

The Salesforce logo, consisting of the word "salesforce" in white lowercase letters inside a blue cloud-like shape.

salesforce

BOOST YOUR SALES WITH CHANNEL PARTNERS

LEARN HOW SALESFORCE HELPS
YOU MAKE YOUR NUMBERS

Introduction

A thriving channel partner relationship can mean competitive advantage for any business that is looking to grow. It's a classic illustration of the famous adage: "Two heads are better than one." By teaming up with a channel partner, you can increase your value proposition to your customers — and, in turn, grow your profits.

But managing these partner relationships is anything but simple. When critical information exists in fragmented systems, you lose productivity and some of the power that comes from your collaboration. Worse yet, conflict can arise.

Channel partners are an incredible resource. Partner communities give you the tools you need to leverage your partnerships, making them more productive, more transparent, and more profitable than ever before.

That's why we've created a solution designed for managing the partner relationship.

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Chapter 1

The Power of Partner Communities

Your partners are expecting that you engage with them in new ways — that you have an effortless experience with instant information, personalization, and 1:1 engagement. But that can be hard to do because fragmented channels, technology and processes create friction when trying to communicate with them. Partners aren't empowered to help themselves or provide feedback, new ideas, and solutions. Channel managers and executives aren't able to discover insights and expertise due to a lack of team integration.

When you're not connected to your partners, you're missing out on deals. Leads go cold because it's difficult to share leads between companies. With no visibility into partner pipeline, forecasts are missed. And deals are lost because your partners lack the information and expertise about your solution to win.

But what if you could drive channel revenue by combining partner business processes and collaboration in a single experience? A strong partnership offers incredible value for businesses. With higher partner



engagement you gain mindshare and increased loyalty from your partners, which in turns leads to increased sales. Additionally, partnerships raise your productivity due to faster information discovery and exchange as you work together to address a common need.

With a thriving partner program, you've improved your value proposition to customers by offering stronger engagement of your selling and support functions, which in turn leads to increased profits.

The possibilities for your channel partnerships are endless, including joint business planning, shared pipeline and lead generation processes, joint marketing and customer service responsibilities, and using your partner relationships to gain access to other geographical markets. Imagine a partnership with an official plan for certifying your partners, generating leads, and establishing contractual agreements between both companies. However, these benefits for a partnership won't be maximized without the tools — such as a community — to make your partner program a success.

But how does a partner community fit into your sales process, and more specifically, with your partner relationship? In a word: effortlessly.

A community tackles all of the potential partner roadblocks head-on, strengthening the power of your partnerships and streamlining your collaboration. In the next chapter we'll go into how to position a partner community at the core of your partner relationships, from onboarding to analysis.

“ What if you could drive channel revenue by combining partner business processes and collaboration in a single experience? ”

