

OUTLOOK 2024

**KEY STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER GROWTH
IN TIMES OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE**

**PARTNERSHIP AND
CHANNEL OPPORTUNITIES
IN 2024**

The B2B landscape has undergone profound changes in recent years. Markets have become increasingly saturated, and competition is fiercer than ever as brands struggle to keep up with the rising tide of content and a growing number of touchpoints needed to engage with buying committees. As the trend of evolving buyer behavior is set to continue for the foreseeable future, it is vital that businesses understand the evolving dynamics of this behavior and the challenges and opportunities it presents.

According to Deloitte, [67% of the buyer journey](#) in 2023 took place through digital channels, and [75% of buyers](#) say they use more sources to research and evaluate purchases than they did in 2022. Depending on the industry and target audience, each of these sources offers businesses opportunities to connect with qualified buyers. As this is unlikely to change in 2024, one of the biggest challenges lies in determining which areas to invest in, in line with performance and the organization's capacity and skill sets.

“The rising complexity of the buyer journey increases the challenges for your partners, making it essential to understand their capacity to nurture potential clients. When allocating Marketing Development Funds (MDFs) and leads to your partners, you need to ensure the quality of the leads they receive, as well as their fit to each partner’s profile. For example, verify if your partner has an internal marketing function and is able to nurture leads.

By working with demand generation companies, organizations can leverage their strengths, resources, and knowledge to not only increase visibility with leads for their partners but also to build customized programs that meet individual partner requirements.”



— **David Verwey,**
VP of EMEA & DPO

HOW TO BUILD A STRONG PARTNER ECOSYSTEM IN 2024

Partner ecosystems are especially crucial in the B2B technology sector, as buyers seek seamless [user experiences](#) as they navigate their purchase channels and drivers. As technological complexity continues to grow, decision makers are more likely to invest in products and solutions that integrate well with existing services in their business. It is increasingly important to take this fact into consideration in your marketing communications, hence the growing prevalence of partnerships and co-marketing arrangements.

Indeed, partner-delivered technology solutions exceeded [70% of the entire addressable market in 2023](#), reaching a global revenue of \$3.4 trillion (Canalys, 2023). Among the technologies most often sold through partner channels are cybersecurity, network infrastructure, cloud, and hardware solutions.



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Rapid innovation, driven by increased adoption of cloud computing, AI, and automation solutions, is increasingly pushing companies to direct their corporate and partner marketing budgets for greater ROI. On average, [60% of MDFs](#) remain unspent (The Channel Meet Up).

However, there is a paradoxical dilemma between performance determining funding and partners not having the skills or support needed to drive performance. Nevertheless, this presents an opportunity to invest in partner ecosystems that can deliver on complex and changing buyer needs and preferences.

“Despite the value of partnership and channel opportunities, significant challenges remain and will persist through 2024. The biggest of these is effectively measuring outcomes by translating data into actionable insights. Given the growing complexity of channel marketing strategies and the underlying technology and processes they depend on, it is notoriously difficult to measure attribution and ROI.”



— David Verwey,
VP of EMEA & DPO

As businesses venture into 2024, addressing these challenges will become even more vital to effectively engage leads in the channel space through demand generation programs.

1 // DEFINING ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

Relationships with channel partners play a key role in driving growth. As businesses navigate the complexities of their respective markets, understanding and clearly defining partner roles becomes pivotal in establishing clarity, cohesion, and collaboration.

Read on to explore the five elements of building a harmonious and productive partnership ecosystem in 2024:



Prioritize cohesion to avoid overlap or conflicts

Each channel partner fulfills a different role, but cohesion throughout the channel ecosystem is a top priority. For example, while affiliate partners provide leads passively, selling partners actively sell your solution.

Other types of partnerships include value-added and white-label resellers, systems integrators, managed services providers, sales agents, and marketing agency partners. All can provide value to your business, as long as their responsibilities are clearly defined and there are no misunderstandings or conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the efforts of all your partners must complement one another—in a cohesive brand story—to support a unified buyer's journey for your prospects.





Prioritize quality over reach when setting goals

Establishing a solid foundation with channel partners begins with setting clear goals and expectations. This is arguably even more important than a partner's size and reach. After all, quality and relevance are more important than quantity in almost every case, especially in sectors as competitive as B2B SaaS.

