

Why **Partner Relationship Management** (PRM) Fails Most of the Time



Continuous improvement can keep your partner relationship management (PRM) program fresh and relevant.

Over the past few years there has been a lot of excitement about **partner relationship management** (PRM) process development and automation. However, this segment hasn't really grown as fast as the marketing automation platform (MAP) or customer relationship management (CRM) segments. What is holding back the growth in deployment of partner relationship management (PRM) automation? Here are some key factors that present barriers to deployment and are frequent causes of failure:

// *By making appropriate investments in a channel automation program that addresses the requirements for Unified Channel Management, an organization can not only build a state-of-the-art partner relationship management (PRM) program, but also drives top and bottom line success in a very logical and sequential way.*



1. Short-term focus

Most channel organizations are busy managing activities by the quarter, and typically very few dollars are invested in mapping channel processes that require redesign and redevelopment to build out a state-of-the-art partner relationship management (PRM) infrastructure. The channel is a great way to go to market, but when the market changes (as it inevitably does) and organizations fail to remap their channel infrastructure accordingly, they struggle to stay relevant. We have seen this repeatedly over the years across multiple Fortune 1000 customers. Those who are adaptive and constantly redesigning their channel—not just quarterly, but whenever necessary and in anticipation of opportunities—tend to outperform those who are chasing market evolution.

2. Inadequate resources

It is one thing to remap a go-to-market model—e.g., by adding an OEM channel to sell via OEMs or adding franchises to increase reach—but without significant investment and patience these activities really don't produce results. As a result, most deployments of partner relationship management (PRM) automation tend to be underfunded and underdeveloped. This leads to frustration within the channel sales and support organization and, of course, a poor partner experience.

3. Lack of a unified approach

The channel is a complex way to go to market. While it's true that having a robust channel can not only increase reach but also provide a huge competitive edge, it takes time to develop relationships and competencies to truly be a channel leader. This is where a unified approach to partner relationship management (PRM) comes in. Organizations need to think carefully about how to set up **partner onboarding, training, enablement** and management by deploying end-to-end process steps, most of which should be fully automated to reduce variability and cost of operations. Having a unified approach also increases the self-service nature of the engagement, which not only reduces operating costs but also significantly increases partner satisfaction.

