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# TOP 5 THINGS MSPS WANT FROM VENDORS

*Before There is an MSP Channel  
Program, There Must be a Relationship*





## If an MSP Partner is not Treated as a Legitimate Business Partner The Partnership Will Not Work

Why would an MSP want to sell and use a vendor's products and services if there is not a mutually beneficial business partnership? If a vendor expends time, effort, and resources to create a channel program and recruit partners, shouldn't the outcome be a profitable and sustainable business relationship?

Before sales incentives, marketing development funds, spiffs, and most certainly metrics, there is the vendor-partner relationship. If there is no relationship, there is no partnership. Consequently, there is no reason to have a channel organization if you are not committed to developing a strong partnership that is setup for success. But, if you are committed to creating a well performing channel, how can it be optimized through relationships? How does a vendor create an environment that fosters fruitful channel partnerships with MSPs?



## What do MSPs want from vendors?

# #1 To be Treated as Your Customer

An MSP is your customer since they buy and use your technology. And they are also your partner because they are employing that technology for their end customers. If you want a profitable channel organization, a good relationship with your partners is crucial.



## How do you do that?

**01** Get to know them. Listen more.

**02** Develop and build a great partner experience.

**03** Be respectful.

**04** Produce immediate actions and solutions if something goes wrong with your product or the partnership.

**05** Manage expectations.

**06** Know why you want this partnership in the first place.



# #2

## A Well-Planned/Managed Recruitment & Onboarding Process

The time to develop your channel relationships is during or even before the partner recruitment process. You can meet potential partners through mutual customers, industry events, and technology based organizations. Help prospective partners see the value and opportunity of working together and be prepared to answer any questions they may have such as:

01 Why does your company use the channel to sell their products and services?

02 What is the best partner profile for your product and services?

03 How does your company view channel partners? How are they welcomed by your sales, marketing and management teams?

04 What steps do you take to get to know the partner and their business model?

05 How do you support the partner? What resources are available to help the partner sell?





**After a successful partner recruitment stage, ensure your onboarding procedure is outstanding as well.**

**01**

Clearly communicate how this process works even during recruitment.

**02**

Give partners some choices as to how they want to be onboarded (self-paced, channel/partner manager-led, combination of the two) since they know best what is effective for them. But don't go overboard with options that can be overwhelming for you and the partners. No matter what method is chosen, you need to thoroughly manage the plan.

**03**

Develop a timeline with achievable milestones and make sure partners know upfront it must be met in order to participate in the partner program.

**04**

Provide training materials, documentation, and a knowledge base partners can access at any time.

**05**

And one more time for good measure, clearly communicate how your onboarding process works.







# #3

## To Help Them Build Their Business

Once a relationship is established, the essential endeavor is to help your partners build their business. Understanding a partner's business model and how they make money means that you have spent the time to get to know them, and have shown that you care about the partnership.



How do they go to market with the products and services they sell?

01

Do they have resources to effectively market your products?

02

What can you do to help develop and build those resources if needed?

03

What sales and marketing programs can be put in place to help them increase revenues?

04

Do incentive programs work for their type of business?

05



# #4 Provide Straightforward Communications That Will Build Trust

For MSPs, the critical elements of their vendor-partner relationships are communications and trust.

01

Communicate, communicate, communicate!

02

Be transparent with your program and marketing efforts.

03


Keep partners up-to-date with the product, roadmap, and strategies. Tell them what is going on.

04

Have candid and ongoing dialogs; that goes for everybody and every department involved with the partners.

05

Let your partners know they can always come to you with concerns. Practice active listening.



Just like with any other type of relationship, **trust** starts with open and honest communications. And **trust** builds if you consistently say what you'll do and then do what you say.



# #5

## Dependable Channel/Partner Account Managers

Because they manage all the aspects of the vendor partner relationship to ensure it is on track, the most vital member of the partnership is your Channel/Partner Account Manager (CAM/PAM). Their priority is to help partners successfully grow their businesses.

A good channel/partner manager is a nurturer who focuses on what's important to their partners and is their first line of defense when needed. For some MSPs, the CAM/PAM is the only line of communications they have directly with the vendor. They are the vendor's liaisons who are ultimately responsible for the success of the partner relationship.

**It Cannot Be Said Enough.** Strong vendor-partner relationships are the basis for a positive and profitable channel partnership. They take a lot of work to be successful. If the vendor and the partner have established a relationship that is mutually beneficial, they have created the foundation for a successful partnership.





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## ForzaDash is the most effective way to develop a successful MSP channel.

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Contact us and mention this **whitepaper** to get a discount on our award winning program.

This whitepaper contains original content and selections from the article "Optimize Your Channel Through Trust-Based Relationships" by Dede Haas in the Q3, 2015 issue of Strategic Alliance Magazine.

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