

Channelnomics Primer

Best Practices for Maximizing Non-Transacting Partner Relationships

Making the most of these critical yet underutilized components of the technology channel ecosystem

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Non-transacting partners are integral to the contemporary technology channel ecosystem. By influencing customer purchasing consideration, they open opportunities and enhance sales value for vendors and transacting partners.

These non-transacting partners, which include both individuals and companies, often act as the catalysts for demand generation and are instrumental in shaping the decisions of end customers. By offering specialized expertise, they fill critical gaps that may be left open by traditional reseller partners, thereby enhancing the overall value proposition to the customer. Their influence often determines which technologies or solutions gain traction in the market, making them pivotal in the go-to-market (GTM) strategies of many vendors.

To fully leverage the potential of non-transacting

partners, vendors must recognize the distinct value they bring and create an environment conducive to influence and collaboration. This involves not just acknowledging their contributions but also integrating them more deeply in the partner ecosystem.

This Channelnomics primer defines the role of non-transacting partners and outlines strategies for effectively engaging with them. To capitalize on their influence, channel professionals must develop targeted programs that cater to the specific needs and expectations of these partners.

By aligning incentives, providing relevant resources, and fostering strong collaborative relationships, vendors can increase the contribution of non-transacting partners to GTM strategies and ultimately enhance sales outcomes.

Defining Non-Transacting Partners

Non-transacting partners include traditional resellers, integrators, service providers, independent software vendors (ISVs), and other vendors; IT consultants and professional services firms; business service providers such as accountants, law firms, property management companies, and marketing agencies; private-equity and venture-capital firms; and even customers.

A non-transacting partner is any entity that routinely influences sales opportunities by providing customers with guidance on vendor, product, and service selection; offers support in designing and implementing systems based on products they don't sell; and influences partner or customer purchasing decisions.

The primary distinction between transacting and non-transacting partners lies in their role in the sales process. Non-transacting partners, as the name suggests, influence sales but don't directly execute them. Unlike referral partners, which may be more opportunistic and have a limited con-

nection to the vendors they refer, non-transacting partners possess a deeper level of knowledge and a stronger relationship with the vendors and channel partners they influence. This connection allows non-transacting partners to play a more strategic role in shaping customer decisions and guiding the sales process.

Non-transacting partners stand out because they take a vested interest in thoroughly understanding the brands and products that they recommend or influence. Their commitment goes beyond merely making introductions; they confidently advocate the solutions that they support. Their depth of knowledge allows them to provide more informed guidance to customers and associates, making their influence in the decision-making process both credible and impactful.

Why Work With Them?

Supporting non-transacting partners is crucial for several reasons that directly impact the success and sustainability of a vendor's GTM strategy.

Non-transacting partners are key influencers in



the purchasing decisions of end customers. Their deep understanding of specific technologies and solutions allows them to guide customers toward the best options and serve as trusted advisors in the decision-making process. By leveraging their influence, vendors can ensure that their products and services are considered by customers that might not be reached directly through traditional sales channels.

While transacting partners are focused on executing sales, non-transacting partners often provide specialized expertise and support that enhance the overall value proposition to the customer. This can include everything from systems design and implementation to ongoing support and consultation. By addressing these areas, non-transacting partners help create more comprehensive and satisfying customer experiences, which can lead to stronger customer loyalty and increased repeat business.

Non-transacting partners contribute to demand generation. Their ability to influence market trends

and customer preferences means they play a pivotal role in determining which technologies and solutions gain traction. By supporting these partners, vendors can increase market awareness and create a stronger pull for their products, leading to greater market penetration and higher sales volumes.

By integrating non-transacting partners more deeply into the partner ecosystem, vendors can foster stronger, more collaborative relationships that benefit all parties involved. This includes aligning incentives, providing necessary resources, and ensuring clear communication channels. Such collaboration not only enhances the effectiveness of GTM strategies but also ensures that non-transacting partners remain engaged and motivated to advocate for a vendor's solutions.

Structuring Programs for Non-Transacting Partners

Just as vendors create partner programs to define, govern, and manage relationships with resellers, integrators and service providers, they also must



form programs that cater to the specific needs of non-transacting partners.

When establishing a non-transacting partner program, vendors should take the following issues into consideration.

