



21 Rules of Partnerships for 2021

Words of wisdom from Revenue Builders about how to *effectively* scale growth through partnerships.

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PhD Partnernomics

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Head of Ecosystems Partnerships,
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Analyzer, *Forrester*

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Have an actionable plan when you create your Partner Program.

Mark Brigman,
PhD Partnernomics

01

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People launch a channel partnering strategy with no process, no support, and nothing to help facilitate the partners' success. When a channel partner is not a performing partner, most of the time, they're not managed correctly. We don't give them the support, information, tools, and processes that they need to be *successful*.

You need to get very clear about the what, how, and why we're doing it. We need to answer, how do we *define success* in 6-month blocks to 24 months with the CEO and all executives? 80-90% of the time that doesn't happen from the beginning.

It has to start there. It has to have a *framework*.

Key Takeaways

The success or failure of a is typically a reflection of the resources provided to the partners.

Prior to launching a Partnership Program, goals need to be defined, metrics need to be established, and KPIs need to be determined.

The support and alignment with the C-suite is also essential to the success of the program.

Value your
partner
experience
equally to
your customer
experience.

Jay McBain

Analyzer,

Forrester

02

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Three or four years ago, companies started to use customer success as their north star. But, if you do the journey mapping or buyer mapping over all the moments in that buyer's life, 71% make their decision after the digital journey.

You'll find 80% of the time you *don't* own that moment, it will be with one of your partners. And when they do that initial Google search, it may not be you that is on page one.

You're going to want to be partnered up with *everyone* on page one and page two. The partner experience overlays the customer experience, driving your product and making it more sticky with your partners.

Key Takeaways

Customer buying decisions are swayed and made by their interaction with third party influencers.

Partnerships are more essential than ever to influence your target audience.

Build bridges through internal education.

Allison Kelly

Head of Growth Strategy,

Attentive

03

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A pitfall I experienced was expecting everyone to appreciate the value of partnerships. I often use this nomenclature around how partnerships build bridges—we don't break bridges. That doesn't just mean externally, that means internally.

One of the best pieces of advice that I can give Partnership Leaders out there is don't think and assume that everybody knows actually what you're talking about. Take *intentional* steps internally to understand what's important to other internal stakeholders.

Key Takeaways

What Partnerships Managers do is often foreign to people outside of the Partnerships team.

Show your team how partnerships contribute to building revenue for the company through extra communication efforts.

Partnership Managers must educate their colleagues and be transparent with their goals to ensure that all the necessary players are aligned.

A partnership can't be forced.

Jared Jones

Head of Ecosystems Partnerships,
Launchdarkly

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There's two non-KPIs that I track that are core principles about partnering. The first is a logical fit. I've tried many times, try to fit a square peg into a round hole. If it doesn't make sense, then it probably isn't going to work, and it probably isn't worth your time. We have a limited amount of time and resources to build out the integrations and to build out the business functions and the agreements.

The second is working with people and partnering with people that you want. I have a really strict no asshole policy when it comes to partnering. If you're a jerk or you're really difficult to work with, it's just not going to work. We don't have enough time.

Key Takeaways

Only partner with companies that your resources allow you to support completely.

When potential partners are presented, there needs to be natural ability to work together, and an obvious ability to integrate.

The C-Suite has to buy-in.

Theresa Caragol
Founder & CEO,
AchieveUnite

05

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The first time (for a partnership program), is a CEO executive- level decision. So you have to be getting those folks buying in from the start; that's *critical*. The second thing that's really important in doing this is that it's about getting the strategy and the types of partners right.

If you don't get that right, *none* of the other stuff matters.

Key Takeaways

The CEO has to drive the direction of the Partnership Program from the beginning.

Develop a strategy for the Partner Program including what type of partners will best fit the program and what your company expects from them.

Assess your partnership's potential.

Jason Yarborough

VP Partnerships,

Terminus

06

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We want to make sure that our partner's customer base lines up with ours. We look at certain things through Reveal. We consider percentage of mutual overlap, percentage of prospect customer base, our customer base to their prospects, and (we ask) is that percentage worth going to market?

We also look at *geo-presence* and what the psychographic data says. We ask, “Are they talking about the same things we are? Are they in the same space we are, and are they talking to the same people?”

Key Takeaways

Determine what criteria is important to your company when identifying the right partner to reach your ICP.

Utilize a free account mapping tool, like Reveal, to allow you to evaluate your partner with the right set of data.

Compare your company's efforts to communicate with your ICP against your partners to see if you are sending similar messaging in the same place to the same people.

Create a scalable partner program to drive revenue.

Jo Wright

Director of Partnerships & Channel Leader,

Braze

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The revenue that our Partnerships are delivering is increasing. That's not because, as individuals, we're working longer hours. It's because we've made it more efficient. Over the past two years, we've *tripled* the pipeline targets per person.

We've *doubled* the amount of partners that we're working with without doubling the headcount, and I'd say our relationships are better than ever before.