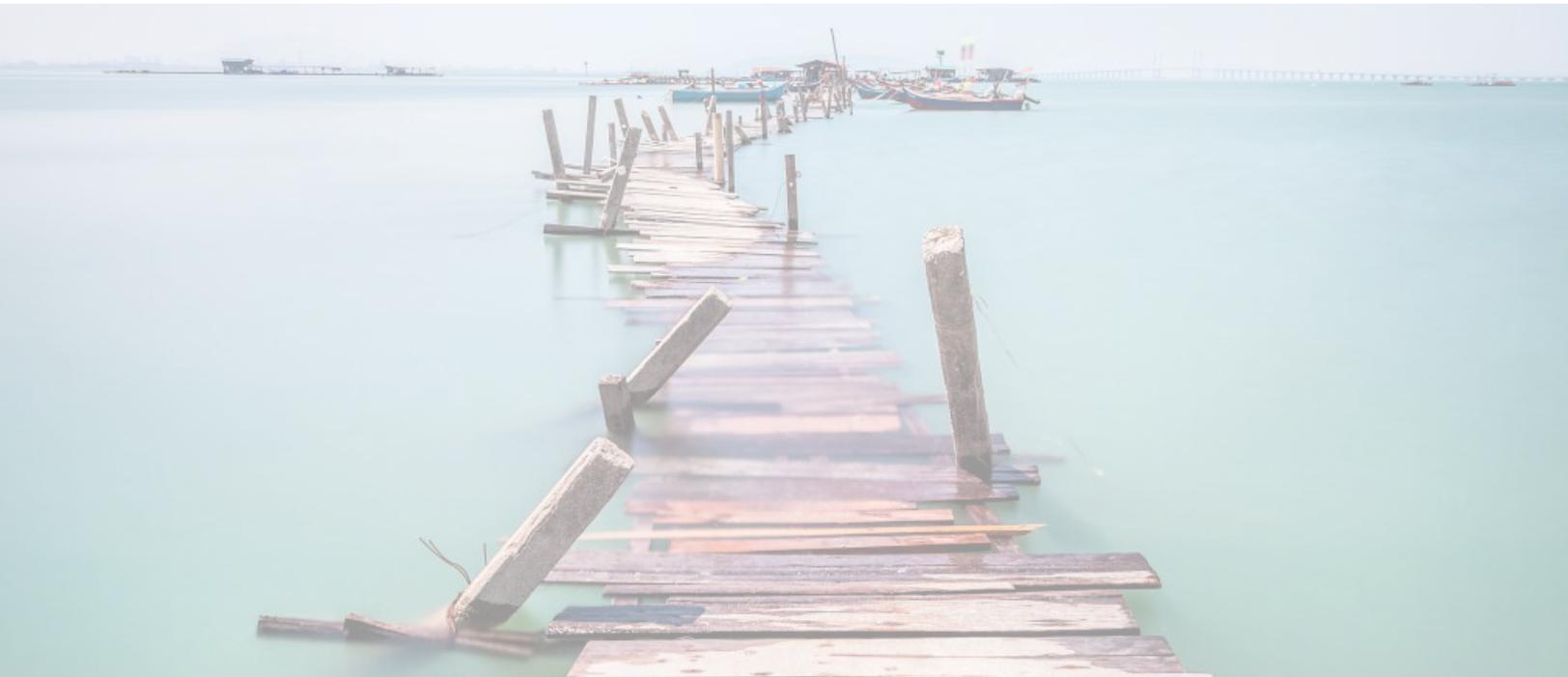
4. Homegrown automation

Most organizations today have some way to automate their partner relationship management (PRM) activities. Too often, however, automation is achieved by using SharePoint or some other portal as a primary interface with a document library, **deal registration** and other homegrown applications tied to partner training, **incentives management** and so on. The total cost of ownership (TCO) for patchwork arrangements like these tends to be significantly higher than for the purpose-built partner relationship management (PRM) automation platforms like ZINFI and others provide today.

5. Lack of simplification

We have talked about the importance of simplicity and ease of use in many previous articles. Too often a channel program gets bloated with archaic **partner recruitment** policies, training, incentives and **demand generation programs**. Premier channel organizations systematically revamp their partner relationship management (PRM) initiatives to eliminate redundant and confusing programs and process steps. This is essential for keeping partner relationship management (PRM) fresh and relevant to the partner base. Keeping things simple also reduces costs and increases transaction velocities substantially.

In summary, a thoughtful approach with a passion for continuous improvement can keep your partner relationship management (PRM) program fresh and relevant to the partner base. However, to address the ever-changing needs of a dynamic channel, it is essential to invest in an appropriate automation platform that allows organizations selling through the channel to quickly redesign and redeploy process steps. These new steps should be fully automated and end-to-end, and organizations will need to make partners aware of the changes by deploying various outbound automation and training tools. By making appropriate investments in a channel automation program that addresses the requirements for **Unified Channel Management**, an organization can not only build a state-of-the-art partner relationship management (PRM) program, but also drive top and bottom line success in a very logical and sequential way.



www.zinfo.com

Contact Us

AMERICAS

sales.noram@zinfitech.com
6200 Stoneridge Mall Road, Suite 300
Pleasanton, CA 94588
United States of America

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

sales.emea@zinfitech.com
Davidson House
Forbury Square, Reading
RG1 3EU, United Kingdom

ASIA PACIFIC

sales.ap@zinfitech.com
3 Temasek Avenue
#21-00 Centennial Tower
Singapore 039190