- 1. Program Participation:** Relationships with non-transacting partners are challenging to manage if you're unaware of their presence in your ecosystem. Vendors should encourage non-transacting partners to join their programs so they can learn more about their models, value propositions, and capabilities; as well as establish formal lines of communication, enablement, and support.
- 2. Opportunity Registration:** Vendors should create a mechanism for non-transacting partners to register their participation in sales opportunities. This is like deal registrations in conventional channel programs. The difference? Non-transacting partners are indicating that they're playing a role in the sales consideration process.
- 3. Access to Resources:** Non-transacting partners, like their transactional counterparts, should have access to partner portals, product information, training materials, and marketing resources. A vendor should arm non-transacting partners with information that will help them understand brand value propositions, product features and functionalities, and use cases that can benefit them and their customers.
- 4. Communications:** Communications should be crafted specifically for non-transacting partners, keeping them informed of the latest program, products, and GTM initiatives.
- 5. Connections to Other Partners:** Vendors should establish lines of communication that allow non-transacting partners to find and reach other partners in the ecosystem – resellers, integrators, service providers – that they can work with to support their mutual customers.
- 6. Low Barrier to Entry:** Non-transacting partners shouldn't have high barriers to entry. Vendors should make the requirements for participating in their influencer programs as simple as possible. The goal is to create promoters, not try to impose operational and performance requirements that would make ecosystem participation unattractive.



10 Tips for Productive Relationships

Successful relationships with non-transacting partners don't develop by chance. Like all effective GTM strategies, these partnerships require intentional structure, thoughtful investment, and ongoing effort. The following 10 tips offer a solid framework for building and maintaining strong, productive connections with non-transacting partners.

1. Understand Their Objectives and Needs

Non-transacting partners often have goals and business models that differ from those of traditional sales-focused partners. Vendors must take the time to understand these unique objectives and align their strategies accordingly, whether that means offering specialized training, flexible collaboration terms, or customized incentives. Doing so will foster stronger relationships with non-transacting partners and maximize their influence. The result? More effective collaboration, better market penetration, and mutual success in achieving shared business goals.

2. Set Out a Clear Value Proposition

A clear value proposition is crucial when engaging non-transacting partners, as it defines the mutual benefits that make the partnership worthwhile. For these partners, the value proposition should outline not just the financial remuneration or share of the sales proceeds they might receive but also the strategic advantages they gain by associating with your brand. Brand association enhances their credibility in the market, positioning them as trusted advisors that recommend reliable, high-quality solutions. Additionally, a compelling value proposition should provide non-transacting partners with access to the information they need to effectively service and support their customers. This ensures that they're equipped to deliver value, strengthening their influence and reputation. Furthermore, you can leverage "reverse influence" by highlighting

how the association with your brand opens doors for non-transacting partners to expand their own networks and business prospects.

3. Ensure Comprehensive Onboarding

Onboarding — essential for successfully integrating non-transacting partners into your ecosystem — should be aimed at familiarizing non-transacting partners with your products, services, and overall business processes. This ensures that they're fully equipped to represent your brand effectively. The onboarding process should include detailed training sessions that cover not only the technical aspects of your offerings but also their value propositions and market positioning. Providing extensive resources, such as documentation, case studies, and access to support teams, is crucial for enabling partners to service and support their customers confidently. Assigning dedicated account managers to new non-transacting partners can significantly enhance the onboarding experience. These account managers act as the primary point of contact, guiding partners through the initial stages of the relationship, addressing their questions, and helping them navigate the complexities of your ecosystem. By investing in a thorough and supportive onboarding process, you set the stage for a productive and lasting partnership, ultimately driving mutual success.

4. Implement Robust Enablement Programs

Non-transacting partners require access to the right tools, resources, and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. By investing in a comprehensive enablement strategy, you can ensure that these partners are fully equipped to represent your brand, recommend your solutions, and support their customers. To implement a successful enablement program, offer continuous education through various channels such as webinars, workshops, and certifications. These educational opportunities help

partners stay up-to-date with your products, industry trends, and best practices, ensuring they can confidently engage with customers. In addition, develop a resource hub that serves as a one-stop shop for all the materials partners might need. This hub should include marketing materials, case studies, and technical documentation, providing partners with easy access to the information required to influence purchasing decisions and provide post-sales support. By ensuring that non-transacting partners are well-equipped and informed, you enhance their ability to contribute to your GTM strategy, ultimately driving greater success for both your business and your partners.

