



Partner Management Software Can Change Your Channel Forever



Partner management software has emerged as an important component in the evolution of business process automation

While the Internet was invented almost 50 years ago in a research environment, it wasn't until the late 1990s, with the advent of the dot-com era, that organizations were able to embrace technology to thoroughly automate their business processes.

Partner management software is a prime example of business process automation. This is a standalone category that didn't really exist a decade ago. Since then, however, purpose-built partner management software has emerged as an important component in the evolution of business process automation.

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Today, partner management software tends to have three core capabilities: partner relationship management (PRM), partner marketing management (PMM) and partner sales management (PSM). We at ZINFI call these three categories together **Unified Channel Management** or UCM. Each of these solutions—PRM, PMM and PSM—tends to focus on one aspect of channel management. Together, they drive end-to-end channel management. Any organization considering deployment of business process automation software for their channel marketing activities should understand how each solution can impact your channel.

Partner relationship management (PRM) software can help to reduce internal operating costs while improving partner recruitment, **onboarding, training** and **incentives** management via a dynamic partner portal capability.

While **lead management** and distribution also tend to be part of PRM software, the primary focus for PRM software is to enable partners to learn how to sell and

to provide partners with access to various incentive programs to motivate selling activities. PRM is often the best important starting point for an organization considering the deployment of partner management software.

Partner marketing management (PMM) software tends to focus on enabling a partner to drive demand by leveraging **co-branded assets** and marketing tools. Today's prospective buyers look for solutions primarily online.

Gone are the days when tradeshows and magazine advertising drove leads to B2B sellers. Today's business buyers are no different from consumers when they research purchases—they invariably search online. Therefore, it is critical for resellers and other channel partners to be able to tap into a vendor's knowledge of the marketplace and to have access to a dynamic marketing platform. This is where partner management software can help tremendously.

Partner sales management (PSM) software helps channel partners learn by providing them with a set of dynamic sales enablement tools. These tools teach them how to sell while they are selling, and give them the ability to track prospects' engagement with the products and services they offer. Most of these sales enablement tools are available to direct sellers, but partner sales management software brings these capabilities to the channel side of the business. PSM is a very important and practical third component of a three-pronged partner management software capability.

Hopefully, you can now see how deploying any one of these three core solutions from the partner management software category can significantly streamline both your internal and external partner-related activities. Partner management software not only reduces your operating cost, but also increases partner satisfaction—and performance—levels substantially.



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