



## Praxa Welcomes Microsoft's Australian 'CRM Partner of the Year' Into the Family

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Last month, Praxa's parent company, CDC Software, finalised the acquisition of Microsoft CRM specialist Snapdragon Consulting, an Australian market leader in Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Under the terms of the acquisition, Snapdragon has become part of Praxa Limited.

This acquisition augments Praxa's existing CRM capabilities with Snapdragon's experience implementing and customising the Microsoft platform, gained since the product's pre-beta days.

Founded in 2003, Snapdragon is focused on Microsoft Dynamics CRM and was awarded Microsoft's 'CRM Partner of Year' in 2005 and was again a finalist in 2006. The company runs Microsoft's Australian CRM User Group as well as the [www.MSCRM.com.au](http://www.MSCRM.com.au) website, a community portal designed to support Microsoft CRM users. Like Praxa, Snapdragon is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and one of the first companies in Australia to be accredited by Microsoft.

John Clough, chairman of Praxa, said the decision to acquire Snapdragon is a strategic move that matches complementary competencies across the two businesses.

"This acquisition aligns with Praxa's plan to gain greater breadth in complementary Microsoft technologies and specifically more depth in our CRM expertise," said Clough.

"Adding Snapdragon's team of Microsoft CRM specialists to our broad portfolio of services positions Praxa as a leader in Microsoft CRM consulting and implementations in Australia."

Industry veteran Guy Riddle will remain general manager of the Snapdragon business. Over the last 10 years, Guy has specialised in CRM and is one of very few people in the world to receive the exclusive Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) Award for his contribution to the Microsoft CRM community.

"Snapdragon's integration into the

CDC family will allow us to better serve our customers by offering them greater technical capabilities across a range of complementary technologies including Business Intelligence, SharePoint and reporting," said Riddle. "As part of Praxa Australia, we will be able to more effectively service larger clients, competitively position ourselves to best serve their needs and offer rich technical expertise across Australia's eastern seaboard."

Praxa has successfully relocated Snapdragon's existing teams, based in St Leonards and Melbourne, to its North Ryde and Southbank offices respectively.

To find out more about Snapdragon, please click here.



## Golden Touch

Did you know that Praxa is a Gold Certified partner for both Business Objects and Microsoft, two of the world's leading technology software providers? This means Praxa has to exhibit superior levels of successful implementations, capabilities and certification for both Business Objects and Microsoft product & service offerings.

Not every professional services provider can attain

Gold status. Gold Certified Partners are required to meet rigorous prerequisites for certification and expertise. We have to demonstrate a superior understanding of our partners' tools and technologies as well as mastering and supporting them in real world setting at important customer sites.

Through engagement with Microsoft and Business Objects, we have in-depth

access to a variety of exclusive resources and early product information as well as planning tools and events to keep up to speed on the latest Business Objects and Microsoft product developments and future direction. Backed by our dedicated and certified professionals, our customers are assured of getting the best out of these best of breed product solutions from Business Objects and Microsoft!



# Praxa 'Zapped'



*"Praxa is a recognised market leader in domain knowledge for Microsoft technology and business solutions, and adding business intelligence capability in this area adds significant value to Praxa customers"*

**Steve Zangari**  
*Director of Partner Strategy & Relations*  
**Zap Technology**

Praxa was recently appointed as a Zap Technology reseller partner which will further strengthen and expand Praxa's BI offerings for organisations in Australia that are looking for affordable and scalable business intelligence solutions on the Microsoft platforms.

"We are delighted that Praxa will be taking Zap's business intelligence solutions to the Australian market," said Steve Zangari, Director of Partner Strategy & Relations for Zap Technology. "Praxa is a recognised market leader in domain knowledge for Microsoft technology and business solutions, and adding business intelligence capability in this area adds significant value to Praxa customers. Together, Zap and Praxa offer a user-friendly, fast to implement solution that suits the BI needs of small to medium enterprises, but also can scale to provide a complete solution offering to rival the global vendors in the enterprise market."

Zap Technology is an international software company that creates web based business software solutions running on the Microsoft platform to help organisations improve corporate performance.

