

Internship
at
ZS Associates, Gurgaon

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
MBA Health and Hospital Management

Academic year, 2017-2019



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Organizational Profile

ZS is rooted in an academic partnership that began in the early 1970s. In 1973, Andy Zoltners completed a PhD in integer programming algorithms at Carnegie Mellon University, devoting a chapter in his dissertation to sales territory alignment problems. Andy subsequently accepted a teaching position at the University of Massachusetts (UMass).

The following year, Andy crossed paths with PhD student Prabha Sinha, who was exploring the use of higher math in meal planning for the military. The two collaborated on the Multiple-Choice Knapsack problem and co-wrote a paper on the topic. Eventually they realized that this line of thinking was highly applicable to the problems of sales force sizing and resource allocation.

Over the next several years, the pair worked with a number of companies, gaining practical experience applying modeling techniques to sales force problems.

In 1982, Andy presented his and Prabha's mathematical models for sales force sizing and territory alignment to the Pharmaceutical Management Science Association (PMSA), using an early Apple computer to display sales territories on-site. Executives from many of the attending companies were stunned by the model's ability to quickly solve sales force sizing, sales resource allocation, and territory alignment issues and see solutions visually in real time, with one exclaiming, "I've been waiting my whole life for this!"

By 1983, both Andy and Prabha were teaching at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management. They lectured by day, and by night they worked on the many client projects that came their way. Already having consulted to eight companies, the two professors concluded that there was an opportunity to help many clients address critical sales force effectiveness issues, and so they incorporated ZS Group, Inc., on September 21, soon renamed ZS Associates, Inc.

Growth Through Focused and Practical Problem Solving

1985 saw ZS double in staff, from 12 to more than two dozen, and the burgeoning consulting firm soon outgrew the standard midnight computer runs to Northwestern's computer center. Andy and Prabha, realizing the need and opportunity to expand, collateralized an IBM 3481 mainframe computer purchase with their homes. That same year, the firm released the first version of its automated territory design software.

By 1986, ZS had helped eight of the world's 10 largest pharmaceutical companies size their sales forces and align territories in the United States, Canada, or Europe. The two-year-old, 25-person firm had already worked on nearly 100 projects in a dozen countries.

In 1987, ZS was selected by a global corporation to help reorganize, downsize, realign, and redeploy its US sales forces. It was one of ZS's largest projects to date. However, providing great analytics were simply not enough for this project – the people-oriented aspects of facilitating placement decisions proved to be critical as well. Providing change management processes and supporting tools for the human resources side of sales and marketing became a key element of the firm's placement work.

Additionally, ZS began working on incentive compensation design and administration, helping clients determine optimal incentive plans for their sales teams as well as publishing performance reports and calculating attainment on an outsourced basis.

In 1990, another international company chose ZS to help develop sales force strategies and deployments for its recently merged sales forces in a dozen key countries. This was the first of many such near-simultaneous, multi-country projects for the firm. The same successful model was repeated through the 1990's with multiple clients.

Expanding Capabilities to Serve Clients' Sales and Marketing Needs

In 1993, ZS introduced a new sales force effectiveness and productivity framework. This framework – and future versions – has since been leveraged extensively by the firm to help clients determine their key issues and improve their business performance. The company also began to develop data warehouses for clients, as well as a range of analytical services. These projects were the genesis for ZS's services in client capability building and outsourcing.

In 1997, ZS began to apply its data-handling capabilities and rigorous analytics to the marketing research function. In subsequent years, this new marketing research area grew together with ZS's already established forecasting practice and expanding expertise in broader marketing issues, to take shape as ZS's current marketing services practice area.

In 1998, ZS introduced specialized software, processes, and dedicated teams to focus on the growing opportunity in administering sales force incentive compensation programs, an area the firm had been addressing for some time. In addition to providing outsourced services, our work in this area enabled clients to successfully administer their incentive compensation programs in-house.

In 2002, ZS launched the Marketing Research practice, which eventually evolved to an even broader Marketing solutions area.

In 2004, the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) awarded Andy and Prabha the Marketing Science Practice Prize for outstanding implementation of marketing science concepts and methods, recognizing the sales territory alignment system they had developed and implemented through the work of ZS Associates. Their winning paper, Sales Territory Design: 30 Years of Modeling and Implementation, was subsequently published in the INFORMS journal, Marketing Science.

By 2007, ZS's headcount had topped 1000 employees. Also in 2007, the firm completed more than 2000 projects – a first for a single year – for almost 300 clients in 28 industries in 38 countries. The projects were in 30 different categories/issues: more diverse than ever.

ZS's Silver anniversary in 2008 marked 25 years of extraordinary growth:

From one small office in a college town, the firm grew to 17 offices around the world – nine in North America, five in Europe and three in the Asia / Pacific region.

Building on ZS's original MAPS® territory alignment software, today's Javelin™ Software Suite supports a myriad of sales and marketing needs.

An early focus on the pharmaceutical industry has expanded to B2B organizations in nearly 30 industries.

The client issues ZS addresses have evolved from sales force size, structure and alignment to include a full spectrum of sales and marketing issues, providing consulting expertise, client capability building and outsourcing services.

Building on Our Tradition of Growth and Innovation

ZS Associates is imbued with a passion for learning, innovating, and helping companies succeed. We are committed to delivering the best solutions to solve client problems – and developing outstanding people to do it – a hallmark that continues to define the success of ZS today.

Sales

For nearly 30 years, ZS's sales consulting services have helped companies around the world excel at critical sales activities such as: designing sales channels that leverage both direct and indirect paths to market; creating the best sales force structure, territory plan, size, allocation and incentive approach; and integrating sales and marketing programs with extraordinary results and levels of efficiency.

