



Key Requirements for a **Channel Marketing Platform**

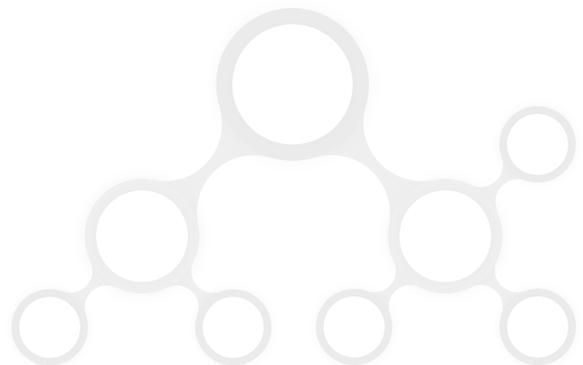


What makes a channel marketing platform successful

Marketing to and through a channel partner network is a very important capability all channel organization should have. However, in order to make sure you are successful with your partner activities, you need to make sure your channel marketing platform has a few core capabilities. In this article we will explore specifically what makes a **channel marketing platform** successful.

But first, let's step back for a second and think about the purpose of a channel partner network. It's obvious, right? We have a partner network because we know we cannot sell directly to all of our customers. We use a channel partner network to distribute and sell our products. Well, that's all well and good, but to achieve that objective you need a whole bunch of capabilities in place, including a channel program, **partner training**, certification, incentives and many more things. At the core of all of these activities is partner marketing—helping a channel partner generate leads. This is where a channel marketing platform comes in.

// To do selling through a network of channel partners, you really need a channel marketing platform, and that platform must have robust capabilities tied to lead management, digital through-partner marketing and incentive management. //



// So, many of these vendors have technology platforms that are already obsolete and fail to address key requirements. In this article, we will help you figure out which core capabilities you need for your channel marketing platform to be effective and successful. //

The existence of channel marketing platforms is a relatively new phenomenon. Most vendors providing channel marketing platforms in this category, like ZINFI, have been around for only about a decade. Even so, many of these vendors have technology platforms that are already obsolete and fail to address key requirements. In this article, we will help you figure out which core capabilities you need for your channel marketing platform to be effective and successful.

First, your channel marketing platform must have great lead management capability. Why? Well, as we stated earlier, the purpose of a channel is to generate sales for an organization, and to do so there has to be a very robust **lead management** program in place. In most companies, there is some sort of ad hoc program for lead generation in place, but a state-of-the-art channel marketing platform can establish a formal, automated, repeatable process that will significantly improve your partner's lead generation, as well as your review and approval capabilities.

Second, your channel marketing platform should be able to enable your partners to run various types of

campaigns. You should be able to easily upload campaign assets and track utilization and progress. Your channel marketing platform should be able to provide a set of core digital and analog marketing tools, such as **search, social, email, events, microsites,** and **syndication**—and, of course, a fully capable analytics platform to provide insight into what's working and what's not.

Finally, your channel marketing platform must have a robust **incentives management** capability so that you can not only reward partners for doing the right things the right way, but also link your incentive programs to specific campaigns to make sure you are developing a performance-based management system that is aligned with your objectives.

If you are currently selling through a network of channel partners—whether they are resellers, system integrators, VARs, agents or franchises—it's very likely you will have to help them build pipeline through marketing programs and activities, and reward them with financial incentives when they perform according to your game plan. In order to do that, you really need a channel marketing platform, and that platform must have robust capabilities tied to lead management, digital through-partner marketing and incentive management.





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