Six Essential Tools to Grow Your Partner Sales
Introduction

Whether you’ve been conducting business in the channel for years or you’ve ventured into it recently, you know the importance of maintaining relationships with your channel partners. Without positive relationships in the channel, your sales could suffer from a lack of interest or involvement from partner reps.

Working with an indirect sales team can be quite challenging. Between diverse backgrounds and differences in selling styles, not to mention the potential for huge geographic disconnection, your hands are full. But with partner sales tools that can help you not only manage your connections within the channel, but also help them flourish, there’s nothing to worry about.

“Without positive relationships in the channel, your sales could suffer from a lack of interest or involvement from partner reps.”

Of course, that success is dependent on using the proper tools. There are many PRM systems available today that just don’t quite take care of business. You must have a tool that works with you, not against you. Staying ahead of the curve will help, whether you are pushing out new content or making sure that sales and marketing are working in symbiosis, not in opposition.
The Players

There are many cogs in the channel sales process, all with important functions.

First and foremost, the head of sales has an obviously critical role. Continued growth of sales is crucial to business success. And the CEO who oversees the entire company will agree that without sales, the business wouldn’t exist. It doesn’t get any more essential than that.

Another key player is the partner program manager. Without her, the partners will still operate and close deals but have no one checking in to make sure they have what they need to drive sales. She keeps the entire process running smoothly, and can elicit feedback from the channel partners to ensure there are no hiccups in the sales process.

Along a similar line, the channel marketing manager is also quite important. He keeps track of the direction for marketing efforts and makes changes as necessary. Sales and marketing need to work in harmony, so communication between the marketing department to alert channel sales reps on any changes is vital.
Let’s not forget about the channel sales teams themselves. Again, without sales, there is no company, so sales reps are a key asset. These are the people responding to leads and maintaining customer relationships in order to close deals and generate revenue in the channel. If they’re informed and educated, they’ll be able to sell more.

Finally, the last player is not human—the partner sales acceleration platform. This software makes everyone else’s life much easier, provided it has the essential tools and functions necessary for the channel sales process.
Within channel sales and marketing operations, there are six functions that can be quite handy. These range from a platform that doesn’t take another degree to use, to integration across other collaboration and sales management tools.

1. An easy-to-use platform

Have you ever used a program that just didn’t seem to completely take care of the job? Like a pair of pants that didn’t fit right: A little uncomfortable and constantly aware of what’s going on instead of feeling like an extension of yourself.

The same thing goes for partner sales management software: It should be easy to use, intuitive, and, most of all, fit right in with your daily work. It shouldn’t stand out screaming “Look at me!” to you and your channel partners. Instead, you should feel like it was there all along working for you. This can range from an intuitive user interface to customization that puts everything you need out front but still allows you to access the full functionality when you need the lesser-used tasks.

Time is money. If you’re wasting time using a program that doesn’t fit just right, you’re not able to take on the other duties that fill your day and actually are purposeful and drive revenue. Likewise, if your partner reps are not able to use the software easily, you can expect them to have less buy-in, which, in turn, will result in other issues such as losing track of content that could bring home sales.
2. Ongoing sales training

Keeping on top of sales training is crucial for sales performance. When you have the ability to use your partner software to facilitate your education component as well, that makes the process even easier. Your channel reps can take care of their training as it arises while also staying informed about the entire partner sales process.

Though there are many different ways to facilitate sales training, a good sales tool will not force you into a box with your choices. Make changes as you see fit, and then if you decide that the sales training should be tweaked, you’re not locked into it.

You can also track progress for the training within the channel. An important aspect of sales training is the recognition of meeting certain training goals. By helping the channel reps feel a sense of accomplishment, you’re encouraging that positive attitude and learning experience for the next round. And for those who haven’t reached your goal level of training, they can see their peers be recognized and have something to aim toward.
3. Deal registration tool

Your channel partners will appreciate having priority on the leads they bring in. When you have a deal registration option, you can offer them the sale first. This allows for your partners to focus on selling and generating revenue, without worrying about having their leads undersold by another one of your channel partners.

When your channel partners aren’t worried about having their leads stolen, they will be more methodical and exacting in their sales approaches. The battle won’t be “win at all costs” because they’re not trying to seal a deal immediately in order to avoid another channel partner from taking away the lead. In this way, your channel reps are focused less on the specifics of making a sale and more on what the customer is looking for—which could lead to a larger sale in the long run. Things just need to breathe a little first, so don’t stifle leads by forcing conflict and competition within the sales channel.

4. Personalized prospect pages

Everyone enjoys having their ego stroked once in awhile. With a customized prospect page, your channel reps are reaching out to the leads with a more personal touch. They’re addressing the specific needs of the lead and can make sure to focus attention on what will be most attractive to the prospect. This is a step or two above a personalized email campaign in that the landing page can be tracked and monitored for activity and engagement.

When your channel reps can recognize what sort of content is attracting the buyers and promoting sales, they can imitate this on their other pages for similar prospects. In this way, the process is constantly evolving.
Mainly, you’re looking to maintain content awareness between the channel reps and your marketing efforts. When you push out new content and updated marketing materials, your channel reps can be notified and begin using the content. On the other hand, if they must spend precious time searching for content, new or old, before sending the relevant information off to a potential customer, that’s time that could be better spent reaching out to leads or closing deals.

“*When you push out new content and updated marketing materials, your channel reps can be notified and begin using the content.*”

With collaboration and content sharing capabilities, your partner sales reps are on top of the situation at all times. They have the correct content, available whenever they need it. And because of this preparedness, they are ready to field any questions, whether they are heading into a sales pitch or closing a deal.
find that your partner sales require more than one suite of programs, so integration is essential.

Really, why shut the door on integrating with other programs, even if your partner software takes care of everything you need? The capability to interface with other programs is never a bad thing—and if you have the need for integration, it can be a great cost savings. Less time working to move data from one program to the next means less time and money lost performing non-essential tasks. And streamlining your data sources means that you are reliant on fewer programs overall.

6. A tool that plays well with others

Tools that work with other programs will be beneficial in the long run. Even a tool that promises to take care of all your partner platform needs should integrate with other tools for accessing historical data and to make the transition easier. But you may find that your partner sales require more than one suite of programs, so integration is essential.
Conclusion

Your channel partners are among your most important assets. They can be thought of as another appendage of your own sales team, working to bring in new leads and close deals. But because of their extended reach within the channel, they’re able to bring in prospects that your own sales team may not be able to find on its own.

Gone are the days of old-school partner relationship management. Static information dumps and outdated content libraries are a hindrance. The new approach includes partner sales acceleration. Leads are out there; you just need to identify them and inform them. Buyers are becoming smarter and are searching for their solutions provider. Your partner sales teams will just need the tools to inform these leads about why your solution is the best.
About Allbound

Allbound is an all-in-one partner relationship management platform that allows you to work seamlessly with your channel partners. While you can find many tools that have similar features and functions to Allbound, why piecemeal things together when you don’t have to?

REQUEST A DEMO