



Seven Critical Factors for a Successful Partner Recruitment Program





It Doesn't Matter How Big or Small Your Channel Is

Chances are that once in a while you need to run partner recruitment campaigns—especially when you launch a new product or acquire a new company that your current channel is not equipped to sell. However, partner recruitment is not an easy task. We at ZINFI can help you with this or do it on your behalf either on a national level or globally by using our Channel Marketing Automation and concierge services.

Most vendors want to recruit channel partners who have marketing, sales and product capabilities in place to sell the vendors' specific set of products. Research statistics show that channel partners bringing in average revenues of between \$2 – 10 million carry products from anywhere between six and 40 vendors. So, for a partner to add another product to his portfolio, it is a major strategic decision that is never taken lightly. Vendors therefore need to be highly selective about the partners they select and what to do to make the engagement meaningful.

There are seven success parameters that we know to be critical to create a meaningful engagement with a prospective partner that leads to successful recruitment.

1. Know Your Partners

Channel marketing is about building repeatable motion, so if you already have a set of partners that are selling your product, the best thing to do is to understand what makes your best partners successful before embarking on **partner recruitment**. How? Well, you can do a simple survey using a Channel Marketing Automation platform, asking them what other products they sell, who their premier vendors are and what distinguishes them from the rest, and how much and what type of service they provide. Since the survey tool is part of your Channel Marketing Automation platform, the data collected remains yours, and you can use it over and over again as a basis for reaching out to the right targets.

2. Build Your Target List

Once you know your target partner profile, it is easy to build a list of companies to begin your **partner recruitment**. You can use LinkedIn, data.com and other data sources to find this information. We at ZINFI can also help you to build customized partner lists by using our Channel Marketing Automation platform, which connects—among other sources—to multiple social and database sites.

3. Create Your Message

Partner recruitment must engage your potential prospects. It requires a very specific business proposition that must answer three fundamental questions if a new partner is to engage:

- how would this solution help me differentiate my company in my market place
- how much investment would I have to make to sell this product
- how much revenue and profit would I make from an average transaction. If these three items are not answered clearly, then the rest of the channel program from rewards and rebates to MDF and more will not be enough to engage a prospective partner

4. Make It A Yearly Goal

Most often vendors run a **partner recruitment** campaign for three to six months and then stop. A short-term campaign is rarely effective. But if you take a long-term approach, and continue to reach out over 12 months to a targeted set of partners with specific messages, engage them into multiple conversation and help them understand how they can differentiate and make money, you will start seeing returns from the campaign. This may occur anywhere from three to six months down the road, but be prepared for a longer haul.

5. Make Ramp Up Easy

Maybe your partner tiers have many qualification criteria, multiple product certification requirements, complex rebate structures and more. This is not productive. The best way to accelerate **partner recruitment** is to simplify. The more the new partner has to do to sell the first product, less they will actually sell. So, while it is possible to induce many new partners to quickly fill out a form to join your program, if the road to selling takes too many steps you will lose the opportunity for any real engagement. Making it easier for a new partner to learn how to sell and support a single product will help you accelerate sales out. After that you can broaden the relationship by engaging the partner with other products and services.

6. Stop Calling If They Say No

During your **partner recruitment** effort, if you have come across an organization who makes it clear they don't think your product is a good fit for them, then please don't keep calling them. You cannot convince a partner to carry a new product if they don't want to. They first have to be interested in the new category; then you have to make a case for them to partner up with you in particular. You can save a lot of time by focusing on those partners who express interest, even if they don't yet know how to start selling your products, rather than waste efforts chasing established partners who sell competitive products and hoping they will switch. They won't, and even if they eventually did, your effort probably won't be worthwhile.

7. Give Them Leads

Selling a technically complex product takes a lot of hard work to understand, both from sales and a technical perspective and since most partners do not have adequate marketing resources, it is unrealistic to expect that a newly recruited partner would be able to effectively market a product that they have only just learnt how to sell. So don't leave them hanging out to dry: give them a **Channel Marketing Automation** platform with preconfigured campaigns that they can run in a few clicks.

ZINFI's **Partner Relationship Management (PRM)** platform can provide you with a complete integrated approach in partner recruitment, partner training, multi-partner lead generation and management capabilities. ZINFI's marketing concierge services can help onboard your new partners and also help them to improve their marketing efforts.

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