- **Business Intelligence and Technology- Maximize Profits at a Fraction of Current Costs**

ZS can deliver superior business intelligence solutions that transform data into insight. Business Intelligence practice gives a specialized analytical monitoring and diagnostic solutions that improve sales and marketing and help cut costs.

- **Business Process Improvement- Streamline your sales and marketing operations**

When struggling to uncover operational roadblocks and inefficiencies in sales and marketing departments, ZS helps to reengineer sales and marketing processes and facilitate successful change management within organization. The unique mix of analytics, operations and technology identify and implement the right solutions to improve your organization's commercial operations.

- Customer Targeting and Activity Planning- Increase Sales Success and ROI on Your Field Force

Investment

The sales field force remains one of the most effective channels to engage the customer. But it is also one of the most expensive. And in a market in which you have to achieve more with less, companies must maximize the return on their sales force. ZS helps sales organization identify the best opportunities and field force tactics.

- Go-to-Market Strategy and Transformation- Achieving Step-Function Increase in Sales and profitability

ZS helps sales and marketing executives identify critical growth opportunities, determine sales and marketing strategy, and implement the necessary changes – changes that regularly boost our clients’ revenue 2-10% or more. ZS knows how to transform sales and marketing strategies and capabilities while minimizing transition risks and driving sustained adoption of new approaches.

- Sales Channel Strategy and Management- Develop and Manage Channel Partner Programs to meet Evolving Customer Needs

ZS creates winning channel strategies. It aligns go-to-market strategy with overall business strategy by helping clients develop and manage a channel program with the right mix of direct and indirect (partner) channels to meet business goals and customer engagement requirements.

- Sales Compensation- Compensation That Boosts Sales Force Retention and Market Share

An effective sales compensation plan helps retain your top salespeople, increase market share, make selling costs predictable and reduce the cost of plan administration. An inferior plan does the opposite. ZS helps to create plans and quotas that support your strategy and streamline administration.

- Sales Force Design- Design a Customer-Centric Sales Force

The sales force is one of an organization's most valuable and expensive marketing resources. Unlike other marketing tactics, building or reshaping a sales force can take considerable time, money, and attention. ZS has designed sales forces for organizations across more than 25 industries and in over 70 countries.

- Sales Force Effectiveness- Maximize the Return on Your Sales Force

Over the past 30 years, ZS has conducted thousands of sales force effectiveness engagements with over 700 companies in more than 70 countries and 25 industries. ZS has helped clients' salespeople achieve: longer face time with their customers, more topics discussed during customer visits, significantly improved customer satisfaction ratings—and most important, up to 30% higher sales performance

Leading companies turn to ZS marketing consulting services because they excel at helping them accomplish marketing mandates such as: creating tailored and practical strategies to capitalize on their market opportunities; sorting through myriad options for creating demand to determine the optimal marketing mix; and evaluating marketing programs to dramatically improve their performance.

- Customer Insights- Increase Customer Insight to Make Better Sales and Marketing Decisions

A clear understanding of customer needs, buying processes, buying preferences, perceptions, and potential is essential to sales and marketing success. ZS uses qualitative and quantitative methods spanning both primary and secondary data-based approaches to provide clients with customer insights.

- Customer Segmentation- Enable Sales and Marketing Strategy and Execution through Actionable Customer Segmentation

ZS combines marketing science expertise with decades of experience to help companies around the world develop highly actionable segmentation strategies that drive brand strategy through to tactical execution.

- **Forecasting- Create Robust and Transparent Forecasts for Your Products**

Understanding fundamental market drivers and their influence in shaping product demand is integral to good business planning and full utilization of company resources. ZS has developed customized forecasting processes to serve our clients. It merges forecasting knowledge and experience with the industry expertise of clients to produce collaborative results

- **Marketing Mix- Maximize the Return on Sales and Marketing Investments**

Sales and marketing organizations face unrelenting cost pressures. ZS helps sales, marketing and brand executives substantially increase the return on their investments and gives them confidence that they are making the optimal promotional spending decisions.

- **Marketing Performance Measurement and Optimization- Improve In-Market Effectiveness Through Timely Insights into Marketing Performance**

Accurate and timely feedback on marketing program performance is critical to the real-time fine tuning and course corrections necessary to maximize marketing results and return on investment. ZS has extensive experience helping clients maximize the value realized from their investments in marketing programs

- **Pipeline Strategy- Optimize Return on New Pharmaceutical and Medical Products**

Pharmaceutical brands and medical products may not be generating returns that maximize your company's substantial R&D and marketing investments. With market conditions creating higher barriers to commercial success, the pressures on R&D and marketing executives are becoming only more acute. ZS helps life science companies increase the commercial success of their product pipelines

Departmental learnings

I have worked with the Research and Development Excellence team, a sub-team of the Knowledge Management (KM) team at ZS Associates, Gurgaon.

My learnings:

As a part of the KM team:

1. I learnt about my role initially as a contractor and further as an Associate.
2. I had hands-on-training on the methodology of secondary research. Most of the searches were done by using 'Advanced search' on Google, using dedicated keywords and combinations of slots.
3. Learnt about the US and Europe healthcare system
4. Developed decks (presentations) and compiled datasheets for various internal projects
5. Learnt the ZS style of power point presentation
6. Learnt how to use the KM subscribed databases.

As a part of the Research and Development Excellence Team:

1. Learnt in detail about the process of clinical trials, drug approval and registries
2. Understood the various platforms and approvals needed in the pre-approval phase of a drug.
3. How to extract and analyze the data, use the tabsheet, formulate inferences and prepare presentations.