

CASE STUDY

Customer Info

Founded in 1992, SUSE is a multinational open-source software company that develops and sells solutions including SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, the first commercially available Linux distribution. Over half of the world's supercomputers run SUSE Linux Enterprise. SUSE has thousands of customers and employees, along with hundreds of worldwide partners in hardware, software, and system integration.

The Objective

Bring discipline and improvement to the SUSE Market Development Funds [MDF] program. Minimize unspent funds and maximize marketing opportunities for the SUSE brand.

The Approach

Build a secure, dedicated Ecosystem Cloud allowing SUSE to manage partner marketing fund requests, approvals, and reimbursements through a simple workflow-based process with essential business logic.

Technologies Used

WorkSpan Joint Funds App

Joint Funds Case Study

Presented by WorkSpan



How did the open source software giant SUSE achieve an **85 percent spike** in Market Development Fund [MDF] utilization? By upgrading to a dedicated Ecosystem Cloud.

A bit of background: SUSE goes to market with independent hardware vendors (IHVs). These partnerships, account for a big chunk of its revenue—it pairs its IHV hardware with its commercial software to form enterprise-grade Linux solutions. Still with us after those acronyms? Awesome. You're our target audience.

Before the company harnessed the true power of its alliances, its joint funds program felt like a jigsaw puzzle with more than a few missing pieces. The reason will sound familiar to you: fragmented workflows, spread thin across spreadsheets and emails.

This case study will show you how SUSE traded "spreadsheet frenzy" for a clear and tightly integrated picture of all of its alignments, processes, and operations.

And that, my friend, delivered the aforementioned 85 percent spike in MDF funds utilization.

The Problems at Hand

The company's IHV partnerships drive its revenue, but they feature a lot of moving parts that increase the chances of breakdown. The upshot? **MDF funds frequently go unused.** Managing the disparate activities, priorities, and organizational hierarchies across the different partnerships took a toll on the MDF program.



Bret Dayley

"With some of our partners, more than two-thirds of the MDF funds were exiting the program. We were missing out on so many branding and marketing opportunities."

- Bret Dayley, IHV Alliance Marketing Lead and Program Manager for Alliance Marketing at SUSE

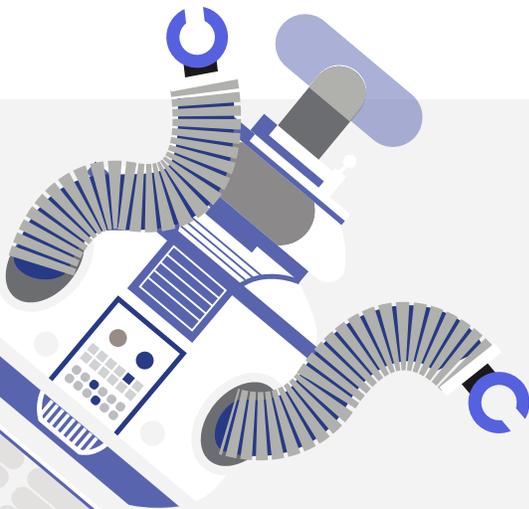
more than
two-thirds





PROBLEM CONT'D

Things needed to change course, but a huge obstacle was in the way, namely a disjointed set of solutions for managing alliances. Instead of using a dedicated, singular system, the organization was jumping between different interfaces, as part of a taxing and chaotic workflow centered on email- and spreadsheet-oriented processes—a case study in “more is less,” you might say. **Streamlining the software stack** was essential, because on top of the general inefficiency, there was the risk of GDPR violations and the danger of not even following SUSE’s own recommended best practices.

**Danger, Will Robinson!**

Day to day, teams struggled with considerable email back-and-forth, along with a generous helping of that spreadsheet frenzy. Relying on these activities was never going to realize the goal of (much) higher MDF utilization, instead resulting in routine issues with being paid on time, accessing up-to-date information, and gaining on-demand visibility. **ROI reporting was MIA.**

How WorkSpan Provided a Lifeline

Seeing that less would be more, the firm began focusing on consolidating all of its ecosystem management workflows into one system. That entailed leaving behind other vendors and zeroing-in on WorkSpan.

“We had drawn up a list of ‘must-haves’ for the new system, and decided to work with WorkSpan once we saw they could deliver on all of them,” said Bret. “First, they passed our rigorous assessment for enterprise architecture security. Then, they showed us how we could gain maximum visibility into our IHV partnerships, with the added benefits of easy provisioning and straightforward rights management. Those features are especially important to us, since we can’t allow any partners to see anything that doesn’t apply to them.”

With WorkSpan, SUSE gained tight security using sophisticated attribute-based access controls (ABAC) capabilities and an efficient joint approval workflow, backed up by a full audit trail. The platform was a ticket to easier quarterly budgeting, **with the ability to:**



✓ **Enforce** essential business logic like key dates.



