




# How to Create an Effective Partner Training Program

*(That Partners Want to Use)*

Two sharpened pencils, one slightly larger than the other, are positioned diagonally on the left side of the page. They have grey erasers and sharpened wooden tips. The background is a solid, bright yellow.

While the task of creating the right partner training can seem overwhelming to a channel management team, a strong partner training program is key to a successful channel program.

This isn't simply a task you want to check done on and move on. Even your most seasoned partners will need key details and training on your products and solutions to be successful. It's about creating the right content that will enable your partners to be successful, delivered in a way that they'll be willing to use.

The following steps will help you navigate the journey of creating an effective channel training program. This ebook splits the training creation process into two steps:

**STEP 1: Know Your Partners and Know Your Goals**

**STEP 2: Create Your Training Program Roadmap**

# STEP 1: Know Your Partners and Know Your Goals

You want to make your partners as successful as possible as quickly as possible. To do that, it's critical that the training you provide best matches their needs.

Before you start creating your partner training program make sure you understand those needs, and can answer these 4 questions:

- What does our partner audience look like?
- What are our partner training objectives?
- What do partners need to be successful with our offering?
- How will we deliver our partner training?



## What Does Our Partner Audience Look Like?

When creating partner training start by identifying who the training is for, as your partner's training needs will vary. Take an inventory of your current partner base and determine targeted groups. Training should build upon the strengths, expertise and existing knowledge within your current partner base as it applies to your offering.

Possible partner training segments could be based on:

- role
- vertical market expertise
- technical needs
- tier
- partner type or another specific need

Training should be concise and targeted to serve a specific purpose. A one size fits all approach will only frustrate partners.



## What Are Our Partner Training Objectives?

With your partner audience identified you can now determine your training goals. Depending on your partner relationship, training may be as straight forward as identifying the right customer to bring to you, or as in depth as technical training.

Start by identifying what each of your partner segments need to be effective at selling and/or implementing your solutions. Once you identify what is needed you can create training categories for the various training elements: **technical, sales, product, identifying the right target customer, etc.** Having well-defined training objectives will help you stay focused on why you are creating training in the first place.

## What Do Partners Need to Be Successful With Our Offering?

With your training objectives defined you can start building your training plan. Make sure your training is created with the audience and goals always in mind. Partners come with different skillsets and your training needs to reflect that.

Create training that is specific and relevant. Consider developing how to guides, FAQs, sales and marketing scripts, implementation manuals and any other content pieces that would apply to a day in the life of your partner as a key part of your training program. These step by step guides should be designed to help partners navigate the important facets of your products and solutions as they work with customers.



### **How Will We Deliver Our Partner Training?**

We find that customers often get caught up thinking they need to invest in a Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver the training, when these are often only needed when you are requiring more complex training and knowledge testing/certification. Often clearly labeling and organizing training materials in your partner portal, where your partners are already looking, is the best place to make your training program available.

Your training delivery method may also differ based on the type of training you have created. For many channel programs posting training in your partner portal is all that is needed. Some programs also hold in person training and/or webinars.

It is likely that your program will include a hybrid approach of multiple delivery methods. Regardless of how you decide to deliver it, you must make sure it is easy for your partners to access the training they need, when they need it.

## STEP 2: Build Your Training Program Roadmap

You now know what your partner audience looks like and what your training goals are for your channel program. You're now ready to start building out your partner training.

### Walk Before You Run

Building out your partner training can feel like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be if you start with realistic expectations. Accept that you won't be able to provide partners everything on day one. Figure out what will have the most impact and build from there. Once you determine a starting point, work until you have completed that section and roll it out to your partners. Give partners time to go through the training and then get feedback so you can improve upon future training and better meet their needs.

Remember, asking for input means listening and a willingness to apply the feedback given.

### Training Is Never Complete

Training is always a work in progress. Products and solutions are constantly changing to meet the needs of the market and competition is changing. Make sure that you anticipate these changes and factor them into your training plan. It is important to provide partners early access to information so they are prepared to address the market with the new information. Proper planning will ensure you can give your partners the things they need before they ask for it.

Trust us; they will thank you!



## Walk In Your Partner's Shoes

Thinking like a partner will steer you toward partner needs and away from any preconceived notions you started with.

Take a few steps in your partner's shoes to determine the things they need to be successful. Consider the sales process, unique product features and benefits, and partner strengths they already have:

- knowledge of a specific market
- competitive insight
- existing customer base
- technical skill

Your training goal should be to build on their existing knowledge and help them grow their business. Understanding your partners will help you identify the strengths that already exist and the gaps you need to fill.

## Be Short And To The Point

Partners do not have an unlimited amount of time. It is critical that training is focused, concise and in bite size pieces. Condense longer training into segments that are ideally 5 minutes but no longer than 10 minutes in length. This will allow partners to get through training material as they have time and refresh as needed.

## Get Help With The Content

Content creation can feel like a heavy burden so leverage your internal sales and marketing teams for guidance and resources. They know how to sell your product, and technical training is probably very similar to what you already deliver to internal staff. Take the time to understand what they have experienced when working with your customers and partners, then identify opportunities to bring their key learnings into your partner training.

In addition, it doesn't take specialized skills and software to build effective training. Want to create a video? Record your GOTOMeeting and upload it. Word and Powerpoint are still a content creators best friend.

## Chart a {Training} Course

Starting with the end in mind will help you center your training on your program goals. Use the work you did determining your partner audience and training goals, and make sure that each training piece clearly meets those needs. Good training has a well-defined, measurable purpose. Don't lose sight of why your partners need training.

## Get Structured

Organize your training content so that the goal is clear to the audience. Structure your training with a quick overview of the training goal so that partners know upfront what they should get out of the training. This will ensure partners get the training that is right for them. Make sure your training content meets that overview goal, summarize at the end and include a call to action.

Creating a successful partner training program takes work, but by having a clear vision of what your partners need and how you can best deliver it to them, you will increase partner involvement and sales.





## Growing your Channel Program? Explore Channeltivity.

Channeltivity is a partner relationship management software platform that helps companies build strong relationships, optimize partner productivity and support new sales.

The Channeltivity platform is used and recommended by many channel programs to deliver effective and engaging partner training.

Channeltivity is easy to use, is fast to set up, and connects to Salesforce.com.

To find out why 20,000+ channel sales professionals around the globe depend on us, and to experience the solution through our hands-on demo, call 877-226-2564 or visit <https://www.channeltivity.com>

