

# Collaborate Remotely with Your Channel Partners Using **PRM Software**



## There are multiple ways to enable your partners remotely without meeting face-to-face

If your company (or even country) is under a travel ban due to an epidemic like the coronavirus outbreak—or perhaps because of budget restrictions—and you have to cancel your road shows to train and enable your partners, don't despair. There are multiple ways to enable your partners remotely without meeting face-to-face by leveraging **partner relationship management** (PRM) software. In this article, I will explore how you can deploy a set of pragmatic PRM channel automation tools to enable your partners in a few easy step.

// *This overview has demonstrated that you can perform essentially every activity that's necessary to enable partners both tactically and strategically while working remotely if you deploy a PRM platform* //



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effectively collaborate with your partners remotely on these and other tactical initiatives. We will discuss these tools in a bit more detail later on.

- **Strategic enablement:** This is about driving systematic improvements like **sales reach** and lead generation from greenfield opportunities as well as building technical or solution competencies for certain strategic product or services rollouts. These activities can also be performed using PRM software, but to do so effectively you will need to carefully consider your overall channel programs, policies, promotions and key **performance management metrics**. An appropriate PRM platform will allow you to set up advanced **training** by product categories and other criteria, but if you lack an overall integrated strategy, much of this work will turn out to be tactical, rather than strategic, enablement.

With this as a framework, it's time to consider some of the PRM software tools that can be used for both strategic and tactical enablement. These tools can address a broad range of activities related to partner life cycle management, including partner recruitment, partner onboarding, partner enablement, demand generation and partner management. In each of these areas, we can apply both tactical and strategic approaches by using various PRM tools.

Now we're ready to consider some of the PRM software tools that can help us with each of these activities and allow us to collaborate remotely:

1. **Partner recruitment** – In this age of digital content and media—especially when partners may be working from home, from the office or another location—they are very likely connected to their mobile and other computing devices. “Marketing to” the partner is a core activity, and PRM modules created specifically for social marketing, email, Google AdWords, microsites, events (online live and on demand) all enable core tactics that can be deployed for both tactical and strategic engagement.

There are essentially two types of enablement involving collaboration with channel partners using PRM software: tactical and strategic. Let's briefly address both.

- **Tactical enablement:** Tactical enablement includes activities like pushing a promotion through the channel, rolling out sales incentives for partner sales reps to sign up for and execute on, or creating programs to train partners on new product launches. Within 4–6 weeks you can easily deploy a partner relationship management (PRM) platform with built-in tools that allow you to

