



# Smaller Market Seminars Yield Big Gains for Vital Support Systems



*When Midwest-based enterprise technology solutions provider Vital Support Systems turned to longtime partner Avnet Technology Solutions for assistance in growing its market share, it gained an unexpected but highly effective solution: an innovative series of IT consolidation seminars aimed at the enterprise and the small and mid-sized business (SMB) markets. In addition to providing prospects with rare access to leading experts in consolidation and virtualization, these cost-effective, scalable seminars have enabled Vital Support Systems to identify and engage high-value prospects while reinforcing their consultative relationship approach and comprehensive solution offering.*

## The Background

Vital Support Systems is the Midwest's leading provider of enterprise technology solutions for systems and networks. With offices located in markets throughout Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Illinois, Vital Support Systems differentiates itself through its highly consultative approach, deep technical knowledge, strong business focus and comprehensive solution offering. Rather than simply "filling customer orders," Vital Support Systems invests the time and resources necessary to fully assess each customer's technology needs so it can then design, integrate and deliver enterprise-class solutions that work. And it does so while leveraging state-of-the-art processes and tools that allow technology to be deployed faster and more affordably. The company offers a comprehensive suite of data services that includes the planning, design, installation and management of critical communications components, including business critical servers, security solutions, local and wide area networks, wireless, storage, voice and IP telephony.

Since 2001, Vital Support Systems has been an HP-exclusive partner with Avnet and maintains multiple elite status rankings within HP, including Technology Elite status in storage, enterprise server, blade server and high performance. It also maintains Solution Elite status in exchange, Oracle, SQL, VMWare and Information Management.

Throughout its partnership with Avnet, Vital Support Systems has realized measurable growth in key markets. In recent years, the company has sought to build market share by acquiring net new customers in its target regions. To achieve this strategic goal, Avnet has continually worked with Vital Support Systems to identify potential opportunities for growth that align with the company's consultative approach and high-value solution offerings.

## The Opportunity

In 2007, Avnet approached Vital Support Systems with a unique strategy to grow the company's market share: Customized, multi-city IT consolidation seminars. This approach would allow Vital Support Systems to attract and engage net new customers with an event that featured consolidation industry experts and leaders—a rare opportunity for companies in smaller markets outside urban centers. In addition, the seminars would provide an ideal opportunity for Vital Support Systems to identify and initiate dialog with companies in need of assessment services due to ongoing challenges such as budget constraints, limited datacenter space and skyrocketing energy and cooling costs.

But how could the seminars be planned, promoted and conducted in multiple cities on a limited budget and over a relatively short time span? The answer: Avnet's IT Consolidation seminar series.

Through its comprehensive IT Consolidation series, Avnet provided a complete and cost-effective seminar package that encompassed all aspects of the event planning and production. From start to finish, this comprehensive methodology would ensure that every detail was addressed for every event, including venue date and selection, target market identification and data lists, email marketing and telemarketing to drive registration, promotional collateral, onsite conference materials and final campaign summary (including the Total Dollar Opportunities identified from each event). With this proven solution in place, Vital Support Systems and Avnet were able to put their strategy into action—immediately.

**“Our partnership with Avnet has proven time and again to be a true asset to our company both strategically and competitively. Their deep understanding of our market coupled with their extensive range of innovative resources like their IT Consolidation seminar series allows us to achieve key goals faster and more cost-effectively—and often with better-than-expected results.”**



*- Jeff Sparling, CEO, Vital Support Systems*

### **The Partnership Approach—in Action**

During 2007 and 2008, Avnet worked with Vital Support Systems to develop and conduct a customized series of IT consolidation seminars in each of the company's target Midwest markets. This enabled representatives at each location to meet face-to-face with prospects receptive to upfront consolidation assessments—and with solid plans and budgets to implement recommended solutions.

In addition to the seminars, Avnet also worked with Vital Support Systems to align prospective customers with the appropriate assessment services available through Avnet's SolutionsPath™ Services portfolio. Encompassing server, storage and desktop assessment services, this comprehensive suite of services has enabled Vital Support Systems to provide each new customer with a validated, high-value recommendation proposal that is based on the customer's unique IT environment and specific consolidation goals.

### **The Results, Returns—and Rewards**

Avnet has planned, promoted and executed multiple consolidation seminars in Vital Support Systems' targeted Midwest markets and plans to complete two additional seminars by the end of the year. Already, Vital Support Systems has identified assessment opportunities with multiple end-user customers and is currently engaged in evaluating the IT infrastructure for numerous net new and existing customers.

In addition to helping Vital Support Systems advance toward its business growth goals, this successful partnership opportunity has further reinforced the company's position as a strategic solutions advisor and provider within this highly competitive market segment.

Most importantly, by leveraging Avnet's strategic resources and services in these key markets, Vital Support Systems has been able to focus its relationship-building efforts where they matter most: on customers that are ready to pursue their IT consolidation goals. In addition to saving valuable time and resources, this partnership approach has helped expedite the sales process and accelerate success for Vital Support Systems.

Avnet Technology Solutions is an operating group of Avnet, Inc. (NYSE:AVT) with locations in more than 30 countries. As a leading distributor of IT products and services, Avnet improves how technology solutions are defined and delivered to businesses worldwide. From our unique position at the center of the channel, we promote collaboration among leading hardware and software suppliers and providers to deliver technology solutions that solve the business challenges of their customers.



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