

POWERING PARTNER PERFORMANCE THROUGH CHANNEL TRAINING

Train for Gain: How to get the most
from your partner networks



docebo[®]

Copyright © 2016 Docebo - All rights reserved. To contact Docebo, please visit: www.docebo.com



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 The Power of Partner Channels

2 Challenges

Protecting the Brand

Maintaining Partner Channel Engagement

Managing Growing Networks Efficiently

Preventing Partner Conflicts

Evaluating Partner Success

3 Best Practices for Partner Channel Success

4 Learning Tech Solutions

5 The Right LMS for Channel Partner Enablement

6 Sources





CHAPTER 1

THE POWER OF PARTNER CHANNELS

Partner channels offer organizations a way to increase the reach of a product or service without investing heavily in the sales effort. Instead of building a new sales team, with all the added cost that brings, organizations can partner with like-minded companies to sell their product or service.

A website design software company might offer integrations with a social media tool and create a partner channel to benefit both of them, for example. Each of their clients might need solutions that could be offered by one of the channel partners. Because they don't compete on the solutions they offer, it makes sense to the partner.

Despite the potential, many organizations aren't leveraging the full power of partner channels because of the array of challenges that come with the practice.



80%

**NEARLY 80% OF COMPANIES USE PARTNER CHANNELS
TO GENERATE INCOME**



65%

**65% OF CMOS FEEL UNPREPARED
TO DEAL WITH CHANNEL GROWTH**

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net>

Partner Channel members face their own roadblocks as well, but only the parent organization can solve these problems.



Source: What are the biggest challenges and struggles channel partners encounter when working with their vendor



CHALLENGES

PROTECTING THE BRAND

Partner channels need the right knowledge, materials, skills and processes to be good brand ambassadors. This can be difficult because of the added challenges partner channels can bring. Channel partners can be spread amongst hundreds of organizations across the globe. Channel training and communications needs to be able to bridge cultural and language divides. Partner channels need product knowledge, as well as customer service and sales training to ensure a good customer experience. Bad customer experiences with channel members will mainly reflect poorly on the parent organization.

MAINTAINING PARTNER CHANNEL ENGAGEMENT

Organizations can't simply deliver one-time training and expect the partnership to move smoothly. Channel partners need marketing material, product training and incentives to be motivated to move partner products. Without the right knowledge and incentives, channel partners will mention your product if it comes up but they won't take the extra effort to make a sale.

MANAGING GROWING NETWORKS EFFICIENTLY

Managing partner channels across the globe can be a difficult and expensive task. Businesses need to stay on top of channel partner growth, lead generation and registration, training and many other aspects of the relationship. Without the right systems in place, a partnership is doomed.

PREVENTING PARTNER CONFLICTS

With multiple partner channels selling the same products, conflicts are inevitable without the right procedures in place. Organizations need to prevent conflicts and unnecessary competition amongst channel partners. They also need clear plans for when problems slip through the preventive net. Channel partners and parent organization sales teams could be affected by channel conflicts. The client is caught in the middle, risking a bad customer experience.

EVALUATING PARTNER SUCCESS

Just like any aspect of sales, partner channels need to be continually evaluated to ensure success. Organizations need robust data delivered in a useable format to find weaknesses within the sales, marketing, or customer support chains. Partner channels aren't just selling a product, they are acting as brand ambassadors for the parent organization. Low numbers are a symptom of a larger problem: Without the right data, poor customer experiences could be affecting the parent brand without their knowledge.



BEST PRACTICES FOR PARTNER CHANNEL SUCCESS

STRONG ONBOARDING FOR EARLY ENGAGEMENT

A healthy onboarding process can get new hires up to their best potential quickly and efficiently. The same principal applies to partner channels. A strong channel partner onboarding effort will allow partners to create unique value propositions for their customers and provide a solid return on investment. This early engagement will also help create a strong relationship and help retain and acquire new partners. Partner channel onboarding programs should mirror the parent organization's onboarding, while keeping in mind regional and cultural differences.

LET THE EXPERTS HELP

Companies have internal experts that have worked hard to learn every detail of the products and services they are selling. Allowing partner channels to use this knowledge can help ensure brand cohesiveness and keep engagement up. Give channel partners the opportunity to connect with product managers or product marketing departments to ensure they are learning from the experts who know the product's value propositions. Don't just limit this help to product knowledge. Customer success and sales experts can also be tapped for their skills and knowledge.

TAILOR TRAINING TOWARDS THE MARKET

Training material should be tailored towards the channel partners market culture, language and dialect. Consider the infrastructure where channel partners are located as well. Access to training may be limited by internet bandwidth and computer access. Ensuring training material can be utilized by mobile devices will increase the usability.

Smart phones and tablets are much cheaper than traditional desktop and laptop computers. Ensuring mobile usability will increase the likelihood training can be consumed in less technologically advanced markets.

INTEGRATIONS FOR BETTER RELATIONS

Make sure all partner shared systems can communicate easily and exchange reliable data for evaluation. Single sign-on (SSO) is a must-have for a great administrator and user experience. The more difficult the relationship is for partner channels, the more likely they are to ignore the partnership.

INCENTIVIZE AND REWARD SUCCESS

Partner channels should be motivated and rewarded as early as possible to keep engagement up. Don't just incentivize sales. Begin an engaging relationship, starting with the onboarding process. Rewarding training completion and certifications will ensure partner channels will be properly trained from the beginning of the relationship.

PREPARE FOR (AND PREVENT) CHANNEL CONFLICTS

Develop a partner deal registration system and define rules of engagement early in the partnership to reduce the chance of conflicts. Partner management software can aid these efforts. Reinforce the rules with certifications and training offered through an learning management system (LMS).