Established more than 10 years ago, Zap has a world-class software development team and like Praxa, they are a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, specifically in data

management, business intelligence and ISV/software solutions. Their software unites data from many systems in an organisation to present the big picture for understanding and planning performance.

Zap software helps organisations improve their business performance by presenting and analysing key performance indicators from planning financial budgets to monitoring scorecards against targets; from analysing and reporting on where and why problems are occurring to creating accurate forecasts.

For example, Zap Business Intelligence for Microsoft Dynamics CRM is designed to help organisations fully realise the potential of their Microsoft CRM data, by providing high level insights to drive effective decision making across the marketing, sales and service functions. It has defined business content such as key performance indicators (KPIs), dashboards and scorecards to reflect key issues that organisations want to report on from their CRM data.

This user friendly, web-based software is highly scalable, allowing growth with the organisation. The ability to analyse any type of data from your business system and its low maintenance nature mean you can focus on your business and enabling fast but accurate decision making

through improve data accuracy that minimises errors. The ability to self-service and access information anytime, anywhere means an organisation can detect issues and opportunities early and reduce the need for manual reports – the automated reporting process would free up the staff's time to focus on other important business matters.

Zap's range of software solutions encompasses performance management, business intelligence, budgeting, planning and forecasting, and financial consolidation. Their softwares are used across a diverse range of industries including financial services, government, healthcare, retail, manufacturing, utilities, distribution and hospitality and entertainment.

"Partnering with Zap provides Praxa's customers with Microsoft platforms a sophisticated yet affordable web based business intelligence solution," said Frank Hung, Managing Director of Praxa. "Praxa has great depth and expertise in Business Intelligence and Zap provides the right fit to offer our customers a complete Business Intelligence suite that is tailored specifically to their unique environment and needs."

Zap's corporate performance solutions are now available at Praxa.



## Intelligence In War & Intelligence In Business: Are They One And The Same?



Let's suppose pure cooperation is love and pure competition is War. Let me further simplify the wide spectrum of human activities, such as businesses and sports, to fit between love and war: Here you will certainly find business is more inclined to the side of war. Browsing through a book store, it is not difficult to find books relating the conduct of business to the conduct of war.

Carl von Clausewitz was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussian soldier, and influential military strategist. He is most famous for his book on military strategy, *On War*, published posthumously by his wife in 1832. Quoting Clausewitz in the chapter devoted to Intelligence, he wrote,

"...by 'intelligence' we mean every sort of information about the enemy and his country."

He summarised that, intelligence in war, is the basis of plans and operations and this definition of intelligence is surprisingly similar to the definition of Business Intelligence by D. J. Power as a "Decision Support Systems." In business, of course, we

need to know everything about the customers and the market.

Intelligence used to be exclusively a military discipline that focuses on the collection, analysis, security, and distribution of information, such as the enemy, terrain, and the weather and realising the importance and sensitivity of intelligence, Clausewitz, wrote:

"If we consider the actual basis of this information, how unreliable and transient it is, we soon realize that war - (*unquote, and so is your business*) - is a flimsy structure that can easily collapse and bury us in its ruins.....The difficulty of accurate recognition constitutes one of the most serious sources of friction in war, by making things appear entirely different from what one had expected."

Prior to the Information Age, businesses had to collect data from non-automated sources, which is slow and inefficient. Even when the business acquired the data, they lack the computing power to analyse the data into useful information, not to mention that they did not have

high-speed computer networks to share the resultant knowledge. Hence, decision makers tend to rely on intuition, otherwise known as guessing.

Today thanks to the advances in modern technology, business intelligence is now becoming more affordable and accessible but more importantly, indispensable. In fact, according to Gartner, the world's leading information technology research and advisory company, Business Intelligence is the must have tool for growing organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the good news is, you don't have to be in a combat to own one: Most Business Intelligence package nowadays can perform data-mining, analysis and forecasting, document warehouses & management.

If you would like to drill down and find out how Business Intelligence can help your organisation battle through the "collection, analysis, security and distribution of information," which is similar to that of military intelligence but at a fraction of the cost, then please contact us and we will fight for you!

