

## Building a Partner Program That Works

When you are a vendor and your strategy is to do indirect sales through channel partners like resellers or VARs, having a great product is only half the job when recruiting new partners. Having a proper partner program in place describing exactly what you are offering and what you are requiring in exchange means the world for your partners.

Most times resellers will choose to resell a product that is marginally inferior to another if the second one has a more robust partner program and the vendor is offering a better deal in terms of partner enablement. Below we outline some key elements that should be included in your partner program brochure (if you don't have one start creating it immediately). Of course there are differences from one business to another and it depends on what strategy you want to follow so these points work as an example, you can add or remove content based on your needs.

### 1. Company Overview

- Describe solutions/products
- Company reach

Start from the basics, include a brief overview of your company and your products for partners that never had an interaction with your website or products. Also, it is a good idea to mention your customer base as a validation that your product works and people are using it.

### 2. Market Overview

- Market growth for each product/solution

Give your potential partners a picture of your market and especially the growth rate that will make it more sensible for them to sell your solution.

### 3. Partner Program Overview

- Describe the successes of partners
- Briefly list the benefits

If you already have an established partner network you can give some examples of companies that benefited from your partner program or simply list the greatest benefits a company can have from partnering with you.

### 4. Program Tiers

- Create a table with the different tiers and what each includes

Usually, most vendors prefer to have 3 different tiers that are connected with the commitment from the reseller side to have meet minimum annual revenues, the support that is provided to each different tier of partner, the training for the sales people, marketing

funds etc. So, if you have different tiers of partnerships you can list them in a table in order all those differences in requirements and benefits can be easily comparable from your potential partners.

## 5. Program Requirements

- List your program requirements such as:
- Minimum volume
- Sales training
- Technical certification
- Participation on surveys

The requirements that each partner should meet are essentially tied to your strategy as a vendor when creating your partner program, but above you can get some ideas if you are just starting to consider the option of indirect sales. For example, you can set a minimum annual volume of sales from each tier of partners, asking them to complete a complete a sales training or technical certification, to participate in future surveys that will improve the overall product and give you customer feedback etc.

## 6. How to Qualify

- Qualified dedicated sales team, outbound
- Strong engineering staff, certified
- Experience in the field/industry
- Excellent customer reputation/relations
- Solid financial background

Depending what type of commitment you require and for different partnership tiers, you could ask from your potential partner to have a dedicated sales team for your product or fulfill certain terms like a solid financial background. You can be very demanding when building strategic partnerships and less when working with small businesses in the reseller or private label model, it's up to you.

## 7. Benefits Overview

Link the benefits with the different tiers.

- Incentives (Deal registration, discounts, marketing funds)
- Sales campaigns incl. marketing kits
- Training and education
- Partner enablement
- Business development
- Technical support
- Marketing support
- Listing in Partner directory
- Flexible payment options
- Knowledge Database

When talking about the benefits that you are offering your channel partners, apart from the chance to have revenues when selling your product, you should make your potential partner feel that you have in place a procedure that will help him onboard as fast as possible and then have all the tools at his disposal in order to start selling it. Some typical benefits include marketing incentives and material, training, deal registration, partner portal etc.

## 8. How to Apply

Provide your channel portal, dedicated channel team details or phone number.

Finally, the most obvious is to provide a specific call to action for him to sign up for your partner program through a partner portal or contacting someone from your team.

As mentioned in the beginning, the things listed here work as an example and you should add or remove part of it based on your strategy and what you believe will work better for you company and for your partners. If you have any comments for other readers to take in mind, please share them in the comments below.