[Discover 5 strategies for driving demand with channel partners](#) →



Check network relevance to ensure industry understanding

When choosing channel partners, it is imperative that they have a thorough understanding of your industry and can relate to the prevailing pain points of your target audience.

The same applies to co-marketing campaigns, in which brands partner with others that offer services that complement, rather than compete with, their own. Such arrangements may themselves be mediated via a demand partner to provide an extra layer of accountability.



Agree on success metrics to foster a culture of transparency

In any partnership, it is vital to have a shared vision of what success looks like. Both parties must have a common understanding of the desired outcomes and their roles. Not only does this alignment set the stage for a productive partnership, but it also fosters a culture of transparency and mutual respect.

To ensure alignment, set clear, quantifiable success metrics from the start. Whether it is leads generated, sales conversions, or client satisfaction, these benchmarks track progress and highlight areas for improvement. Regularly reviewing these metrics keeps both partners aligned and focused on mutual success.



Review, communicate, adapt, and synchronize your efforts

Continuous evaluation and open communication are the bedrock of any successful partnership. Be sure to establish a regular review process to assess partner performance, and maintain open communication channels to address concerns, share feedback, and adapt your strategies as needed.

The ideal partner is one who is adaptable and follows up in a timely manner to synchronize efforts and capitalize on new opportunities from the moment they arise.

2 LEVERAGING BUYER PERSONAS, ICPs, AND AUDIENCE DATA

Buyer personas and Ideal Client Profiles (ICPs) are essential for any marketing strategy, helping marketers better understand and target their audiences. While ICPs are mostly focused on the firmographic criteria of accounts that might be the best fit for your offerings, buyer personas are fictional representations of members of these accounts' buying committees, which can support personalization for each individual buyer.

When starting to work with partner ecosystems, compare your ICP to that of your partners in search for common ground, helping you identify an audience that would benefit both your organization and partners. Then, develop buyer personas to engage buyers of that shared niche, based on data from past sales and campaigns of both parties.

Keep in mind that it is important to refine your buyer personas with data collected after campaigns to ensure their continued efficiency as a representation of your ideal buyers.



[Discover how to craft data-driven buyer personas in 4 steps](#) →

3 UNDERSTANDING AND LEVERAGING MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Market intelligence is the cornerstone of any effective strategy. Channel partners offer a wealth of insights that, when combined with a brand's own data insights, can provide a comprehensive view of the market they are collectively trying to reach.

Discover how to leverage this combined intelligence for optimal decision making in 2024:



Merging first-party data with partner insights

One of the most valuable aspects of having strong channel partners is that you can augment your own first-party data with their data and insights—especially when working with large demand generation partners, who are more likely to have a broader view of your industry and the various trends shaping its evolution.

Partners with large content networks will have a wealth of market data at their disposal. This gives them a highly precise understanding of what content resonates with your target audience, allowing them to support a demand generation strategy that aligns with your goals and expectations.

As the digital landscape becomes increasingly saturated with content, particularly with the emergence of generative AI, working with trusted partners becomes even more important. Ultimately, brands will find it crucial to present themselves through high-quality, valuable content in order to establish a meaningful presence.





Using partner insights for unique positioning

With their unique position in your broader industry ecosystem, established channel partners can provide deep insights into market trends, buyer behavior, intent, and the competitive landscape. Equipped with these insights, brands are better prepared to establish their place in the market, along with a unique voice and clearer value propositions.

Leveraging a combined pool of first, second, and third-party data ultimately allows organizations to make more informed investment decisions. This includes everything from refining audience segmentation and understanding buyer intent to optimizing omnichannel marketing campaigns.

To make such partnerships work, brands should establish a systematic approach to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting their partners' market intelligence. Successful partnerships, more than ever, depend on collaborative problem-solving and the exchange of knowledge. With this symbiotic vendor-marketer relationship, brands can greatly increase the value of their channel partnerships.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY

A cybersecurity vendor launches a feature to assist healthcare clients in addressing regulatory demands in data protection. They work with a demand generation partner with a large content network and a sizable readership of healthcare decision makers. As such, the partner has a wealth of client engagement data and a thorough understanding of trends in the industry.

By leveraging their intelligence and combining it with their own first-party data, the cybersecurity vendor can better tailor their marketing messages to highlight the challenges their new feature solves and communicate them in a way that truly resonates with a healthcare audience.

