



How to Conduct Multi-Partner Business Planning with **PRM Software**



Build a starter plan, validate it with a partner, then roll it out through the channel management infrastructure and PRM software.

I had a boss who used to say all the time, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." Along the same lines, Dwight Eisenhower once said, "A plan is nothing, but planning is everything." Both of these statements point to the fundamental idea that success can only happen when you visualize it clearly and then act towards making it happen. This is certainly true when it comes to multi-partner business planning, and PRM software can make a big difference in that process.

// The purpose here is not to feed the PRM software simply to create pretty plans with graphs and charts showing targets that can never be realized, but to document via automation the specific components of the plan for transparency and visibility, and to be able to track results in real time. //



// *All this is possible when we accept the premise that a plan is nothing, but planning is everything. When one quarter ends, another quarter begins. The planning never stops.* //

We all know business planning is not easy, particularly when you try to do it a few times a year with channel partners who are all terribly busy. However, it can be done. We at ZINFI see it being done in many organizations we support today. The secret of success is to have several key components in place from the beginning. Perhaps the most critical component is a planning automation capability provided by **PRM software**. But before we go into more detail about PRM software, let's spend a few minutes discussing what the core components of a business plan with a channel partner may look like, and how to make the planning process work for you.

For a business plan to be comprehensive, it needs to answer three basic questions: Is it real? Can we win? Will it be worth it? The word "we" collectively represents the vendor and the partner organization, and in this article I will refer to this as a business planning team. For the planning team to be able to determine whether the market opportunity is real or not, it is essential for both the vendor and the partner to engage in a conversation about the vertical in question, customer pain points and competitive scenarios in a very clear and concise way. State-of-the-art PRM software should be the vehicle for capturing and clarifying these inputs by addressing market size, specific solution composition, pricing requirements, and potential deal size and volumes.

When it comes to figuring out how to win, the plan needs to clearly address marketing, sales, and technical training and competencies. It is essential that the business plan provide an estimate of the amount of resources (people and program funding) that will be required to develop, sustain and grow to a target level of revenue. Planners will need to take into account the vendor solution as well as partners' capabilities. Again, PRM software can be a critical tool to capture these variables in a dynamic fashion.

Finally, at the end of the day a transaction—or set of transactions—that brings in new opportunities has to be financially worthwhile for both parties involved. The success metrics tied to margin and profitability need to be clear. Both revenue and profit targets, including margins a partner would earn for attaining certain metrics, need to be spelled out explicitly. Best-in-class PRM software can not only capture this in a clear format, but also create a metric-based management framework for execution.

Once a specific plan has been developed with a channel partner and then applied to other partners to truly scale the approach substantially through the channel, it is essential to confirm the plan is reality-based and the team is positioned to win for a worthwhile victory. Nothing is more demoralizing when a team fails to achieve its target. The purpose here is not to feed the PRM software simply to create pretty plans with graphs and charts showing targets that can never be realized, but to document via automation the specific components of the plan for transparency and visibility, and to be able to track results in real time.

If your organization is planning to roll out **multi-partner business planning** to drive a certain product category or program or initiative, you need to take the right approach: Build a starter plan, validate it with a partner, then roll it out through the channel management infrastructure and PRM software.

This formal approach can be foundational in helping your channel network visualize the future and attain success through real-time execution. All this is possible when we accept the premise that a plan is nothing, but planning is everything. When one quarter ends, another quarter begins. The planning never stops.



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