Category

Commercial Excellence

Channel & Partner Sales Playbook

A repeatable system for recruiting, enabling, and managing resellers, distributors, and alliance partners so indirect revenue scales without diluting margin or brand control.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

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- 8 minute(s)

Overview

A practical playbook for building a channel partner program that actually generates revenue: partner segmentation, enablement, deal registration, MDF governance, and the QBR cadence that keeps partners selling.

How many tiers should a channel program actually have?

Three to four is the practical ceiling. More than four tiers creates thresholds so close together that partners argue about placement instead of focusing on what earns them the next tier up, and it multiplies the number of distinct enablement paths your team has to maintain.

What's a reasonable deal-registration window?

Most B2B programs use 60-90 days, renewable once if the partner shows active engagement (a discovery call logged, a proposal sent). Shorter windows push partners to register too early with no real opportunity behind it; much longer windows let partners "land grab" accounts they're not actively working.

How do we handle a partner and a direct rep both claiming the same account?

Whoever has a dated, system-logged first touch — a registered deal or a logged discovery call — gets primary credit; the other party can request a split via a documented escalation path with a 5-business-day SLA. The policy needs to exist and be enforced consistently before the first conflict, not negotiated live during one.

Should MDF be a fixed annual budget or earned incrementally?

Earned incrementally, gated by tier and by a short ROI report after each activity. A fixed annual grant with no reporting requirement is the single most common source of unexplainable channel spend when Finance asks for a channel ROI number.

How long does it take to stand up this whole program from scratch?

The audit, scoring, and policy-writing steps take roughly 3-4 weeks of focused work. The harder part is the first two quarters of consistent PBR cadence and re-scoring — that's what converts a one-time cleanup into a program partners trust.

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