

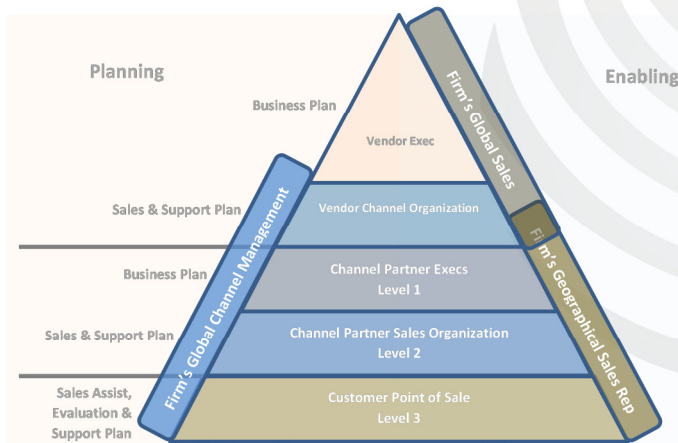
**Introduction**

If a firm globally is in an ‘emerging quadrant’ - defined by few partners and a low partner performance. The firm’s past successes would have been through a limited direct sales force, one or more key selling partners and through informal referrals from strategic relationships. As the firm grows it is natural to establish a channel program and seriously recruit indirect sales partners to gain traction in the market. Primary goal for the partnership program would be to achieve volume sales for their products and services. To meet these goals ideally, firm must be present with partners and customer references in geographies where growth is a possibility! This briefing note will focus on key suggestions for a firm’s Partner / Channel Management based on a review of best practices and our insights. We present a suggested approach after a review of best practices.

“we don’t have enough partners.....we don’t have the right partners”

**Suggested Partner Model**

A small firm would benefit from a single-tiered partner structure (i.e. direct partner relationship with firm) segmented by industry. Ideally these partners should use firm’s product or service to create value add to their



existing solutions and services. Commission on the sale price should be the commercial model. This approach provides an option for increased percentage or accelerators when certain volumes are reached and prevents price erosion due to multiple partners competing. Additionally, partners have more than a linear incentive to increase sales. The firm should clearly define remuneration for initial license sale and for recurring maintenance revenue. Partner

management should align with the existing stated goals – through a Partner Strategy, Partner Plan and Partner Management Structure. The firm should plan for a scalable partner channel with win-win conditions; the aim should be to enhance a partner’s desire to represent the firm’s products and solutions through incentives, marketing and sales training. Ensure that clear organizational structures, performance metrics and tiered response levels are provided to different levels of partner sales representation. Define and implement clear engagement, segmentation rules, non-exclusive territory and partner levels (Silver, Gold, Platinum). Starting with the global partner business strategy aligned with the firm’s global strategy, build out partner profiles that are required to support the global plan. Layout goals, policies, systems and processes with the intent of making it easy to do business with the firm.

**Key preparation:** *Partner Pack Intro – Firm’s profile, Product Brochures, Partner Pack Recruitment – Firm’s client profile and industry solutions, Partner Business Model, Partner Tracking Matrix – Define segments and marketing plans, partner levels, contracted percentages, maturity. Have an approved budget (for Information Packs, Recruitment, Partner Discussions – Contracting and Deal Closure)*

**SalesForceFunctionality Across the Partner Lifecycle**



**Partner Nurturing**

The firm could leverage the Partner Lifecycle as proposed by Salesforce PRM. Aligning the approach to this model –

**RECRUIT – Align sales cycle – Pre-requisite:** Publish the firm’s partner strategy document. Partner recruitment should be integrated into marketing/sales plan and activities by geography.



**Recruitment and onboarding – Pre-requisite:** Training strategy; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); contracts, sales modeling tools to forecast revenue recognition, support requirements, and budgets; sales tools; Market Development Fund (MDF) strategy and management system; Incentive strategy. Define the selection criteria, due diligence, application process and pre-contract reviews. Have a well laid out onboarding process that covers - Partner agreements, acceptance of joint business/co-branded marketing/MDF plans, rules of engagement/disengagement, business review guides that facilitate corrective action and compliance, training and certification plan, forecasting system and funnel review process, lead registration/approval rules of engagement, loyalty and tiered growth path.

**MARKET & SELL - Loyalty and Effectiveness – Pre-requisite:** Training plan; Partner Portal with tiered access to eLearning, Marketing, Solution and Pricing documents; Deal/lead management process and sales model implemented. Define how partners ramp up and get certified, including new hires. Launch administrative support (deal desk, contract desk, pipeline management); education and training (sales, pre-Sales, consulting and support, could be categorized as – Base/Silver, Preferred/Gold and Expert/Platinum based on partner tier); effective two way communication (Regional Partner Council) and joint marketing (firm to create market awareness, balance/focus discussions, MDF). Complete work process for lead registrations (avoidance of channel conflicts, mechanisms to integrate CRM data used by partner), incentive point accumulation and awards. **MEASURE - Pipeline, Forecasting, Analytics and Market Penetration – Pre-requisite:** Effective partner relationship management, MDF utilization, closure of deals in pipeline, integrated marketing and sales activities, strong and regular communication channels. Define the yearly partner events with categories of partner performance that get rewarded. Have a live pipeline view of all opportunities. A working MDF program that facilitates co-branded marketing. Gather continuous feedback and fine tune the model.

**Key preparation:** Partner Pack Final Closure – Partner Nurturing Information, Resource Investment expectations and commitments, Partner Pack Onboarding – Agreement. Have an approved budget for classroom & e-Learning, Webinar, Boot Camp, Certification, Continuous communication campaigns and Admin Desk