

Four Steps to Creating the Best Sales Channel

Although some of the steps below may seem difficult in your current environment, press on with these ideas and they'll become easier and easier... and your success will become greater and greater!

1. Identify the Top 20%.

You can't make a huge difference with all your channel partners. The math doesn't work that way, and it shouldn't. For your region to be optimal, you need the bottom 80% finding the opportunities on their own to round out coverage; and the top 20% to proactively identify the major accounts and opportunities. The secret is to identify the top 20% and treat them differently. It's not fair, but it's effective. What can you do with them? Check out the next three ideas.

2. Pursue specific end-user accounts together.

Working with your Top 20%, invest time with each sales person. Identify a list of targeted end-user accounts that will bring you and your partner a ton of good business. Do your best to get them in the door. Approach these accounts in a synchronized manner. "You personally call on facilities, and I'll have our inside sales team calling on IT." Every single time you're in the area, discuss these accounts with your sales partners. While you're targeting these few large accounts, your channel partners will use the same strategies and massaging to get in the door of their other accounts.

3. Deliver sales training.

No, not training on the differentiators of your product vs. your competition. I mean real sales training. How to schedule appointments. How to demo your solution. What questions to ask during the discovery phase. Etc. Etc. If you don't have the confidence to teach these skills, then you need to acquire it – this idea is that much of a difference-maker. Think about the amount of channel sales people in your region that are representing you every day. If you can make them 10% better at their jobs, I promise that the results from their improvement will be far better than that.

4. Become a content machine.

Bring a different message every quarter to your channel partners. Give them the content they need to become a difference with their end-user customers. For example, next quarter, teach them how to demo the reporting features of your system and give them the tools to deliver the demo to their customers. The following quarter, give them a white paper about your technology and teach them how to present it to their end-user customers. The biggest need your partners have is content. They need content. You have content. Bring it to them. Help them get in the doors and make an impact with their prospects and customers with excellent content ... and they'll never forget it.