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Why Your **Partner Portal** Needs to Focus on Sales Enablement

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Let's explore...

If you are selling through the channel, your partner portal is a primary way of staying in touch with your partner base and keeping them informed of your latest offerings, your marketing and sales programs, and any incentives you are currently offering. However, too much content and program information can easily drown a partner portal and make it difficult to use. In this article we will explore why your **partner portal** needs to focus primarily on sales enablement, making sure all programs, tools and other content align with the core objective of helping partners sell more.

> *"The partner portal should not be confusing for sales people. Instead, it should enable them to easily find relevant and informative content that actually helps them close a deal. Next-generation platforms like ZINFI's partner relationship management (PRM) solution come with a state-of-the-art, enterprise-ready partner portal content management capabilities."*

SALE
Enablement

Sales enablement is changing rapidly. We are transitioning from sending a bunch of literature to partners via "snail mail" to providing online training, documentation and support. Despite this transition, however, most partner portals are still antiquated. They tend to rely on a patchwork of toolsets from multiple vendors, and are hard for partners to navigate as they look for **relevant content**. Moreover, when a large vendor organization (generating, say, a few hundred million in annual revenue) acquires smaller organizations, too often the partner portal content from different organizations is poorly integrated if at all, leaving partners to figure out what happened in the transition from the old interface to the new one.

With this in mind, I'd like to talk about two primary requirements vendor organizations should think about seriously with respect to leveraging their partner portal as a sales enablement tool: the need to think about your partner portal as a digital 24×7 support tool for ongoing business, and the need to map the transition for partners who have just been acquired.

First things first: Let's talk about how the partner portal needs to be organized to support partners from a sales enablement perspective. When it comes to informing your partners of day-to-day news regarding strategic programs, your partner portal content management system needs to be highly flexible and fluid to allow you to categorize and tag content in a dynamic way. In most cases you need to make sure that several core content management capabilities are in place:

1. Partner portal page content:
   It is essential to make sure when sales people log in they are able to access the sales zone rapidly and easily, and not get lost in marketing, technical and other solutions-centric content. While you may want sales people to go through product training and other modules, the majority of the partner portal page content needs to be focused on helping the partner sales reps find relevant information quickly.

2. Documents, assets and collateral:
   All sales reps, new or experienced, need to have access to the **right sales documents**, presentations, data sheets, case studies, etc. as they need them. During the sales process (which ideally parallels and supports the buyer's journey), the sales person needs to know what materials to send prospects at each stage of the selling/buying journey. If you dump all content into a single category, that doesn't help the salesperson figure out how to find what they need for discovery vs. lead development efforts.

3. Refresh and reload:
   Too often partner portals are loaded with stale content. We often hear this from the channel partners we work with. It is essential to have an integrated product and service release process where old content is retired in a timely fashion and is tied directly to the discontinuation of products and services. Likewise, new content needs to be introduced in a way that coincides with new launches. For all this to happen effortlessly, the content management capability of your partner portal platform needs to be state of the art.

Now, once you have a core motion in place that enables partner sales reps to leverage the appropriate portal page content, documents, **assets and collateral**, the next conversation you need to have should focus on any acquisitions you may have made. Too often, organizations simply turn off the partner portal of the acquired organization and then switch it over to their existing portal. This can be quite confusing for partners of the acquired organization. The best way to address this is to build a "How to Find" welcome area for those partners in their old portal, and then—leveraging identify-based access—lead them quickly to places in the new portal where they can find relevant content.

The partner portal should not be confusing for sales people. Instead, it should enable them to easily find relevant and informative content that actually helps them close a deal. Next-generation platforms like ZINFI's partner relationship management (PRM) solution come with a state-of-the-art, enterprise-ready partner portal content management capabilities. Whether you select ZINFI or another provider, if you keep sales enablement at the center of your selection process, you can't go wrong with your partner portal deployment.

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