize for other Microsoft Dynamics applications in the next year, and possibly Microsoft Office SharePoint later.

About the Blogger

Scott Bekker is editor in chief of Redmond Channel Partner magazine.