How Flexible Is Your **Partner Relationship Management Software**?

It doesn't have to be that complicated, and it doesn't have to be expensive. Elegantly designed software, like Unified Channel Management (UCM) platform puts users in control.

If you are selling through the channel, you probably have some kind of **partner relationship management software** (PRM) in place. It may have been cobbled together by various channel managers prior before you arrived at your company, or you may have recently procured PRM software from a vendor who promised you unlimited capabilities. But now you are realizing that you are more or less stuck in the mud. The software can't do what you want it to do. If this describes you, well, you are not alone. It's a reflection of where most partner relationship management software is today — namely, stuck in the past.

// *It's very different from what you have experienced with software until now, and it could be truly liberating for you, your partners and all of the users of your channel management infrastructure.* //

How did this happen? Most PRM software vendors built their technology architecture by looking at CRM and other application ecosystems that existed around them at the time. (And yes, this includes the 800-pound gorilla that is touting its massive infrastructure and the millions of apps for sale on its marketplace). If organizations struggling to manage their channel today are going to turn things around and successfully plan for the future, this entire approach needs to be re-evaluated. When it comes to software development, the operating word for now and well into the future is "flexibility," but almost all **partner relationship management** software fails to live up to this promise. Here is why it matters.

Partner relationship management is about — you guessed it — managing relationships. I realize this sounds redundant and even obvious, but I think this formulation really gets to the crux of the problem with most PRM software. Most partner relationship management tools emerge from a focus on building monolithic applications, and customers are simply expected to adapt to those pre-determined feature sets. In reality, this approach rarely works because different companies have unique requirements, and those requirements change constantly in a rapidly evolving business environment. The other alternative is to hire a bunch of coders and have them build from ground up exactly what you need. Both approaches are flawed and beset with problems tied to cost, quality and delivery timing. Both give organizations little flexibility as they try to manage complex, dynamic relationships in a global channel environment. The time has come to build flexible PRM software that makes it easy for organizations to make changes to workflows — without relying on the vendor — as their requirements change over time.

This is where next-generation architecture like ZINFI's Adaptive SaaS (aSaaS) is focused. It puts the customer and their hundreds of workflow requirements front and center and addresses these requirements in three simple ways: First, by providing a set of best practices workflows that are applicable for small, medium and large channels. Second, by providing a set of highly

flexible workflow mapping and automation capabilities that we like to call MAGIC (**mobile**, **adaptive**, **global**, **intelligent** and **configurable**) tools. Third, by providing a customizable **reporting** infrastructure that not only creates reports, but actually produces new insights by linking modules across a broad array of PRM workflows.

I know this may sound like mumbo jumbo, particularly if you are accustomed to thinking that your partner relationship management software starts and ends with your partner portal, where you patch in various applications for asset sharing, **market development funds**, **lead management** and so on from various providers — and then pull your hair out hoping they will all work together the way you need them to. The elegance of truly flexible software is something you need to experience for yourself. If you do, you will quickly realize there is a much better way of managing your channel and adapting to the rapidly changing requirements that you face every day.

It doesn't have to be that complicated, and it doesn't have to be expensive. Elegantly designed software, like ZINFI's **Unified Channel Management** (UCM) platform puts users in control, allowing them to design beautiful and customized workflows using drag-and-drop tools that are highly intuitive, logical and comprehensive.

The marketplace is dynamic. The speed of change is increasing every day, and your channel requirements will continue to evolve. You need partner relationship management software allows you to address your channel requirements instead of becoming an impediment.

If you find yourself thinking that you need to escape from your current reality, consider what ZINFI has to offer. It's very different from what you have experienced with software until now, and it could be truly liberating for you, your partners and all of the users of your channel management infrastructure. Isn't that worth taking a few minutes and getting a live demo?

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