MONITOR SALES AND TRAINING RESULTS TOGETHER

Partner channels, like any aspect of business, need to be analyzed constantly. The right tools can allow partner channels to be watched remotely and managed with little to no hands-on management. If a partner channel is underselling, sales data can be compared to training data to look for potential weaknesses.





LEARNING TECH SOLUTIONS

An LMS can solve many of the problems faced by channel partnerships. If your partner training program can strike the delicate balance needed to educate your partners on your product and service while retaining your company's branding and culture, you can more closely align the experience of your sales partners to that of your employees and build a stronger network built on common goals and objectives.

WHITE LABELING

Use white labeling on all communication, marketing and training material to reinforce brand cohesion. Choose an LMS that offers customization features and give each partner their own portal that they can configure to suit their needs.

LEARNING FROM VARIETY

An LMS can deliver knowledge in a variety of ways to ensure every learner is supported. Back up instructor-led classroom training with online and mobile learning materials that can be accessed at the point of need. Formal training alone has a low retention rate when not paired with on-the-job training, so make sure partner channels get some hands-on experiences as well.

SOCIAL TOOLS UNLOCK KNOWLEDGE

Social tools can be utilized to unlock expert knowledge within the parent organization for channel partners. Channel partners can use message boards within an LMS to pose questions for industry experts. Peers can also answer questions and rate these answers to ensure only the best information is used.

INCENTIVIZE AND GAMIFY FOR GROWTH

Gamification and rewards can be a powerful tool to encourage partner channel engagement. A learning management system with gamification and automatic reward rules can simplify the task of incentivizing partner channels. Channel administrators can setup automatic rewards based on performance and use an LMS to monitor progress and distribute rewards.

AUTOMATE TRAINING

Automatic enrollment rules and certificates can reduce the time necessary to ensure proper training. An LMS can deliver training material to channel partners. Enrollment rules can be configured to ensure the right members receive the training they need. Certificates can ensure partners are properly trained before they begin representing the parent brand.

COMMUNICATION FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

LMS social tools can be a powerful resource for conflict prevention and resolution. Required courses within the LMS can be used to enforce rules of engagement. Partner deal registration systems can be explained with a course with required certification to ensure they know the rules.

MONITOR, EVALUATE AND REVISE

A robust learning management system can deliver analytical data that is mission critical to the channel's success. Sales data is only part of the equation. Sales data can only show how a partner channel is performing. It doesn't show the weaknesses within the partnership, but you can tie training data to sales data to paint a clearer picture of your relationship. A good LMS will provide this data across all training modalities, not just formal online learning environments.





THE RIGHT LMS FOR CHANNEL PARTNER ENABLEMENT

When choosing a learning management system for partner channel enablement, consider these five key challenges. An LMS doesn't just have to be a means for delivering training. It can be a powerful tool for simplifying complex business relationships.

MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE

Begin an engaging relationship with a strong onboarding process within the LMS. Use gamification and automatic rewards tools to create a hands-off incentivizing practice to keep channel partners engaged and motivated. With the right incentives, channel partners will do more than simply mention a parent product, they will sell it to boost their profits and commissions.

REINFORCE BRAND AWARENESS WITH TRAINING

Keep channel partners aware of product updates and brand culture with a variety of learning materials delivered in multiple ways. A healthy LMS will present opportunities for social and experiential learning to backup formal instructor-led training. White labeling across the LMS can also strengthen culture and brand awareness as well.

SIMPLIFY CHANNEL MANAGEMENT WITH AUTOMATIONS

An LMS should have integrations and automation tools that reduce the time investment with channel partners. Automatic enrollment rules, certifications and rewards can ensure channel partner members have the right training before they potentially misrepresent the parent brand. Less time spent managing the partner channel increases the likelihood of profitability. The LMS should also easily scale with your partner channel network.

COUNTER AND CONTROL CONFLICTS

Training within an LMS can reinforce rules of engagement for channel partners. The right training, backed up with on-the-job experiences can reduce the likelihood of potential customers being contacted by competing channel partners. Keeping communications channels open is key for a healthy partnership and a LMS can provide those tools.

ANALYZE FOR RESULTS

Training reporting data is paramount in determining weaknesses within a partner channel. Sales by channel partners is only part of the equation. Tying sales data with training data can provide a better understanding of return on channel investment (ROCI) and show weaknesses within the training.



SOURCES

1. [Four Keys to Success: Channel Enablement](#)
2. [What is Channel Enablement?](#)
3. [Best Practices in Enabling Reseller Channel Partners - \(Subscription Only\)](#)
4. [10 Channel Partner Problems](#)
5. [Docebo - Training Globally](#)
6. [Is Your Brand's Marketing Aligned with Your Channel Partners?](#)
7. [Dealing with Partner Channel Conflicts](#)
8. [State of Channel Partners](#)
9. [What Incentives do Partners Want?](#)

THE LMS YOUR PARTNERS WILL LOVE TO USE

Don't leave your partners without the right tools to represent your brand. **Docebo** supports **social** and **mobile learning** to ensure your partners are armed with the right training content, whenever they need it, with a full suite of **integrations** and **automation** tools to reduce your time investment while fostering stronger relationships. Meanwhile, **Docebo's** advanced reporting tools can help you prove and improve the return on channel investment.

See the Docebo learning management system in action!

REQUEST A DEMO



For more information, visit www.docebo.com



www.facebook.com/Docebo



twitter.com/docebo



www.linkedin.com/company/docebo-srl

docebo[®]

Copyright © 2016 Docebo - All rights reserved. To contact Docebo, please visit: www.docebo.com