



How to Make Your **Partner Portal** More Partner-Friendly



Guaranteed to see substantial improvements in partner engagement and satisfaction

At **ZINFI**, we work for major global brands and every day help thousands of their channel partners improve productivity. This is not as straightforward as it might be. One of the main complaints we hear constantly from channel partners is how hard it is to use most vendors' **partner portals**. Yes, a few are great, but most partner portals are complex to understand. When we ask partners what they would like to see in an ideal partner portal, the five things we consistently hear are not surprising, but somehow only rarely delivered:

// The great news is that you now have a choice of best-in-class partner portal content management systems that you can deploy to migrate your partner portal piece by piece. //



1. Ease of navigation –

Far too frequently, vendors use cool marketing lingo that is utterly confusing. Why use non-specific terms like “engage” or “excite” about your channel process steps when you can use simple, unmistakable words like “welcome”, “join”, “on-board” or “train”. Calling a spade a spade is the first step in simplifying navigation in your partner portal. Also, categorizing your partner portal by straightforward functional areas like sales, marketing, technical or incentives is logical and doesn’t require an effort to understand. Being too cool isn’t clever. Ease of navigation starts with making things easy to grasp.

2. Mobile access–

More than two-thirds of the partners consistently access a partner portal while they are away from their desk. So, while it is easy to make your portal mobile-compatible, don’t forget to make the rest of your portal smartphone- or tablet- You don’t have to go all the way in building apps for your portal. Many vendors have gone far down the app route, and it has turned out to be a pretty wasted investment, as very few partners click through all the apps. So, while apps can work as a Band-Aid to push out some news streams, events, training, etc., don’t get bogged down: focusing on the broader issue of easy mobile access is the key.

3. Personalization –

Your partners must be able to pick and chose the content they want to see in your partner portal. To start with, the portal should allow partners to filter out content that is not relevant – by region, country, or partner tier type using content tagging, but partner portals should also provide focused content to specific groups of partners by function, e.g. sales, marketing, or technical. The more streamlined the information in your portal, the easier it will be for your partners to use. At ZINFI we see that more than 70% of vendors are still using a flat, or non-targeted content profile in their partner portals, which is overwhelming for most partners.

4. Simplifying promotions –

Vendors with multiple product lines are constantly running a wide variety of promotions via their partner portal. However, if the partner doesn’t see a logical connection to the vendor initiatives, and furthermore if the promotions are not related to the differing maturity stages of the partner, then you are anesthetizing the channel with an avalanche of information that has nothing to do with them.

5. Tracking metrics –

We are now in the age of content marketing. This means that it is the value your partner portal brings to the channel is dependent on your understanding of what content is useful to specific groups of partners, and what isn’t. Yes, you need a dynamic **partner portal content management** capability, without which you cannot serve up the right content to the right partner. For a vendor with global reach, this may require an incremental investment of a few thousand dollars per month, but within a few months you are going to reap significant benefit from your partner base by stimulating them to self-educate, improve their knowledge and manage better – all because you will be able to identify how to help them based on data, rather than on opinions or anecdotal feedback.

The great news is that you now have a choice of best-in-class partner portal content management systems that you can deploy to migrate your partner portal piece by piece. This doesn’t need to be a multi-year program, nor does it need to be one mammoth effort. If you take a structured approach, consecutively by functional area, you can migrate your portal gradually. Quarter by quarter, you can take one function of your organization, undertake training and move all of the relevant content over. If you do that over a period of a year you can migrate pretty much your entire portal without undue complexity. As you do this, you are guaranteed to see substantial improvements in **partner engagement** and satisfaction with your partner portal, which in the end will drive more revenue at a lower cost.



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