5. Maintain Regular Communications

Regular communication is essential for keeping non-transacting partners informed, engaged, and aligned with your business goals. These partners play a vital role in influencing customer decisions. Consistent, transparent communication ensures that they remain connected to your brand and fully aware of the latest developments. To maintain effective communication, schedule regular check-ins and updates through newsletters or partner portals. These updates should include key information such as product updates, market trends, and upcoming initiatives. Forums and advisory boards are useful communication vehicles as well, allowing partners to engage in open dialogue and provide feedback.

6. Offer Incentive and Recognition Programs

Incentive and recognition programs play a pivotal role in fostering strong relationships with non-transacting partners, driving their engagement and reinforcing their commitment to your brand. These partners, which often work behind the scenes to influence customer decisions and shape market trends, need to feel that their efforts are both valued and rewarded.

One effective approach is to offer performance-based incentives tailored to the unique contributions of non-transacting partners. For example, bonuses or co-marketing funds can be provided to those who excel in demand generation or customer support. These incentives acknowledge the impact of partners' efforts and encourage them to deepen their involvement with your solutions. Recognition, however, extends beyond financial rewards. Public acknowledgment of top-performing partners through awards, partner events, or social media can have a significant impact. It not only boosts the morale of those recognized but also sets a standard for others to strive toward. By creating a narrative of success around your partners, you cultivate a culture of achievement and loyalty.

7. Focus on Collaborative Marketing Efforts

Non-transacting partners can significantly enhance the effectiveness of your marketing initiatives when they're actively involved in the process. The key to successful collaboration lies in co-developing marketing materials and campaigns that are tailored to specific markets or verticals. By working closely with your partners, you can create targeted messaging that resonates with particular customer segments, leveraging their insights and expertise to ensure that the content is relevant and compelling. Moreover, the benefits of collaborative marketing extend beyond the creation of materials. Sharing leads and insights generated from these joint activities fosters a deeper level of trust and cooperation. It ensures that both you and your partners are aligned in your goals and can act more effectively on the opportunities that arise.

8. Align Goals and Metrics

Clearly defining goals and ensuring that they're mutually understood creates a strong

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foundation for collaboration and drives better outcomes for everyone. The first step is to establish clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance benchmarks that reflect shared objectives. These metrics should be relevant to both your business goals and the specific contributions of your partners. By setting these benchmarks, everyone knows what success looks like and can focus their efforts accordingly. Alignment, however, doesn't stop at setting goals. Regularly reviewing and adjusting these goals based on market trends and partner performance is essential. An ongoing dialogue ensures that both parties remain flexible and responsive to changes, maintaining alignment even as the market evolves. In the end, aligned goals and metrics create a collaborative environment in which both you and your non-transacting partners can thrive.

9. Deliver Technical and Sales Support

Ongoing technical and sales support is vital for empowering non-transacting partners to deliver maximum value to their clients. To support them effectively, it's essential to provide resources that help them navigate techni-

cal challenges, whether through a dedicated hotline, online portal, or regular consultations. Sales support is equally important. Implementing deal registration programs and sharing qualified leads can significantly enhance a partner's ability to close deals. These initiatives not only incentivize partners to prioritize your solutions but also ensure that they're well-equipped to navigate the sales process with confidence.

10. Employ Flexible Partnership Models

Non-transacting partners often operate with unique business models that require different levels of involvement and support than traditional partners. For instance, some partners may need more autonomy in how they influence sales; others may require customized support tailored to specific industries or customer segments. By providing options such as tiered partnership levels, à la carte services, and customizable incentive programs, you enable these partners to contribute effectively according to their strengths. Flexible partnership models not only attract a broader range of partners but also enhance their ability to deliver value.



Influencing Non-Transacting Partners

Non-transacting partners are a critical yet often underutilized component of the technology channel ecosystem. Their ability to influence purchasing decisions and shape customer preferences makes them indispensable allies in driving demand and expanding market reach. The success of these partnerships, though, hinges on a deliberate and strategic approach by vendors.

Effective engagement with non-transacting partners requires the implementation of comprehensive support structures, including targeted enablement programs, regular communication, and flexible partnership models that accommodate their distinct roles. In addition, aligning goals and metrics,

providing robust technical and sales support, and creating thoughtful incentive and recognition programs are essential strategies for nurturing these relationships.

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For more information about non-transacting partners or to get support in designing and implementing non-transacting partner programs, contact us at info@channelnomics.com. ■



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