Marketing to Partners Using
Channel Marketing Software

Channel marketing software needs to be easy to use and affordable.

Any organization selling through the channel needs to make sure its partners are aware of its offers, programs, pricing and various other channel marketing activities. This is where purpose-built **channel marketing software** can help tremendously. The big advantage of channel marketing software is that it is designed solely to address all aspects of channel marketing needs. Unlike direct marketing software, it requires very little customization or setup. In this article, we will explore how channel marketing software can enable an organization selling through the channel to do a better job marketing to their partner base.

Certain aspects of channel management can be met by cobbling together various standalone tools for search, social, syndication, email and other functions, a patchwork of tools can quickly become clunky and cost-prohibitive for day-to-day use by users from all over the world.

Before we take a deep dive into various aspect of channel marketing software, let's make sure that we all agree on what "partner" really means in this context. A channel partner is typically an organization or individual who represents a vendor organization's products and services as a reseller and/or solution provider to the end buyer. That buyer could be a consumer or another business organization. The products and services that are sold through the channel cover all aspects of a modern economy. These range from highly personal consumer services—say, hair salon services or pet grooming —to products or services marketed to professional organizations such as manufacturers, logistics organizations, transportation companies and so on. Any purpose-built channel marketing software should be able to address the diverse needs and differences of all channel partner types.

While there are many differences between one vertical and another, in general the critical aspect of all of these partners or resellers or agents is that they are not directly employed by the vendor organization and focus primarily on serving their own organizational or personal needs, even as they represent the vendor organization. Therefore, it is quite important for any vendor organization selling through the channel to capture mindshare and remain aware of the evolving needs of their channel partners to make sure they stay well-informed and well-trained about the products or services they are selling, and properly incentivized to sell to their full potential. To this end, and in all aspects of channel management activities, channel marketing software plays a very critical role.

Any organization selling through a channel or a network of partners needs to go through the entire lifecycle engagement with their partner base, and that begins with partner recruitment, **onboarding**, **training**, enablement and management. A purpose-built channel marketing software platform should be able to enable an organization to efficiently recruit, onboard, train, enable and manage its partner base. Once that's accomplished with a number of partners and the vendor organization is ready to market to an existing partner base, that's where purpose-built channel marketing software can add substantial value.

When we think about marketing activities directed to an existing base, the first factor that needs to be considered—especially in this age of information overload—is personalization. State-of-the-art channel marketing software (like the platform that ZINFI provides) should be able to create different partner "segments" and allow a vendor to vary the content it provides from one partner segment to another based on the needs and interests of the target audiences. For example, a partner organization that is selling exclusively to a manufacturing base would not be interested in content related to healthcare segment, or vice versa. Therefore, the content and programs offered to partners need to be highly focused and customized around the specific needs of individual partners or groups of similar partners. A purpose-built channel marketing software platform can help significantly with this customization process.

In addition to segmentation, a purpose-built channel marketing software platform also needs to have a comprehensive set of tactical marketing tools, such as **search**, **social**, **syndication**, **email**, **microsite**, **events**, etc. It should also be able to connect with standalone digital and analog tools, such as online site traffic analysis, event logistics management tools and so on. In addition to these core capabilities, channel marketing software should be able to deliver global content locally, and allow the local teams to customize content and manage local activities within the full purview of the global team. This is a very important capability that most direct marketing tools fail to satisfy.

Finally, channel marketing software needs to be easy to use and affordable. Most direct marketing tools have evolved over the past decade and lack the flexibility needed for the regional, local and v segment-based capabilities that a typical channel team needs. While certain aspects of channel management can be met by cobbling together various standalone tools for search, social, syndication, email and other functions, a patchwork of tools can quickly become clunky and cost-prohibitive for day-to-day use by users from all over the world. This is why, if you are trying to streamline your channel marketing activities and keep your partners informed and engaged, you should seriously consider purpose-built channel marketing software from a vendor like **ZINFI**.

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