



7 Ways to Use **PRM Software** to Enhance Ease of Doing Business



Evaluate your channel programs, policies and people, systematically. Also carefully evaluate the PRM software that you are using—or should be using—to move your channel into the digital age.

Selling via an indirect sales channel is never easy, especially if you are trying to do it at a global level with multiple product lines catering to all kinds of verticals. The complexity of managing such a channel can be overwhelming, and that complexity can also make it really hard for partners to do business with the vendor. This is where purpose-built **partner relationship management** (PRM) software can help. In this article, we will explore how **PRM software** can significantly enhance the ease of doing business for a vendor's partner base.

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Before we discuss the benefits of PRM software, however, let's explore some of the core challenges partners face as they do business with a vendor selling through the channel.

- 1. Complex program and partner relationship management requirements** – Most vendors selling through the channel have built their channel program over the years, and the cost of change and/or the fear of change have prevented vendors from simplifying their channel programs. The combination of program complexity, a patchwork of partner portal applications, and a lack of purpose-built PRM software can make doing business very complex.
- 2. The portal is not mobile-friendly** – The partner portal is the first and last handshake a partner has with the vendor. However, if you are not using purpose-built PRM software, it's likely your portal is not fully mobile-responsive and the patchwork of applications you use to manage your partner relationships is really hard to navigate via a mobile interface. This is a critical hurdle that partners must struggle to overcome every time they log on.
- 3. Hard-to-find content** – A primary purpose of your partner portal is to allow your partners to self-serve and access the many vendor-provided channel programs that are in place without calling the vendor for assistance. Without a purpose-built partner portal powered by world class PRM software, however, searching for and finding relevant marketing assets, programs, sales materials and other content can be very difficult.
- 4. Complicated navigation** – If your partner portal has evolved over the years and has become a patched-up quilt of discrete applications, chances are most of the applications (partner contracts, **training, incentives, deal registrations**, etc.) come from different vendors and there is little navigational consistency. The multiplicity of interfaces can be downright confusing. This is where purpose-built PRM software that

encompasses end-to-end channel management can make a big difference, providing users with a clean, consistent, logical interface that remains the same wherever they are within the portal.

- 5. Lack of dynamic alerts** – Keeping partners informed in a way that is useful to them is critical. That's why partners need to be able to configure and manage alerts for their own unique purposes—whether the alerts have to do with deal registration or incentives approval or training certification expirations. Unfortunately, most partner portals do not allow this to happen. If you deploy purpose-built PRM software, however, you can absolutely overcome this issue and enable partners to manage their alert-based workflows much better and faster.

All in all, doing business is hard, even frustrating, for your partners if have not properly deployed and configured PRM software to power your partner portal and programs. So now let's explore in more detail how state-of-the-art PRM software can help your partners overcome these challenges.

- 1. Streamline partner onboarding** – Partner engagement starts with the recruitment of new partners into current programs and existing partners into new programs. Properly built PRM software can significantly augment and automate the **partner onboarding** process.
- 2. Make agreement management easy** – The first step in getting a partner onboarded is signing agreements. For many organizations, this is a painstaking, manual process that is difficult to keep track of. However, when a vendor deploys state-of-the-art PRM software, the agreement management process can be automated and streamlined, thereby increasing partner satisfaction substantially.
- 3. Dynamic business planning** – Business planning is a very important activity for mid-market and enterprise-level partners, as well as large-scale

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dealers and wholesalers. Again, for many of today's organizations this is still a manual process, and there is no automated way to track performance. Deploying a dynamic business planning module from a reputable PRM software vendor can significantly streamline the planning process and make tracking easy and efficient.

4. **Integrated demand generation** – **Demand generation** is a core area where vendors have a strong incentive to enable partners. Today, most vendors lacking state-of-the-art PRM software must provide co-branded asset capabilities via slow, awkward workarounds like downloadable ZIP files. Best-in-class PRM software will provide integrated demand generation capabilities (tools and tactics) right out of the box.
5. **Make incentive management easy** – We have all heard the cliché: “sales people are coin-operated.” Well, there is a reason the channel is called a reseller channel, because it is primarily

made up of sales people. Yes, there are some marketers involved, but most channel partners are resellers, including big box retailers. They can push vendor-branded content, but are rarely able to generate excitement on their own. However, with the right tools, a partner's sales organization can be incentivized properly to align partner and vendor goals and drive results. Using state-of-the-art PRM software, a vendor can automate this process, track results and adjust programs based on real-time business intelligence.

6. **Creative competition** – Making it easy for partners to do business is a very important aspect of any channel program, but making it fun is also important. State-of-the-art PRM software should provide gamification features such as leader boards across various functions and programs to make competing with other individuals and partner organizations and achieving success enjoyable.
7. **Provide intelligence** – Knowing what works and why it works is incredibly important for a channel program to grow and succeed. However, without the right PRM software it is almost impossible to figure out the **keys to success** and make correlations between investments and returns—something all channel professionals want.

As you can see from this summary, running a large, diverse channel can be very challenging, but making it perform at a higher level is even harder. However, there is hope. There are several companies, like **ZINFI**, who provide state-of-the-art PRM software that can change how you interact with your channel overnight with very little investment. Breaking even and even doubling your investment dollars typically happens not in months or years, but in days. If you are constantly hearing from your channel that it is hard to do business with you...yes, be sure to systematically evaluate your channel programs, policies and people, but also make sure that you carefully evaluate the PRM software you are using—or should be using—to move your channel into the digital age.

If you want to learn more, please go to zinfi.com.



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