Key Takeaways

To grow revenue, your partnerships team has to be agile and efficient.

Once you realize channels that will accelerate your growth, create a metric to measure progress.

It is the quality of the team that drives your partnerships, not the size.

**Be realistic
about your
go-to-market
strategy with
your partners.**

Mimi Jackson

Senior Channel Marketing Manager,

Fortinet

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I've heard a lot of great ideas over the years, but when you dig into the details, you start to ask, "Is this even possible to execute in our time frame or in our budget?"

Before you get too far down the path, you have to be realistic, to think about the obstacles, what are the milestones that we have to tackle, and be realistic if you think you can get through those.

Key Takeaways

Align on each participating partner's goals, intentions, resources, timelines, and budgets.

Create a framework from this alignment to design a strategy that can be executed successfully.

Anticipate obstacles and milestones to create an effective collaboration opportunity that can be later expanded upon.

**Strategic
alliances
succeed
within a team,
not a silo.**

Nihal Parthasarathi

Co-founder,
CourseHorse

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Partnership revenue represents about 25% of our overall business. The challenges are forming relationships and maximizing their potential. You need a business development sales person to wrangle these partners and get them to work *with* you, and a product manager to think through all the opportunities to generate revenue.

Key Takeaways

Partnerships are a multi-departmental effort. Cross-team alignment, from Product to Sales, is key for your Partner Program.

Incorporate your business development team in both acquiring new leads and acquiring new partners.

Include your product manager in the conversation with the partnering company to create integration opportunities, increase stickiness, and generate revenue.

Leverage your mutual customers with your partners.

Stanislaw Wasowicz

Regional Director Alliances EMEA,

SmartRecruiters

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When we find partners with mutual customers, I jokingly call them ‘case studies’. People hate being sold to, but they love buying products and services if they see their peers have been *successful* using them. It makes common customers an incredibly powerful driver of demand and proves the value of the partnership. Mutual customers can also be interesting to create stickiness.

Key Takeaways

The customers you share with your partners are a source of value that is irreplaceable.

Through common customers, you can identify the correct messaging, combination, and implementation strategy to go-to-market with your partner.

**Remove
the friction
from
producing
valuable
partnership
results.**

Billy Robbins

Head of Strategic Partnerships,

ProductBoard

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With a lot of things, it's finding ways to remove friction and build that compelling narrative around why things are working and how they're working. You only have so many bets that you can make, so use a tool that allows you to see customer overlaps to figure out where you can build those integrations.

If you're trying to figure out the next integrations that you're going to build, account mapping tools are great. They can also show, as you're doing marketing with partners, how those efforts are impacting. For example, you could be doing marketing with partners, and that marketing doesn't always show up via Salesforce campaigns or via direct sales motion. Account Mapping tools are helpful in highlighting that. It's really about removing friction, crafting that narrative, and having data behind that narrative wherever possible.

Key Takeaways

Upgrade your tech stack. Make sure you have the tools that allow your partnerships to succeed.

Free account mapping tools, like Reveal, are incredibly valuable because they reveal hidden opportunities with your partners that will enable you to have higher win rates, larger deal sizes, and drive revenue.

Be flexible with the structure of your partnerships department.

Joni Deus

Senior Director of Partnerships,

Mailchimp

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Partnerships is a new discipline in the industry. Because of that, there is no ‘best practice’ like “here is where this lives, here are exactly the rules you need, this is the way the structure should be”, so it would be remiss if I haven’t met anyone who hasn’t gone through a reorg. We’ve gone through several in my tenure at Mailchimp. At one point, we rolled into marketing under the CMO. Now, we roll into the Chief Product Officer.

Here, we iterate and *learn* as we go.

Key Takeaways

Partnership teams can easily be molded to suit each company’s varying needs without a preconceived notion.

They will evolve as the partnerships program becomes more established.

Involve your partners' team in enablement.

Jeremiah Daon,
Technology Partnerships,
Quantum Metric

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Enablement is not a one-stop-shop. It's not just enabling your sales and customer success team; it's enabling all of your partner's teams.

Enablement is *crucial* not only in the account selection but also in the bottom line and what we are trying to achieve - success with our customers, happy customers, and stickiness overall.

Key Takeaways

The success of your company's Partner Program transcends your immediate team.

You must duplicate all of the resources for your company for the stakeholders at your partner's company.

The enablement of your partner's teams means revenue potential is gained, and growth is increased.

**Give to your
partners
before you
expect to
receive
from them.**

Eric Chan

Head of Global Partnerships,

Chargebee

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I was fortunate enough to spend a lot of time with existing partners and ask, “What do you need? What are you looking for from someone like us?” Having spent about six months doing that, I really got a firm handle on building out what I thought would be just one technology program but it turned out to be four distinct programs with all different programs with very different approaches.

Key Takeaways

Reciprocity is essential for a thriving partnership program.

Ask what your partners' needs are.

Answering their requests benefits the company's growth, reputation, and creates new channels for opportunity.

