Partner Strategy Canvas

Goals 🎯 | Expectations 🚀 | Commitment 🤝

Partner Notion

Why do you want to partner?
What is the goal of the partner strategy?
Tipp: Revenue is not a goal but an outcome.
Be specific as possible! For instance: reducing CAC by having partner sourced leads, increasing NRR by adding value through tech integrations..

How do you want to partner?
Do you have a first idea who you could partner with to achieve the goals? And, more importantly, do you have a rough assumption on the value proposition for your potential partner? Why would they partner with you?

How do you define success?
Depending on your specific goals, to which extend would partnerships need to achieve them to be considered successful? If you want to source leads by partner - how many? If you want to reduce CAC - by how much percent?

When do you expect results?
Timing is everything, also in partnerships.
Investing into partnerships is a mid- to long-term play. What are the expectations when the first results need to come in?

Is the leadership onboard?
Partnerships have impact on every team in the company. Is the Partner Notion shared within and supported by the full leadership team (and board, if applicable)? Has it been communicated to the whole company?

What are you ready to invest?
Developing and validating the partner strategy will require certain resources, primarily someone leading the initiative, as well as time and support from other teams - is it clear who will own the partner initiative and who will support?

Partner Concept

Partner Type
Decide about the partner type you want to start with, e.g. referral partner or integration partner.

Partner Value Proposition
This is probably the most important element of your partner strategy. Why would any company be interested in partnering with you? What's in for them? This may include the commercial model, but financial incentives alone are typically not convincing enough!

Ideal Partner Profile (IPP)
Similar to the ICP (Ideal Customer Profile), consider to develop an IPP. It will help you to focus on the right partner prospects when you start the partner recruitment. It also helps your marketing team to support you. In addition to the IPP, consider the relevant partner personas.

Market Validation 🚨
Go out and test your assumptions - talk to potential partner and collect feedback!

Business Plan
The Partner Concept is a full GoToMarket plan and a business case which needs to be aligned with and approved by the leadership team.

Make sure to create a month-by-month plan, covering at least two, better three years. Include the expected results, define the KPIs which will be used to measure the success. Keep in mind that partnerships are always a mid-term play, so the expected results often won't be measurable in the first 12 months. Make sure to include tangible milestones for the time you build up your partner portfolio and gain momentum.

Do not forget to include resources needed to achieve the results. This may include a headcount planning, support from other departments (e.g. marketing, product, legal, accounting etc) to get the partner program on the road, as well as dedicated budget, e.g. for partner marketing, integration development, adjustment of existing or additional tools (CRM, PRM, etc)

Company / team alignment
Make sure that the other teams are informed about and aligned with your work.

Roles & Responsibilities
Consider who would take on which tasks and who could support the partner initiative, who would work with partner along the partner life cycle, who could take over the back office tasks. You don't need all details yet, but a good idea about the relevant parties.

Internal Setup
Similar to the roles and responsibilities, consider how processes may need to be adjusted or created, how your tool setup may need to be configured (e.g. your CRM) or your product might need to be adjusted to support partnerships.

Business Case Approval 🚨
All in all the Partner Concept is a business case which needs to be approved by leadership

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Partner Program

Partner LifeCycle 🎯

Recruiting
Define the way you recruit new partner. Work with the IPP, define (dis-)qualification criteria (e.g. "The 4 C's"), create your MAP template

Onboarding
How do you ensure a partner can start successfully? This is the crucial phase of the life cycle, the honeymoon. How do you drive quick wins?

Enablement
How do you continue to work with and engage partner after the onboarding? What is your regular cadence of collaboration? How do you ensure continuous alignment?

Offboarding
Some partnerships are not meant to be - consider a way to offboard partner if the goals are not longer aligned or the partner does not perform at all.

Success 🚀

Budget / Forecast
Make sure to continuously update your initial business plan, using the experience and data from your ongoing work with partner. Adjust the assumptions and refine the plan based on your reporting.

Reporting
Make sure to align with your RevOps or BI team to create a meaningful reporting, using relevant KPIs, to monitor your program's success and share it within your company and with your partner

Tiering
Use the reporting to consider an (internal) tiering, helping you to focus on the right partner. Consider to develop an external tiering where applicable

Partner Experience 🤝

What do I provide?
Partner Experience includes all touch points a partner has with your company. To start off, think about all materials and other information you want to share with a partner. This does include:
- Marketing (Collaterals, Website etc)
- Onboarding & Training, Certifications
- Administrative documents (Legal, Accounting, ...)

How do I provide it?
For each piece of information, for each touchpoint you have with your partner, consider which way you want to have the partner experience the interaction. This would include:
- Define your partner life cycle process
- Define your internal processes
- Define your RACI (roles & responsibilities)
- Consider your tools (PRM, Portals, CRM, Website)

This canvas is based on the CEG Partner Strategy Framework for B2B SaaS

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