

## Project Middle Earth

# Giant Step helps Microsoft UK build a clearer picture of its software partners

"Giant Step's experience of working with Microsoft and the partner network gave us confidence in their ability to gather the in-depth profile information we needed. Their consultative approach yielded facts and figures that had previously been unavailable to us. As a result of this project we're making better informed resource and investment decisions. We're engaging with the right partners and are confident that we're driving towards the required business outcomes."

Steve Morrow, ISV Manager, Microsoft UK

**giant**

**STEP**

**Customer: MICROSOFT UK**  
[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

Project Middle Earth is part of a global Microsoft initiative to build a detailed matrix of its ISV (Independent Software Vendor) partners. One of the key objectives is to give Microsoft more control over its partner portfolio, ensuring that partners are managed more effectively.

Microsoft in the US had used traditional data research agencies to build a revenue picture of its ISV partners. Microsoft UK wanted to go further than this by building a really detailed profile. This would be put into a matrix where partners could be viewed according to their vertical and technical strengths as well as by actual and influence revenue.

### Filling the gaps

Richard Phillips, ISV Partner Account Manager, Microsoft, explains: "We needed to gain much better control over our portfolio of partners. They had previously been managed by guess work. We wanted to gather accurate information so we could confidently identify the partners we should be working with."

A large proportion of ISVs in the UK are privately owned companies whose revenue information is not publicly available. Phillips confirms: "There were huge gaps in the revenue information we held on these ISVs and we weren't confident that information we did have was accurate. Giant Step's experience in working with Microsoft and its partners meant they could approach the ISVs, ask the right questions and, crucially, get the profile information

**Microsoft**

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we needed. They had worked on similar projects and clearly understood the issues involved."

### The value of information

Giant Step worked closely with Microsoft's Partner Account Managers to build a list of companies to profile, along with a framework of information required. This included: revenue information; target customer profiles; business goals; marketing strategies; sales strategies; technology details.

One of the main challenges in gathering information from the partners was in helping them to understand why and how it was being used. Says Phillips: "A lot of these ISVs want to work more closely with Microsoft but don't understand how we measure their value." He continues: "Giant Step's open and consultative approach helped people understand our reasons for asking the questions. They were much more willing to open up and give detailed information once they appreciated both the motivation and the value to them."

### The importance of accuracy

Over a period of 3-4 weeks Giant Step spoke to around 130 ISVs. In this time they gathered a substantial amount of profile information. Whereas more traditional research agencies would have left a lot of blanks, Giant Step was able to have discussions around the technology and business approach, gathering data that would build a really clear picture of the ISVs' current and future value to Microsoft.

Steve Morrow, ISV manager, Microsoft UK, is delighted with the project's success: "We are confident that we now have over 90% accuracy on our data. Partner Account Managers have a much more realistic picture of the ISVs they are managing. We can be much more logical about the way we work with these partners and the partners themselves have a much better understanding of their value to Microsoft."

Giant Step worked collaboratively with its partner, ResourceIT, to ensure the success of this project.