

Nurturing the channel

The enterprise infrastructure solution vendor, Sybase is ramping up its channel initiatives in the region to penetrate the key vertical markets. RWME spoke to Hisham Malak, Channel & Marketing Manager, Sybase Products Middle East, about the company's plans. Excerpts:



Hisham Malak,
Channel & Marketing Manager, Sybase

RWME: What is distribution strategy in this region with respect to OEMs, system integrators, ISVs, VARs, etc?

MALAK: Sybase product offerings cover the full spectrum of technology infrastructure and solutions that are required by organisations today especially in the financial and banking sectors. Such technologies include databases, design and development tools, data warehousing solutions, middleware, mobile solutions, Internet banking and many more.

Given the diverse nature of Sybase products, our strategy is to build and maintain a large network of local and regional partners – OEMs, SI, ISVs, VARs- that specialise in Sybase products, develop their solutions based on and integrated with Sybase technologies, and cater to specific vertical markets. Sybase's focus today is to further develop our channels and expand our partner network to better serve our markets and further enhance our presence in others.

To Sybase, maintaining a strong distribution network of OEMs, SIs, ISVs and VARs is crucial to the

success of the company and enhances the company's ability to be a competitive regional player. While our sales force follow the "Named Account" strategy focusing on strategic accounts in specified market segments in different regions, it is our partner network that allows Sybase to provide proper and effective coverage of the rest of the market. Through forging strategic alliances with partners who specialise in certain verticals like governments, oil and gas, healthcare and so on, we can expand into new areas faster and build a solid base for it there.

RWME: How do you identify and select your solution partners and which are the key vertical markets where you are focusing your attention?

MALAK: Sybase looks to build a long-term and strategic relationship with all its partners. That is why we are selective of the companies we partner with and undergoes a process of evaluation to determine possible long lasting synergies. Some of the criteria we follow in our assessment include market segment

expertise, geographical coverage, solutions offered, type of partnership sought, Sybase technologies and solutions that are of interest, resources available, support to be provided, partner commitment and dedication, partner sales projections, and many others which will ensure the continuous success of the relationship.

Worldwide, Sybase caters to four main verticals: Banking and Finance, Telecommunication, Government, and Healthcare. In the Middle East, Sybase is well grounded in the financial and banking sector and currently serves a large number of local and regional banks and financial institutions.

RWME: What are the training and certification programs in place for channel partners?

MALAK: As mentioned earlier, Sybase offers a diverse range of products. With our input, our partners identify the technologies and solutions that are most appropriate for their business, their customer base and market segment. Sybase provides full sales and technical support on these technologies and ensures that the partners are always educated on the latest developments and releases in their areas of interest.

RWME: How do you plan to accelerate VAR sales in the region?

MALAK: VAR channels is an area that Sybase is looking to further enhance and develop. We view this as an important revenue source for Sybase in the near future and are taking many steps to build a solid VAR Channel. Certain solutions that are offered by Sybase such as Sybase Pylon can be used by any organisation irrespective of the vertical market it is in. For such solutions, we look at recruiting VARs that cover as many verticals as possible and who would push such solutions to their customer base. We will also monitor VARs' performance and work closely with them to help sell fast and sell more by addressing their challenges and providing them with the necessary support.