

# Planning the next steps for your partnerships program

This worksheet helps assess where your partnership program is headed and how to get to the next level



# The current and future state of your partnerships program

Launching your partnerships program was a huge undertaking. Don't let all that hard work go to waste. Assess your program's performance to drive business forward.

This worksheet guides you through the processes to:

- Gain a full picture of your program's current state
- Establish your program growth goals
- Identify potential challenges
- Create an action plan to avoid potential challenges



# The current state of partnership efforts

Gain insight into your partnership program's current performance. Pay attention to what you are doing well and identify areas of improvement.

## The big picture

**1** How much revenue does your partnership program generate? What percentage of business revenue comes from partnerships?

**2** How do partnerships help your company meet its overall business goals and objectives?

**3** How do your partnership efforts enable other internal teams to achieve their goals?

**4** Do you currently measure channel incrementality? If so, how do you determine incrementality?

## Program health

**1** What are your program KPIs and how are they trending?

**2** How many partnerships do you currently have? Does your program show growth? What is your current recruitment cadence and strategy?

**3** What percentage of your partners are productive (i.e., generate substantive revenue)? Are there notable recent changes?

**4** How diversified is your partnership portfolio regarding its partnership types and revenue? Are any partners responsible for more than 20 percent of total revenue? If one of your top partners left, how exposed would you be to losing revenue?

## Partnership reach

- 1** How well does your partner's audience align with your desired target audience? Do your partners introduce your brand to new potential market segments?
- 2** What types of customers do your partnerships bring your business? Are they quality customers that have the potential to generate strong lifetime value? Are they deal seekers that will enable you to liquidate inventory?
- 3** How often can partnerships bring in new customers that are outside of the reach of your other customer engagement initiatives? Which specific partners and partner segments accomplish this?

## Partnerships contribution to customer experience

**1** Do your partners help customers find what they need more quickly and easily?

**2** Do your partners help customers feel more confident in their purchase decision and their ability to get the most from their purchases?

**3** Do your customers use any features or capabilities you've added to your product offering or app promoted by partners? What feedback do you receive about this product enhancement?

## Partnerships impact on buyers' shopping journeys

**1** What is the average number of interactions before your target buyers make a purchase or repurchase? How does this number change when certain partners are involved?

**2** What roles do partnerships play in your customer journeys? Do they introduce, influence, close, or re-engage and retain? What specific customer behaviors can partnerships catalyze – both micro and macro conversions? How does interjecting a trusted source into your buyer journeys shape them?

**3** Are there gaps or redundancies along your buyer journeys that you should address? If so, what role might partnerships play?

**4** What devices do your target customers use when they interact with your partners? Do partnerships lead buyers to your mobile site or app? Are buyers able to make purchases quickly and easily on the devices used?

## Partnerships interactions with other marketing channels?

**1** Does your partnerships program provide synergies with your other marketing efforts? Does your partnership program lift the performance of other channels?

**2** Is your partnership program's value truly incremental to other customer acquisition and engagement efforts? What revenue would you have not otherwise received if you did not have this program in place?

**3** How efficient is your partnership effort compared to your company's other customer acquisition and engagement efforts?

**4** Do some partners instill certain shopping behaviors in your brand? E.g., deal hunting, last-minute cashback application?



## Partnership performance

**1** Who are your top-performing partners and partnership segments? How do they contribute to each of your business objectives? Who performs better and worst on each of the metrics associated with these business objectives than last year?

**2** How is the performance of your new partners? Which perform well and which don't meet your expectations? What is your understanding of why this is the case? What are the key learnings here?

**3** How do you interact with your longtail partners, and is there a plan to grow them within the program?

**4** How do your longtail partners contribute to the success of your program? As a group, do they bring in a substantial amount of revenue? Do they help keep your brand top of mind?

## Factors that contribute to partner success

**1** Are your partnerships mutually rewarding for both your brand and the partner?

**2** How is your partners' experience? How would your partners answer this question?

**3** What steps have you taken to help your program reach its full potential? Does your partnerships program include any strategic initiatives? Are there any optimization efforts?

## Your competitors

**1** What are your competitor's program goals, and how do they structure their program? What are their program terms and payment agreements, and how is their overall partner experience? What type of training and resources do they provide?

**2** Which partners send traffic to your competitors that you don't work with?

**3** What are the key search words your competitors use? What partners show up when you use these words to search?

**4** Where do you rank on product and review sites? Where does your competition show up? Why?

**5** What are partnership leaders outside of your industry doing and not doing?

## Program growth goals

Now that you've uncovered the current state of your program start identifying goals for growing your program.

**1** What upcoming business initiatives can partnerships help support? (e.g., regional expansion, increased mobile presence)

**2** What percentage of business revenue growth do you want from partnerships?

**3** What percentage of new customers do you want partnerships to drive?

**4** What does a healthy ROAS/ROI look like for the partnerships channel in the next three years?

**5** Is there a specific type of partner you want to work with more in the future (e.g., content, influencers, etc.)?

## The action plan

The next step is to clearly define how you will close the gap between the current state of your partnership portfolio and your desired future state. Include key activities, milestones, timeframe, and resources needed.

**1** What are your go-to-market strategies? Who are your target customers, what customer behaviors do you want to catalyze, and with what partnerships?

**2** How will you help your partners stimulate demand? What are your content and promotion calendars for the coming period?

**3** How will you improve your partner experience?

**4** What maturation strategies will you undertake this year to enable your program to reach its full potential in the short and long run?

**5** Is your partnership's growth engine capable of manifesting this vision? What people will you need, and how will you organize your efforts?

## The action plan (cont.)

- 6** What processes and technology will you want to put in place?

## Potential challenges

It's time to pinpoint roadblocks or challenges you foresee that may prohibit the growth of your partnerships program.

- 1** What are potential derailers and disruptors to your plan?

- 2** What are you proactively doing to mitigate these risks?

- 3** What pivots in strategy might your partnerships enable to keep your company and its performance strong?

## Record your goals

Use the table below to detail the goals you identified and how your partnerships program will support them.

Example table:

Example company goal	Current	Goal	How affiliate can support	Scalability (high, medium, low)
Increase revenue	\$34m	\$36m	Commission on % of sale	High
Increase new customers	1k/month	3k/month	Offer higher commissions for new customers	Medium
Improve ROAS	\$2.87	\$3.00	Ensure commissions beat ROAS from other digital channels	Medium
Improve profit margin	10%	12%	Offer higher commissions for high-margin items and lower rates for low-margin items	Low

## Record your goals (cont.)

Fill in the table below based on your own program goals:

Example company goal	Current	Goal	How affiliate can support	Scalability (high, medium, low)



## Feeling supercharged to drive partnership program success?

Use this worksheet to optimize partnership performance and start seeing incredible results.

Check out these impact.com resources for additional help:

- [How to identify opportunities to streamline your partnership program for success](#) [worksheet]
- [How to align your audiences and partners with your business objectives](#) [worksheet]

