

Analysis

IBM Announces Software & Consulting Initiative for ASPs

CBR Staff Writer October 26, 1999

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With an eye on the exploding market for ready to rent software, IBM Corp has announced an aggressive campaign to sell software and consulting to aspiring application service providers, ISPs, ISVs and systems integrators. A support program called ASP Prime, part of the IBM PartnerWorld for Developers initiative, is designed to help ISVs prepare applications to be hosted by service providers and delivered over the web. IBM will provide education, application evaluation, technical support and consulting services to ISVs that qualify. A couple of solution centers, one focussed on Unix and Windows and NT and the other on the AS/400, will be dedicated to the ASP Prime initiative.

There's also a program called Hosting Advantage, which should give service providers a way to evaluate the reliability of their hosting environment. Consulting services are included, and for qualifying business partners, IBM promises to help out with demand generation. Then there's the Lotus ASP Solution Pack, newly integrated for the service provider market. With the pack, ASPs will be able to offer online awareness and

instant messaging, meeting services, team collaboration services, messaging and group calendaring to their customers on a rental model. All applications can be managed by the customer within a portal. The idea is to get ASPs up and running as quick as possible.

IBM also wants to generate leads through its service provider customers, so it's offering a lead fee for sell-through services like online consulting, web-delivered end-user education, web site commerce, recovery services, performance management and Linux services. Revenue sharing programs include the deployment of thin servers like Whistle's Interjet and the back-end services to match. If all this isn't enough to lure you into trying your hand as an ASP, IBM Global Financing is preparing a 30-month rent-to-own program to help new businesses assemble the hardware they need. All that remains is to ask – if IBM is so sure ASPs will make money, why isn't it trying its own hand at the game? Because Big Blue would rather be the grocer than the miner at this particular gold rush. á

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