



BENEFITS



6 Business Benefits of Channel Marketing Automation

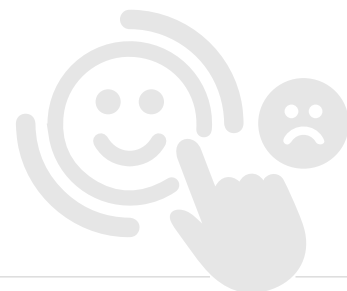


A channel marketing automation platform can help substantially to increase partner satisfaction and partner engagement

Based on a recent estimate, we believe about 300 or so enterprises have deployed some level of **channel marketing automation**, and most of these companies have quickly realized a substantial benefit from these investments. If you're selling through an organization and do not have some level of automation in place, chances are your channel marketing processes are quite antiquated and require substantial upgrades to stay relevant to your partner base. Certainly you can address this by creating homegrown tools, but before you continue to invest further in that direction, and as you look at the year ahead you should seriously consider some of the options that are available in the marketplace for channel marketing automation.

// *There are some of the core benefits that will have a direct impact on your own internal business processes. Increasing your overall revenue and return on marketing investment on a global scale as you deploy various modules in a controlled fashion.*

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In other posts we have discussed in a great degree of detail some of the core features and functionalities of channel marketing automation, but in this article we're going to focus primarily on the business benefits that you can derive by deploying such a platform. A typical channel marketing automation platform requires an investment of about \$100,000 per year. However, when you compare that figure to the total return on investment, the benefits are really quite substantial. We will discuss those ROI-related benefits in greater degree detail throughout this article.

- **Efficiency of deployment:** Speaking of business benefits, one of the most important aspects of channel marketing automation's impact on an organization is improvement in efficiency—how fast you can get things done and how you can do more with less. When it comes to channel marketing automation, you're primarily trying to manage a few core activities—for example, [lead management and distribution](#), [campaign asset management](#), [co-branding](#) and ROI tracking. It is easier for you to make that happen for hundreds and thousands of partners if you have an automation platform in place. If you don't have one today, chances are you're managing everything via e-mail and your partners have to download marketing content, and then they have to co-brand, and then they have to go educate prospects using their own individual platforms. A properly designed and configured channel marketing platform can integrate these processes, and dramatically impact your efficiency and how you enable your partners to market.
- **Visibility of partner engagement:** Today, if you are offering various types of campaign kits through your partner portal for your partners to download, co-brand offline and market using their own individual systems, you have no visibility into the impact those assets and campaigns are having within the partner base. If, however, you have a channel marketing automation platform in place, you will have complete visibility: how many emails are going out, how end customers are responding

to certain assets, how your social media syndication is working, how your web content is working, how effective the events are in terms of driving leads and creating pipeline, and so on. Having that information represents a huge step forward for you in gaining control of the partner marketing process, and that level of visibility empowers you as you try to determine the right level of investment and as you continue to build new campaigns assets and distribute them to your partners.

- **Control of brand promise:** A typical channel marketing automation platform will give you substantial control of your brand image and presence through your partner network. If you allow a partner to download an asset and co-brand it offline, you have no way of controlling what will happen to it. Maybe a brand image will get distorted, or maybe something will get added that is not in alignment with your core brand values. Maybe partners will send something by mistake that doesn't truly represent your company. However, if you have a channel marketing automation platform in place, you can maintain complete control over how these assets are distributed.
- **Speed of execution:** Today, we live in a hypercompetitive world. The sooner we get information out to the end buyer, the more likely that lead generation and sales closure will happen. However, if you are using a manual, antiquated and patchwork process for distributing assets and leads to partners via Excel or a partner portal, it is not physically possible for you to move quickly. On the other hand, deploying channel marketing automation will help substantially in your efforts to distribute content efficiently, track progress and replicate results across your partner base around the world— and this will happen literally in hours and days versus months and quarters. This ramp-up in the speed of execution is a huge competitive advantage for your sales and marketing initiatives, and it allows you to quickly build your entire channel program forward.

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- **Cost savings and ROI:** Because the process of channel marketing is highly automated when you use a properly configured platform, and because you are basically uploading the same assets that you uploaded without the platform in place, when you make an investment on the order of \$100,000 per year you will save tremendously on headcount-related efforts, and you can then redeploy those resources in helping partners, [training partners](#), supporting deals and other activities. This is where a properly designed and configured channel marketing automation platform not only saves you money, but also accelerates growth. So while it is true you have to make an upfront investment, it's also true that we have repeatedly seen vendors realize returns on this investment in a three- to six-month time frame after deployment.
- **Increase in partner satisfaction:** We have repeatedly seen that as a properly configured channel marketing automation platform is rolled out, partner utilization of the platform begins increasing immediately and partners start engaging with the vendor in a lot more focused way. Partners are better informed, and vendors are able to more effectively gain mindshare and build a better relationship. So overall, a channel marketing automation platform not only makes your internal processes more efficient but also drives partner satisfaction substantially.

As you can tell, there are substantial business benefits to deploying channel marketing automation: You manage the partner relationship more efficiently, gain much better visibility and control over the relationship, speed up the education and training process and, of course, save money. These are some of the core benefits that will have a direct impact on your own internal business processes. In addition to that, however, a channel marketing automation platform can help substantially to increase partner satisfaction and partner engagement, ultimately increasing your overall revenue and return on marketing investment on a global scale as you deploy various modules in a controlled fashion.



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