✓ **Integrate** funding from multiple budget periods.



✓ **Generate** robust reports.



✓ **Onboard** alliance teams with an intuitive interface.



✓ **Save the world.**
(OK, not really, but it does make Bret feel like a superhero.)

It was a real (time) upgrade for the company’s partnerships, one that inaugurated a new shared system of knowledge doubling as a collaborative campaign management workspace.



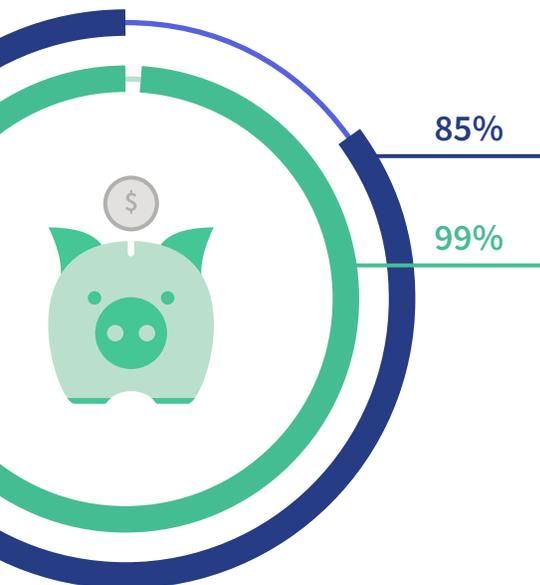
Saying Goodbye to a Disjointed Joint Funds Program

After the WorkSpan implementation, the SUSE alliance business saw an epic upgrade in efficiency from the more streamlined and consistent program operations. Stressful, fragmented processes gave way to in-sync, team-driven initiatives creating more full-fledged joint opportunities.

Moreover, alignment with seven major vendors within the MDF program—including Cisco, Dell EMC, HP, and Lenovo—is much closer to the pin, and SUSE has deep insight into performance data and estimated revenue impacts for each campaign. **#Winning**



“WorkSpan’s shared network is like having QBR in a box, with ROI analysis for all partner activities and 360-degree visibility through detailed dashboards and reports,” said Bret. “This vastly improved visibility into budget and proposal status, as well as expiration deadlines, has made the key processes in the MDF program **work exactly like we expect them to.**”



Numbers, Crunched and Analyzed (No Spreadsheets Necessary)

As you already know, MDF fund utilization **rose 85 percent**. In the most recent quarter, the percentage of it planned for funds actually **exceeded 99 percent**. Putting these dollars to work is now something SUSE can bank on.

Crisis averted.

Streamlined alliance processes and operations have become the rule, rather than the exception. The transformation ultimately succeeded through increased automation and more consistent processes across partner relationships

Together, they killed numerous redundant manual processes with fire.

Bottom line: SUSE saw superior revenue growth, accelerated time-to-market, and better preparedness to seize new opportunities throughout its partner network. The revitalized joint funds program means it can bolster the SUSE brand and also drive more revenue and results than ever before through IHV partnerships.



The Out-Partnering Edge

The transition into the WorkSpan Ecosystem Cloud was both incremental and smooth, paving the way toward more sophisticated alliance work. The WorkSpan team partnered with SUSE the whole way, sharing industry best practices on how others were getting the most from their WorkSpan implementations.

One example involved the use of endorsements within WorkSpan's Joint Marketing App. The WorkSpan team showed SUSE team the ropes of this feature, giving them the knowledge and expertise they needed to sail past the normally choppy waters of time-consuming, back-and-forth communications between alliance and field marketing teams.

“I feel like we can ‘out-partner’ our competitors now,” explained Bret. **“There’s much less business friction because we’re easier to work with than we were when we were still running a highly manual and more ad hoc system. WorkSpan has become the go-to platform for all of our alliance teams.”**

A Refreshing Change in Work Tracking

“The transformative change of WorkSpan really hit home when I received an email from someone who had long been frustrated with the lack of a real, dedicated system for tracking all of our work,” said Bret. “First, he thanked me for rolling out WorkSpan to the alliance groups at SUSE and talked about how he

appreciated the insights provided in those reports. Finally, this individual asked how new activity would appear in the system. I was excited to tell him it was as simple as hitting the refresh button on his report to see all new activity!”

Alliances—together at last. That’s what SUSE gained with its WorkSpan deployment, and it’s now well-positioned to benefit from its ecosystem.



ABOUT WORKSPAN

WorkSpan is the Category Leader for Ecosystem Cloud. With Ecosystem Cloud, our customers are capturing a disproportionate share of the Ecosystem Economy — and you can too. Join the WorkSpan network where alliance, channel, and ecosystem leaders connect, co-create, co-market, co-sell, measure, and scale with their ecosystem partners in a single, secure, network to grow business together.