



## Getting Close to Customers

*How IFS Defence used CRp to move up the value chain*

### THE CLIENT



**IFS is one of the world's leading providers of fully-integrated business software solutions. IFS Defence has delivered value-added business solutions to customers in the Aerospace & Defence sector for more than 10 years. Present in 52 countries, IFS Defence is independently recognised as the global leader for maintenance and logistics solutions to support the most challenging programmes.**

Customers include all of the major defence suppliers: Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, GE, General Dynamics and SAAB.

### THE CHALLENGE

Historically, despite running client reviews at the end of a project using postal surveys and ad hoc interviews, IFS Defence senior management did not feel that they were getting a true understanding of their clients' beliefs and requirements. Confidence in the results was low with poor return rates and a lack of conviction in the validity of the data provided. They did not feel that they were getting to the heart of the issue and weren't getting the integrity of data they needed.

Harry Watson, Director Business Transformation at IFS Defence wanted to find a way of allowing the customer to answer the questions that they felt were important to them; those that would get to the heart of what clients care about and what customers needed to see addressed; and those that focused on the things that drove the relationship with the key decision makers and influencers. A process was needed that was robust and gave them accurate feedback on what their customers really believed.

### THE SOLUTION

The Customer Review process (CRp<sup>®</sup>) from Bsquared Consulting enabled IFS Defence to construct a programme to obtain the type of information it required, namely in-depth analysis of delivery performance and robust data around the softer relationship issues.

Bsquared worked closely with IFS Defence to determine the key performance areas in the relationship with its clients and what needed to be discovered about the future.

*Harry Watson explained: "The questions fall into two areas, firstly about past performance and how clients might measure that; and then secondly and just as importantly, looking forward to the direction our clients may be taking in their own business. This second area of questioning is crucial as it allows a sales dialogue to take place."*

"Identified key performance areas in the relationship with the client"

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The reviews, undertaken by the IFS Defence team, not only helped build relationships, but enabled it to hear first hand the feedback from its customers.

#### THE RESULTS

“Enabled IFS Defence to develop packages and solutions to meet their customers’ needs”

After the first iteration of the Review process, IFS Defence restructured and established market focused teams and therefore demonstrated that it was responding to clients’ needs. This made communications both internally and externally more efficient and reassured clients that not only was IFS Defence listening to what they were saying, it was also taking action to address issues they raised.

Subsequent programmes have helped IFS Defence manage and improve the competencies in its business to the benefit of its customers and contributed to decisions around future strategy and direction.

By gaining an in-depth understanding of the drivers of their clients’ business through the CRp programmes, IFS Defence has been able to develop packages and solutions to suit its customers’ needs. In a changing market with shrinking defence budgets, this is imperative and key to IFS Defence’s future success.

The process has drawn IFS Defence closer to its customers, identified bidding opportunities earlier and provided input to proposals and business winning activities generally.

#### CUSTOMER COMMENT

*“Out of the review sessions themselves we identified three new pieces of business which we did not know about, and certainly would not have known about them in anything like the same sort of timescales.*

*We were surprised that our clients perceived we could add more value to their business by moving up the value chain. We had been reticent to do this, but the fact that our clients were encouraging us to do this was a very positive sign”*



**Harry Watson**  
**Director Business Transformation**  
**IFS Defence**



#### About Bsquared Consulting:

Bsquared has over 20 years’ international experience in providing leadership, advice and support to our clients’ Customer Relationship Management activities. We specialise in helping organisations to improve and develop their business relationships and provide the means to discover the factors which will drive and transform customer and stakeholder relationships. We achieve this using a range of industry leading and internationally proven tools to create a step change in business confidence in organisations.