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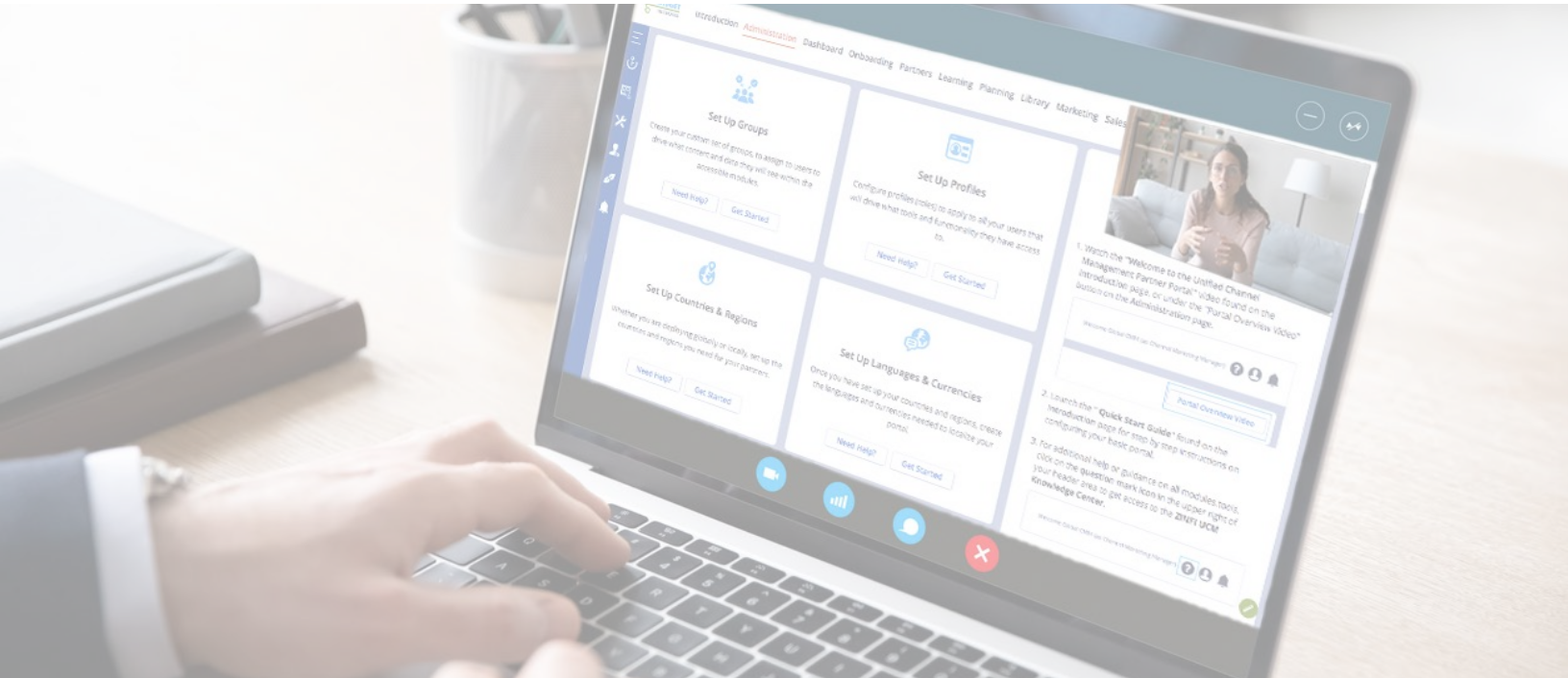
**2. Partner onboarding – Onboarding** a newly recruited partner with a step-by-step onboarding process is critical, and this is where PRM automation can help a lot. Your PRM software should allow you to quickly set up various partner onboarding programs and establish tracks within those programs to move the partner automatically from one stage to another. Laborious process steps like contract signing, business planning and more can be highly automated.

**3. Partner enablement** – One of the most common facets of partner enablement is partner training, which, if it cannot be done face-to-face, can easily be carried out using SCORM-compliant learning management systems (LMSs). When you are selecting a PRM tool, make sure the LMS module is SCORM-compliant so you can easily and build effective step-by-step training courses.

**4. Demand generation** – Partner enablement also includes demand generation, which should include a set of integrated tools and campaign content that partner users can use from a single interface to quickly launch digitally integrated campaigns. Just as you require tools to collaborate with your partners remotely, your partners also need effective tools that enable them to engage with their customer base remotely.

**5. Partner management** – Once a partner demonstrates the ability to sell and produce revenue, it is essential to **reward** that partner with **commissions**, incentives and rebates. To do so remotely requires online automated tools. Every one of these programs can be set up and executed remotely, and the required collaboration can be accomplished through an online portal. Any advanced PRM software platform should be able to drive these activities in a highly automated fashion.

I hope this overview has demonstrated that you can perform essentially every activity that's necessary to enable partners both tactically and strategically while working remotely if you deploy a PRM platform. There are other benefits as well: Creating a state-of-the-art online collaboration platform can also significantly boost partner satisfaction and the productivity of your partner marketing teams. Instead of having to constantly log on to Zoom or other video conferencing platforms to have discussions with one partner or group of partners at a time, you can have your partner portal—powered by a state-of-the-art partner relationship management (PRM) software—do much of the work for you 24x7.



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