Let the
partnership
team be the
enabler.

Simon Bouchez

CEO,

Reveal

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Before engaging in a partnership, a company should ask itself, “Do we have the resources and the management support to take the time to immerse our team with another team?” If the answer is yes, the Partnership Manager must help make sure the salesforce understands the joint values you have with your partner company and can talk to them.

Partnerships become very efficient when reps can work together directly and the Partnership Manager isn't the bottleneck. Once you are integrated, you are in a great position to deliver meaningful opportunities and revenue.

Key Takeaways

When a company provides partnerships with adequate resources and support, the sales team can amplify and accelerate its growth.

That acceleration can only happen if the resources are available.

No one wants to be the “middle man” between sales teams. Enable and connect your sales team with your partners sales team.

**Remember
that
Partnerships
are a
long term
investment.**

Tiffany Tai

GM Global Enterprise and Partnerships,

Canva

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It's not just getting the deal inked. It's also about being able to work with the partner, continuing to evolve the relationship, and figuring out together around how we can be successful and continue to hit all the expectations that both parties have had from the partnership and knock it out of the park.

Key Takeaways

The most successful partnerships have multiple layers of integration and evolve over time.

Each company's internal team must be able to see the value in the partnership.

These deeply entrenched relationships produce remarkable and revenue driving results.

Use the
ecosystem to
produce ROI in
partnerships.

Gautier Machelon
Co-Founder,
Reveal

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In 2019, we interviewed our network of entrepreneurs around us about B2B collaboration. These conversations led to partnerships. There was uniform concern expressed among these business leads that the ROI in partnerships wasn't visible. Partnership Managers are not considered to be huge revenue drivers, and yet, they provide the window of opportunity for so many companies in the form of business transformation.

Internally, we call this disconnect, 'The Partnership's Paradox'. For PMs to drive revenue they must use a data-based approach, mapping all the opportunities they share with their partners, and creating a clear action plan to transform them into revenue. It is not enough to see the success of these efforts on a screen. To truly realize their ROI, Partnership Managers then have to incorporate these metrics into daily conversations with the C-suite.

Key Takeaways

This lack of understanding leads to resources not being provided and partnerships managers not being empowered to drive revenue.

Should the Partnership Manager turn towards the company's ecosystem, they'll find the vehicle that produces significant and valuable ROI for their teams.

Include your pipeline in your KPI's.

Elliot Smith

Head of Partnerships,

6sense

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When I look at a Partner Program, and the partner team is doing a good job, it all has to come back to sales. Partnerships Managers need to demonstrate a clear impact on the business. It's the same as the marketing attribution problem. How do you say that the last touch of a marketing campaign or last activity really drove that opportunity to the next stage of the buying process?

The KPIs for our team are how much pipeline are we influencing, how much pipeline are we sourcing, and ultimately how happy are our customers at the end of the day.

Key Takeaways

Partnerships are an extension of the Sales Teams. Both teams should share KPIs, metrics, successes, and failures.

Provide KPIs that measure your effectiveness and provide undeniable proof that the work the partnerships team does is essential.

**Measure your
partnerships
by the revenue
they generate.**

Dan Stephen

Director of Partnerships,

Amplitude

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The way that we currently assess partnerships at a very broad stroke is by the amount of revenue that a partner channel is able to generate, or the amount of qualified pipeline. I know that some companies measure partner influence and that is a great measure as well.

Key Takeaways

Partnerships drive revenue.

When Partnerships Teams are given the wrong metrics or are assumed to be an obscure immeasurable contribution to the company, they fail.

Include metrics such as conversion rates from Ecosystem Qualified Leads (EQLs) to Partner-Sourced and Partner Influenced Deals.

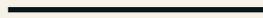
Champion partnership success internally.

Brittany Wroblewski,
VP of Partnerships,
G2

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It's exciting when the partner sees value. Everyone is happy. Those are the stories I turn around and tell product stakeholders. That happens casually in conversation and also very formally in a PowerPoint deck. A delineation between selling internally is sometimes it's formal, in a meeting with an agenda, and other times it's just drawing attention to the good things that you are working on and is equally important.



Key Takeaways

Internal selling is vital to the perception and the success of the partnership team.

Recognize the team members and departments who contributed to this success.

Align your OKRs interdepartmentally.

Pat McBrearty,
Head of Partnerships,
Workboard

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How do you get better results from Partnerships, and do that in a much more agile way to respond to anything that's happening out there, macro, or in your particular market? You need to capture objectives and key results, and you need to create alignment and make them visible.

Key Takeaways

Align on what the project is, who is leading it, who is contributing, where the project ranks in priority, and what the timeline is.

The more you communicate and strategize with your colleagues, the more effective your strategies will be.



Reveal is the free platform for Partnership, Marketing, and Sales teams to *generate revenue through their ecosystem.*

Reveal allows you to connect with companies from your ecosystem, securely compare your CRM data, and *multiply your win rate—up to 3X—*thanks to your ecosystem's insights.