



Connect the Dots

Abstract

To be competitive today, telecommunications companies must become true solutions providers that create value for their customers. Such providers understand all of the following: their products, the technology behind their products, and how their products are positioned in the marketplace. This white paper discusses these concepts in detail.

The Shift in the Telecommunications Industry

The telecommunications industry is experiencing a shift unlike any other of the past 25 years. Advances in telecommunications (e.g., increased mobility and use of the Internet for commerce) are allowing businesses to significantly change the way they operate and communicate, internally and externally. Telecommunications plays the critical role in tying all the components together, or “connecting the dots.”

Consider this question: Is your organization able to connect the dots with a consistent, cohesive, succinct, integrated message that your sales teams understand and are confident in? Can your marketing and sales organizations relate the powerful message of change to your customers?

To succeed today, telecommunications equipment and service providers must be able to help their customers construct effective business solutions. Every telecommunications provider offers frame relay, MPLS, IP telephony, and other “standard telco” services. Every provider is focused on the latest and greatest next launch of a new offering. However, price is no longer a differentiator; the value expressed by your business solution is the true differentiator.

Telecommunications equipment and service providers must determine whether they are capable of becoming such solutions providers. They must ask themselves several key questions:

- Do we have the skill set to understand how new technologies will impact the telecommunications industry?
- Can our account teams discuss how these technologies can be used effectively to improve our customers’ productivity, lower their costs, and provide the scalability and future-proofing their business plans should address?
- Are we stuck in the traditional “telco” mindset?

For example, when providers are considering deploying new services such as network-based IP VPNs or IP telephony, the following questions are critical:

- Do our teams understand both the voice and the data sides of the equation?
- How well do they comprehend what is required to build the solution? What if wireless LANs are involved in the solution?
- Can our sales people identify the security requirements?
- Do they have the expertise to understand, evaluate, discriminate, and differentiate the available options?



Telecommunications service providers must educate their sales and marketing teams as to how the appropriate technology can optimize their customers' business. Thus, these individuals must understand the linkage between their customers' business applications and the technologies used to deliver these applications. They must also understand the flow of information, that when leveraged, allows an organization to more effectively communicate, and as a result, be more effective in its business.

How Hill Associates Can Help

Hill Associates can help your sales and marketing teams connect the dots using our C3E framework. We develop training about technology, applications, and products that is contextual, connected, continuous, and experiential (C3E).

Contextual ensures that the technology and products address key business concepts that concern your customers. Connected relates all of the things happening with the telecommunications industry and in the world at large, not just one particular technology or product. Continuous means that learning is ongoing, not just a one-time event. Finally, experiential means that your team members must participate in order to learn.

Our C3E concept is designed to be a consistent, holistic structure that enables the maximum performance from a sales and marketing organization within a telecommunication company. This unique concept has led our partners to achieve the goals they seek related to their business objectives in today's competitive market. Let us help you navigate the road to success.

About Hill Associates

Hill Associates is internationally known in the field of telecommunications and is proud of its reputation as a premier provider of assessment, training and strategic advice. For over 25 years, we have demystified the complex world of voice and data communications for some of the most recognized players in the industry, from RBOCs and telecommunications service providers to equipment manufacturers to Fortune size companies. Today, we offer a broad array of courses and seminars to these and other clients, while also providing public training via the Web.

Hill Associates' central mission has always been to impart knowledge, inspire, and increase the on-job performance of our clients. We have educated tens of thousands of professionals at every level of the organization—sales and sales support people, engineers, management, and executives at the highest levels of major corporations. Our delivery methods range from traditional instructor-led courses to progressive technology-based learning programs. As pioneers of the blended approach to education, we design comprehensive curricula that can blend classroom experience with hands-on workshops, strategic seminars, live and "flex" e-learning programs, and learning portal technology. Curricula can include customized programs like comprehensive products and services training, which combines core technology training with our clients' specific product information. At the same time, these programs can provide sales methodology lessons to enable students to effectively assess and fulfill customer needs, and ultimately, communicate their company's value proposition.

At Hill Associates, our customers are our partners. In addition to providing "off-the-shelf" courses, we offer highly collaborative program development services, which address each client's unique needs and challenges, providing as much or as little support as our clients need to plan, design, and implement a training program. We conduct needs assessment, plan instructional design to meet



specific job skills, develop curricula to meet targeted goals using both our extensive content library as well as our client's custom content, and finally, can provide testing, program assessment, and feedback.

Why do business with Hill Associates? Because we understand that a well trained team with a solid foundation in technologies and their company's products and services will perform better, differentiate them, and be more successful against competition. Our clients choose Hill Associates for our unmatched combination of currency and depth of material, course design, technical expertise, and the dynamic and engaging learning environment our instructors present regardless of the delivery mode.

Hill Associates' industry insight and quality training programs provide future-minded companies with the know-how to stay ahead in the highly competitive telecommunications environment. That is our promise to our clients and that is how, each day, we create new leaders in telecommunications.

Visit our website (www.hill.com) for more information. While there, check out our newsletter, blog, and podcasts.

About the Author

Mark Steinberg is the Director of Business Development for Hill Associates. Mark has spent more than 25 years in the business of technology. The telecommunications industry has been experiencing dramatic changes over the past three decades. Mark often provides consulting services regarding the strategic implications of technological change.

In addition to teaching the Hill Associates core curricula, he facilitates interactive discussions with a variety of audience types. These have included middle and senior management of Hill Associates' client companies and training partners. Over the past several years, he has used his expertise in communications and business strategy to create and deliver courses that focus on the issues facing companies involved in the communications marketplace. Business leaders rely on Mark's insights as they determine their business and technology strategies. His knowledge of convergence, both voice and data and wireline and wireless, has allowed him to create a variety of programs that address these business strategies. His engagements have been with companies such as CANTV, Telstra, AT&T, Qwest, Global Crossing, BellSouth, Verizon, Cingular, Ernst & Young, and Sprint—in the U.S., South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

A dynamic and energetic presenter with a broad perspective on technology and business, Mark is capable of dealing with technology and learning challenges in the classroom. Mark often combines real world analogies and humor to help explain the technical details. He has developed educational programs for technical and non-technical audiences that range from five days to over sixty days. A Senior Member of the Technical Staff, Mark has been with Hill Associates since 1994.

Mark is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP #49990). He holds an MBA in International Finance from the University of Santa Clara, CA, a BA in Pre-med/Biology from Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY, and has done graduate work in Astronomical Physics at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO. He was previously a consultant to TeleCommunications, Inc. (TCI, now Comcast) and a Product Manager at both McDATA Corporation (now part of EMC) and Honeywell's Solid State Electronics Division.