



ABLE-ONE UTILIZES AVNET PARTNERSHIP AS “CORE COMPONENT” IN ITS BUSINESS STRATEGY



Able-One integrates applications, consulting and technology into solutions specifically tailored to its customers’ business environment. A one-stop source for hardware, software and services, Able-One helps companies leverage technology as a tool for meeting present and future corporate objectives.

Able-One is headquartered in Kitchener, Ontario

Companies that deliver IT solutions to small and medium sized businesses must operate with one foot firmly planted in the present and the other in the future. These providers are continually challenged to meet the current IT needs of each customer, while simultaneously positioning them for success as their business and IT needs evolve.

Able-One Systems specializes in developing, implementing and maintaining IT infrastructures that align with its customers’ evolving business requirements. Small and medium sized business across Canada—in a wide range of industries—depend on the long-time Avnet partner and IBM Premier Business Partner to supplement their IT expertise and resources and help them leverage technology as a tool for negotiating the distance between present and future.

“Our people have a wide range of expertise, including server consolidation, security, clustering, virtualization, high availability, bar-code technology, wireless networks, hardware and OS upgrades,” says Doug Williams, Able-One’s Director of Marketing and Consulting. Able-One cultivates strategic partnerships with leading solution developers in all these technologies. “Our value-add is in assessing a business’ existing IT environment and knowing how to implement a particular technology solution in that particular business; thus understanding how that solution needs to work within the business,” says Williams.

Able-One realizes significant payback from Avnet’s education, certification and Resource Alliance programs

Achieving and maintaining such deep and wide-ranging technical expertise is central to Able-One’s business (its fifty employees have over 360 certifications in various technologies), which makes gaining such expertise a critical focus of the company’s partnership with Avnet. “We’re constantly leveraging Avnet’s technical training

and certification programs to keep pace with IBM as they introduce new technology or refresh their existing hardware and software offerings,” says Williams.

According to Williams, Avnet’s training programs have also been instrumental in helping Able-One expand into new businesses. “We just started our storage practice 2 years ago, and we relied quite heavily on Avnet for expertise and training,” he says. “That particular part of our business is now taking off and our customers are recognizing us as a qualified storage partner who can assess their environment, make recommendations for the future, then implement them.”

Additionally, by leveraging Avnet’s Resource Alliance program, the company was able to fund its IBM System p sales and technical staff. Through the Resource Alliance Program Avnet helps partners fund new hires and new certifications, provided they reach agreed upon revenue targets. “In two years, our System p business has grown from basically nothing into a viable business that’s supporting a dedicated staff and bringing us into significant new opportunities,” says Williams, who points out that Able-One now handles the full line of IBM servers, with the exception of the System z.

Avnet marketing resources and expertise fortify business development efforts

While a reputation built over nearly 20-years and a word-of-mouth network that now includes over 650 customers are undeniably powerful marketing tools, Avnet’s marketing support is also playing a significant role in Able-One’s new business expansion.

That support comes to Able-One in many forms, from campaign funding, administration and execution to a service critical to any IBM partner: help in navigating through the expanse of IBM offerings, programs and contacts. “I have a close relationship with Avnet marketing and I leverage their expertise in the different IBM offerings,”



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—Doug Williams, *Director of Marketing and Consulting, Able-One Systems*

says Williams. “If I hear about some type of IBM offering, promotion or new technology, I’ll give Avnet a call, and in every case they find the information I need.”

Able-One hosts over a half-dozen seminars every year, during which attendees are given the opportunity to “test-drive” various software and hardware products. The company also hosts several web casts and exhibits at a number of tradeshow annually. Avnet marketing resources are crucial to the success of all these events, not only from a funding standpoint, but also in execution—driving attendance, helping in message development and even providing the Avnet Toronto office as a venue.

“Avnet is a core component in building the complete relationship between the manufacturer, our customers and ourselves. Of any VAD, Avnet has the strongest network of people and systems to back up the products,” Williams says. “They have great technical people for pre-sales support and assistance to our technical people, and without their marketing support we would find it extremely difficult to execute any of our marketing programs.”

Able-One helps credit union support current members and prepare for future growth

St. Stanislaus—St. Casimir’s Polish Parishes Credit Union Limited (also known as the Polish Credit Union) was established in 1945 to serve the Polish community in Ontario, and is the largest Polish financial institution outside of Poland, providing a full range of financial services to over 40,000 members.

The institution assesses the value of its financial services offerings through the prism of availability and excellence of service. Its main goal is to provide nothing less than the flawless continuation of services to its members. In that context, credit union executives approached Able-One to examine its legacy system and develop an IT infrastructure that would better address the credit union’s current needs, as well as ensure it would be well positioned for the future.

“We were running a legacy system that was approaching its end-of-life,” says Iain Kwapien, Vice President of Finance & Chief Financial Officer of the Polish Credit Union. “We needed to enhance our Storage Area Network (SAN) performance and capacity, ensure predictable maintenance costs and improve system availability.”

Able-One evaluated the technology needs of the Polish Credit Union and, recognizing the credit union’s long-standing IBM relationship, proposed a total solution that included upgrading their hardware to IBM System p technology, replacing the non-IBM SAN with a new and more powerful IBM DS4700 SAN, and upgrading its operating system to IBM AIX 5L version 5.3.

In addition, working with the credit union’s IT staff, Able-One created full documentation of all procedures, provided staff training, optimized the in-house computer room through rewiring and rack mounting equipment for maximum efficiency, and implemented an off-site Disaster Recovery system

“Working with the Credit Union executives, we developed an IT strategy that would see Able-One developing and implementing a robust, high-functioning, high-availability IT environment with the flexibility required of a growing financial institution,” says Brian Olson, Able-One System p Solutions Specialist. By virtue of this Able-One-managed IT modernization project, the Polish Credit Union enjoys improved performance, lower cost of ownership, fail-safe disaster recovery, fully supported systems and enhanced storage capacity / data accessibility.

For Able-One’s Olson, the success of the Polish Credit Union re-architecting project represents a triumph of partnership, not just between Able-One and its customer, but between Able-One, IBM and Avnet. “We brought value add to the account, with our professional services staff working with the IBM and Avnet teams to deliver a solution that helps the customer meet their short-term needs and long-term corporate strategies.”