[Keep up to date with the latest channel insights on our INFUSE Channel Hub](#) →

4 THE IMPACT OF PARTNER PERFORMANCE ON DEMAND GENERATION

The web is brimming with content, now more than ever before. The deluge of online content will almost certainly continue into 2024 and beyond, especially given the exponential rise of AI-generated articles as brands make scaling their output a top priority. However, this also presents an opportunity for brands that prioritize quality over quantity and look beyond top of the funnel strategies.

As AI content becomes increasingly trendy, buyers will be better able to identify the hallmarks of the content it produces. As a result, they will seek trust and authenticity above all else in human-led content. Coupling this authenticity with sustainable demand generation engines at their disposal will allow brands to have a significant advantage over those that rely solely on AI.



The power of collaborative marketing

Co-marketing campaigns that focus on high-value content will become increasingly effective in nurturing qualified leads and encouraging conversions. However, it is imperative that content produced with a partner is relevant to their own marketing goals. Customization of brand content that enables a partner to best meet the needs of their target buyers is essential for co-marketing success.

Co-marketing and MDF-driven demand generation activities can help accelerate pipeline velocity, a key challenge for many. Both approaches allow partners and vendors to collaborate on campaigns that nurture long-term brand interest and engage leads on their evolving pain points and challenges.



[Discover a framework for creating high-impact B2B content for branding and demand strategies](#) →



Crafting a high-impact buyer journey

By intertwining their growth narratives, brands and their partners can craft a buyer's journey that resonates deeply with their target audience and fosters enduring brand awareness. This alignment means that not only is the vendor's brand story echoed, amplified, and endorsed across multiple platforms, but so are the partner's skills and services.

As both the brand and its partners evolve, this mutually advantageous relationship ensures that their buyer's journey and experience remain relevant, agile, and poised for sustainable growth in an ever-changing landscape.

6 STEPS FOR LEVERAGING CHANNEL PARTNERS IN 2024

Channel partners have become key revenue drivers. Leveraging these partnerships effectively can significantly boost a brand's market presence and revenue potential, fueling growth in a manner that is far more resilient to recessions and unexpected market fluctuations. Below is a six-step checklist to maximize the benefits of channel partnerships in 2024:



- 1. Identify and engage with channel partners specialized in your industry:** Identify partners who have a strong presence in your industry. Their specialization can provide valuable insights and access to a more targeted audience.
- 2. Establish clear goals and expectations and a shared vision of success:** Alignment on objectives ensures both parties work toward common goals, fostering a productive and harmonious partnership.
- 3. Create an agreement covering operational, financial, and legal aspects:** A robust agreement is the foundation for an accountable relationship, minimizing potential misunderstandings.
- 4. Use your partners' platforms and channels for co-branded content campaigns:** Co-branding amplifies reach and lends credibility, allowing both brands to tap into each other's audiences effectively.
- 5. Implement a shared lead scoring and qualification framework:** A unified approach to lead qualification ensures consistency and helps in prioritizing high-potential leads.
- 6. Review partner performance on a regular basis and adapt as needed:** Regular evaluations help to identify opportunities for improvements to be made and ensure that partnerships remain fruitful.

Key Takeaways

Below are the top three takeaways for building strong partnerships to boost your growth in 2024 and beyond:

1

BUILD DEPENDABLE PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR DEMAND GENERATION EFFORTS

The increasingly multifaceted nature of the buyer's journey is complicating the development of comprehensive demand generation programs. However, by forging partnerships with other organizations in your industry, as well as with expert consultants and agencies, you can boost your capability and become more agile.

2

LEVERAGE PARTNER MARKET INTELLIGENCE FOR INFORMED DECISION MAKING

Working with the right channel partners affords businesses the opportunity to access a wealth of market insights. This grants a deeper understanding of buyer intent and behavior, current market trends, and the competitive landscape. As such, brands operating in even the most saturated markets will be better able to identify and communicate their unique value propositions.

3

RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT OF PARTNER PERFORMANCE ON DEMAND GENERATION

Strong partnerships not only enhance demand generation but also play a crucial role in accelerating pipeline velocity. Collaborative efforts, such as co-marketing campaigns, can significantly boost brand awareness and lead engagement, fostering a more impactful buyer's journey and ensuring sustainable growth.

INFUSE demand experts are available to help you innovate your channel marketing strategies with custom-tailored, demand channel programs that empower you and your partners to drive your performance and achieve your goals.

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