

Case study – Office Automation Channels

Research to support major channel expansion in China

The challenge

Facing relative saturation in traditional IT channels, a Fortune 500 IT products vendor sought to engage Office Automation (OA) channels, well-established for sales of fax and shredder machines, to expand its distribution reach and sales volume in China.

The objective of the study was to quantify the missed opportunity for the client in OA channels, as well as to support a China-wide channel recruitment and management initiative targeted at this channel category.

The process

Using published statistics as well as on-site observations at locations where OA channel outlets were clustered in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, Spire developed a model to size the China-wide population of OA channels. Over 600 semi-structured interviews were then conducted with OA channels across seven Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, supplemented by on-site visits and mystery shopping at clusters of OA channels in Shanghai and Beijing. Interviews focused on understanding the sales processes and business performance for these channels as well as whether they were willing and able to sell our client's products. Utilizing the data gained therein for hypotheses formulation and questionnaire design, Spire proceeded to interview over 200 customers of OA channels. Expert and competitor interviews were also deployed to profile competitor strategies towards engaging this channel category.



The results

Our report was presented to the client's regional and China senior management team and was used to develop a program to recruit, train and support new OA channel partners. Project deliverables included a report analyzing all data inputs in totality to quantify the potential value of the OA channel as a conduit for specific ICT products and to recommend a strategy for the client to engage with these channels.

