

"Consensus building"

ACE Customer Experience

Key words: Standardisation, programming languages

The Customer

Well-established Dutch firm with software products based on own IP wants to protect its investment in the IP through standardizing the end-user requirements, thereby enlarging the potential end-user community.

The Problem

The Customer delivers products that implement (which are depending on?) programming language specifications and interface specifications. These specifications often have a well established and accepted core, implemented by all (most?) suppliers, but sometimes (large) manufacturers deviate from the established practice and offer in their own product specific functionality, optimized for their own environment. Since the Customer realizes that it cannot follow all extensions and deviations, the internationally accepted ISO standards are taken as the basis for the Customer products. In order to be able to follow the development of the various relevant ISO specifications and to have early insight in new developments, a close relationship with the standardisation groups is necessary. And when the Customer decides that part of its own specification is ready for inclusion in the ISO standard, then it is also mandatory to have knowledge of the ISO process and the relevant procedures, and to have direct contacts with key-players.

The Assignment

ACE Consulting, with its many years of experience in the standards making processes at various levels (technical, organizational and procedural) and in different settings (national, European and international), is tasked with the coordination of information between the Customer and the relevant parts of the standards world, specifically to keep Customer informed about (new) developments in all relevant areas, and to guide Customers specifications through the international consensus-building process (which implies the adoption of changes) without losing the original intention and approach.

The ACE role

The involvement of ACE in the standards arena started in 1986. What started as simple participation in the ISO workinggroup on Pascal evolved into active participation in various workinggroups (C, Modula-2, POSIX, programming language independent issues) and the corresponding management subcommittees. On various occasions, ACE acted as project editor for International Standards and Technical Reports, and participated as chair in several international committees and workinggroups. Currently, ACE holds the chair of the Dutch Programming Languages panel.

During these international activities many contacts were made with (groups of) other related organisations, like X/Open, CEN, ANSI and ECMA.

In using the existing network and through active participation and contribution to various standardisation activities, the objectives of the Customer are met.

The Result

In using its knowledge of the standardisation world, ACE has managed to get the area of interest on the agenda of the relevant standardisation body. By presenting to those bodies base texts for the standardisation process, written in the right standards language, the process is greatly accelerated. And although the project is not yet finalized, the prospects for getting the wanted specification adopted in the standards world are very favorable.