

How to Recruit Channel Partners That Achieve Sales Goals

Friday, March 7, 2014 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)



Create a Channel Partner Recruitment Process

1. Strategy and Partner Profile

A strong channel partner program starts with a strategy. You size up your company's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the market opportunities and competitive threats. You use this information to set your goals. Then you can define your ideal channel partners based on your goals and your target

market's needs. Once you've identified the channels to pursue, you need to develop a channel partner profile.

Bear in mind that although we tend to think of long-term strategies, in today's rapidly changing market, strategies will likely need to be adjusted more frequently. And when you amend your strategy, profiles also change. Thus, even if you have an established channel partner program, you need to re-evaluate your partner-selection criteria every year.

That means applying changes in your channel partner profiles not only to new partners, but also to existing ones. This assures partners will have the potential to meet your goals, and a win-win relationship can continue to flourish.

2. Answer the Question, "What's in it for Me"?

That win-win relationship starts with defining what your partners are going to get out of the program. Why are they going to want to divert their time to selling *your* products and solutions?

If potential partners already sell to your target customers, your products are a natural add-on sale to their current customers, and you're offering an attractive margin, then you're more likely to attract and retain partners, and reach your goals. Also, you can sweeten the deal by offering partners lead generation and qualification programs.

Once you've determined the benefits your program provides to your partners, create promotional materials or content you need to share with prospects.

3. Find Channel Partners

You now know what you want in a channel partner, but how do you find them?

You need a list. There are only two ways to get lists of prospects: generate your own list from lead generation activities, or obtain an existing list of businesses.

Leads your company has generated often contain the best prospects because potential partners have responded to your marketing message, or have been

contacted by your sales team. An external list, however, that's obtained from a reputable source can provide more contacts faster. It also gives you more control over selecting contacts that match up with your channel partner profiles. Finally, buying a list often ends up costing less than creating your own list.

Where do you find a list? Good resources are media outlets, including industry newsletters and professional journals, as well as list brokers.

4. **Start Dialing**

The best way to reach out to potential prospects is to call them. That's because you need to have a conversation, understand where they're coming from, and see how a partnership with your company might fit their needs. This is a high-level conversation and cannot be scripted, but create some bullet points on areas you would like to cover.

When you talk to potential partners it's important to screen them before you recruit them. Find out how they are selling their current products, the types of relationships they have with clients, the support they provide, and anything else that's critical based on your partner profiles.

Screening and recruiting is a time-consuming activity. So it's often best to complete the task by using agents who are experts in screening and recruiting by phone. If you don't have the internal resources, outsource this to a business-to-business teleservices company that will act as an extension of your company.

5. **Nurture Your Partnerships**

Once you've screened and recruited new channel partners, it's not over. Now it's time to nurture the relationship and provide the support they need to drive sales.

To learn more about channel development, including lead generation and qualification, call 1 718-709-0900 or +39 06 978 446 60 (EMEA).

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