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## Up Close and Personal With Guy Riddle: A Leading Australian Microsoft CRM Specialist



### The origins of Snapdragon – how did it come about and how long has it been operating?

Snapdragon has been around since 2003 and when I was thinking about naming the company, a prerequisite was to have a company name that was 'snappy,' as well as phonetically easy to say and remember, so that people get it first time. Initially I dismissed it as it is a flower but having lived in Hong Kong for 2 years where the iconic mythology of the dragon is very prevalent and the association of a dragon is strong and powerful I believed it would be a good fit - so Snapdragon was born.

### What does Snapdragon specialise in?

We are Australia's leading Microsoft CRM partner, specialising purely in Microsoft CRM. Snapdragon has been working with the product since it was launched officially in 2003 and has been part of the world wide beta team right from the start. We also established and run the Australian Microsoft CRM community website and user group.

### Why is CRM important for an organisation?

The concept of CRM is not new. Back in the 90's I was designing customer centric database systems on IBM AS/400's – we

just did not have an acronym back to categorise what we were delivering. CRM is a strategy, not a specific software solution but it encompasses the technology and strategy needed to completely integrate a business in order to get a full 360 degree view of your customers and their relationship to the entire organisation.

CRM can be widely defined as company 'activities' related to establishing and retaining customers. It is a blend of internal business processes - sales, marketing and customer support. It is all about building long-term business relationships.

*"CRM is a strategy, not a specific software solution...When you combine CRM with Business Intelligence and Analytics, you are able to gather and access information about customers' buying histories, preferences, trends, even complaints, and other data so that you can better anticipate what customers will want and how to best retain them."*

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trends, even complaints, and other data so that you can better anticipate what customers will want and how to best retain them.

The adoption of CRM is being fuelled by recognition that long-term relationships with customers are one of the most important assets of an organisation, providing competitive advantage and improved profitability.

### What differentiates Microsoft CRM?

When evaluating a CRM solution one of the key considerations is compatibility. If an organisation has adopted a Microsoft platform – SQL Server, Window Server, Exchange Server, as well as Microsoft Office and in particular Outlook - why would you consider anything else? Microsoft CRM provides a familiar and consistent user experience and the integration with the other Microsoft technologies is painless. Ultimately you want to have a CRM system that will utilise all the technology you have in place and will continue to work seamlessly when you have installed the latest versions or upgraded your environment.

### Who are your typical customers?

Every organisation can and should utilise a CRM system. We have a diverse range of customers from Taurus Marketing to NSW Business Chamber of Commerce; from Commander Australia to Burwood City Council right through to the Australian Financial Markets Association, Lend Lease and the ASX.

### Where is CRM heading?

The hot topic now is SaaS (Software as a Service). This hosting, "pay as you go", renting your software model is changing the IT industry. The latest version of Microsoft CRM can be delivered via this model and we already have customers availing of it. The idea of 'on-demand' deployment gives customers the choice

to match their specific business and IT needs: they can get a CRM solution that is flexible and feature rich but they don't need to invest heavily on their IT infrastructure or to outlay up front on high capital expenditure or to worry about licensing issues. SaaS in CRM is paving the way and by way of example, Salesforce.com has shown that it can work.

### Winning the "CRM Partner of Year" in 2005 and again a finalist in 2006 must have been very exciting?

It is good to be recognised by Microsoft as an endorsement of our skills and capability.

### And you were one of a handful of people in the world who has received Microsoft's Most Valuable Professional Award?

There are 21 people in the world who has been awarded a CRM 'Most Valuable Professional' (MVP) and the only one from Asia Pacific is me. I am very committed to Microsoft CRM and I have regular communication sessions with the CRM development team at Redmond, where I provide feedback from what our customers have been telling me what they need and what they want from their CRM. These product planning sessions provide the roadmap and future direction for continuous product improvement.

### How has the integration with Praxa been so far?

It's great to see my team and Praxa's team working together! We already are engaging in sales and customer delivery situations combining our skills set. There is great synergy between our teams and we have extremely complimentary skill sets. 2008 will be a major year for us and for Microsoft CRM - with a new enhanced version just released. We are expanding and adding new staff to service the growth so it will be a very busy year!

## Events At Praxa

### Training Across Australia:

Crystal Reports XI

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Systems Administrator

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