Chapter 2

The Benefits of Partner Communities

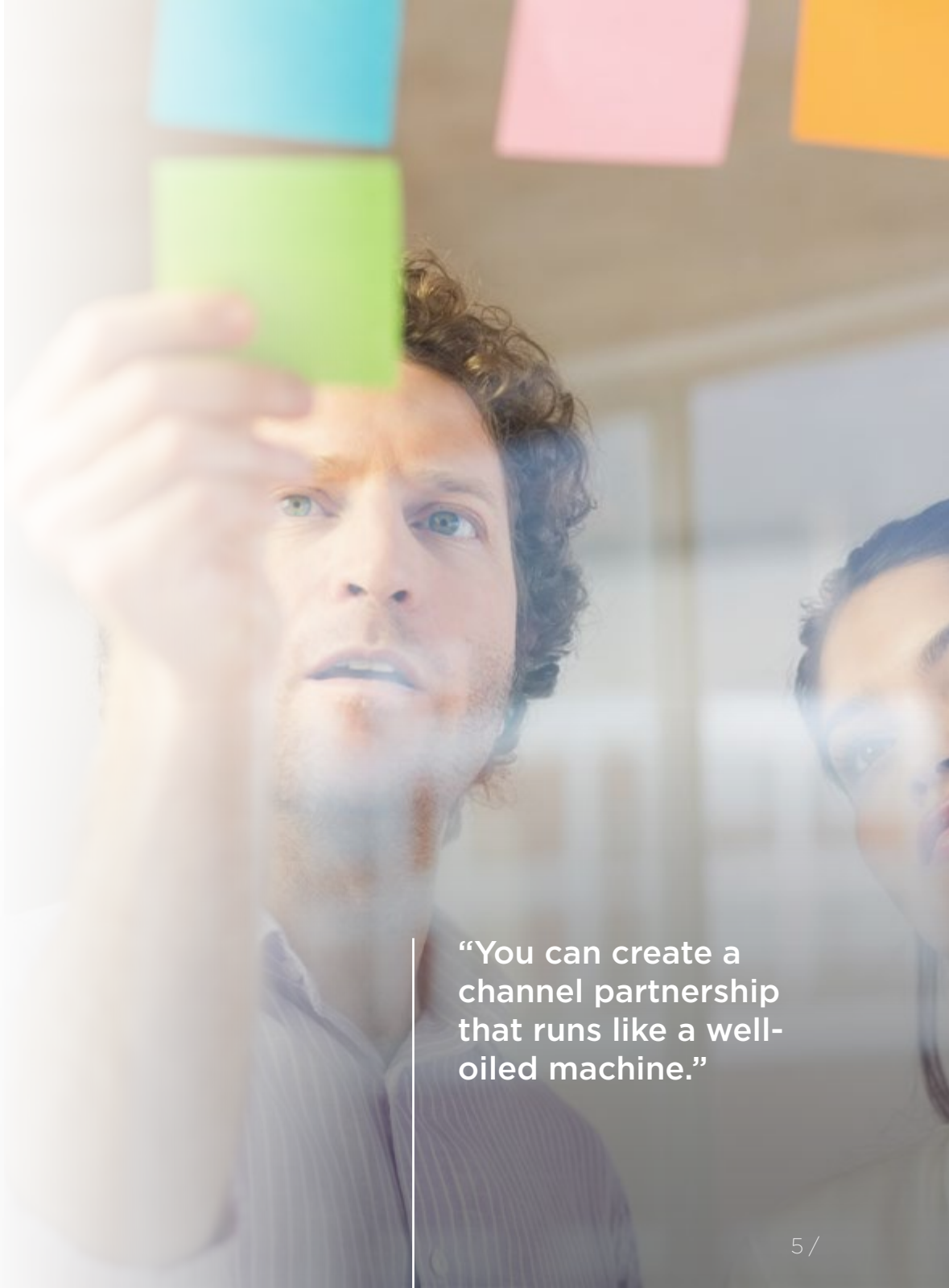
By leveraging partner communities every step of the way, from partner recruiting and onboarding to lead management and deal registration, you can create a channel partnership that runs like a well-oiled machine.

Salesforce gives you the tools to embed each of these components into your partner community from Day 1.

Recruit and Educate

Partner communities enable efficient onboarding and learning by providing easy access to training, certification, and solution assets, right in the partner community. If a partner gets stuck, they can always reach out for help within the community, where they can get assistance from someone on your support team, or even from a fellow partner.

Within the community, training and certification are managed and the process can be automated, guiding your new partners step by step. To encourage your partners to start engaging and participating, the partner community uses gamified badges



“You can create a channel partnership that runs like a well-oiled machine.”

and leaderboards to incentivize users and recognize top contributors.

Co-Market

With the help of a community, co-marketing is a breeze within your partnerships. Manage marketing development funds and budgeting for campaigns and track co-marketing ROI. With Partner Community, you can distribute marketing and or other dollars to specific partners; collaborate on programs; track the effectiveness of the programs; and share results. This allows you to more easily distribute and track how your funding is being utilized and drive programs and channel to success.

Sell

Once your partners get started, the community becomes a crucial part of your joint selling. Lead data from your partners are integrated and synchronized with your CRM. Collaboration within the community allows for lead approval, management, and distribution in a way that is transparent and fair, which helps avoid or minimize conflict.

When your partner is out selling, they still have access to the wealth of knowledge contained within the community. No matter where they are, partners can access the community from their mobile devices and contact experts, view files, or ask questions — anything they need to close the deal.

Analyze

Partner Community includes useful dashboards that enable you to review key metrics, instantly and in real time. You can share access to key dashboards with partners so your internal team and partners are working from the same metric set — creating a fusion of data, goals, and results.

The Constant Contact Story

For many companies, a thriving channel partner relationship is essential. Take Constant Contact, which aims to help companies strengthen their customer relationships through online engagement marketing. In this case, channel partners such as marketing consultancies and website developers play an important role, so Constant Contact needed a way to improve its lead-sharing capabilities and grow its partner businesses by simplifying communication and improving insights.

Salesforce Partner Community delivered those results, turning several touchpoints into one and enabling lead sharing among sales teams and external partners. The community yields greater insights, smarter conversations, more informed planning, and higher revenues — not to mention more meaningful engagement across the board.

Chapter 3

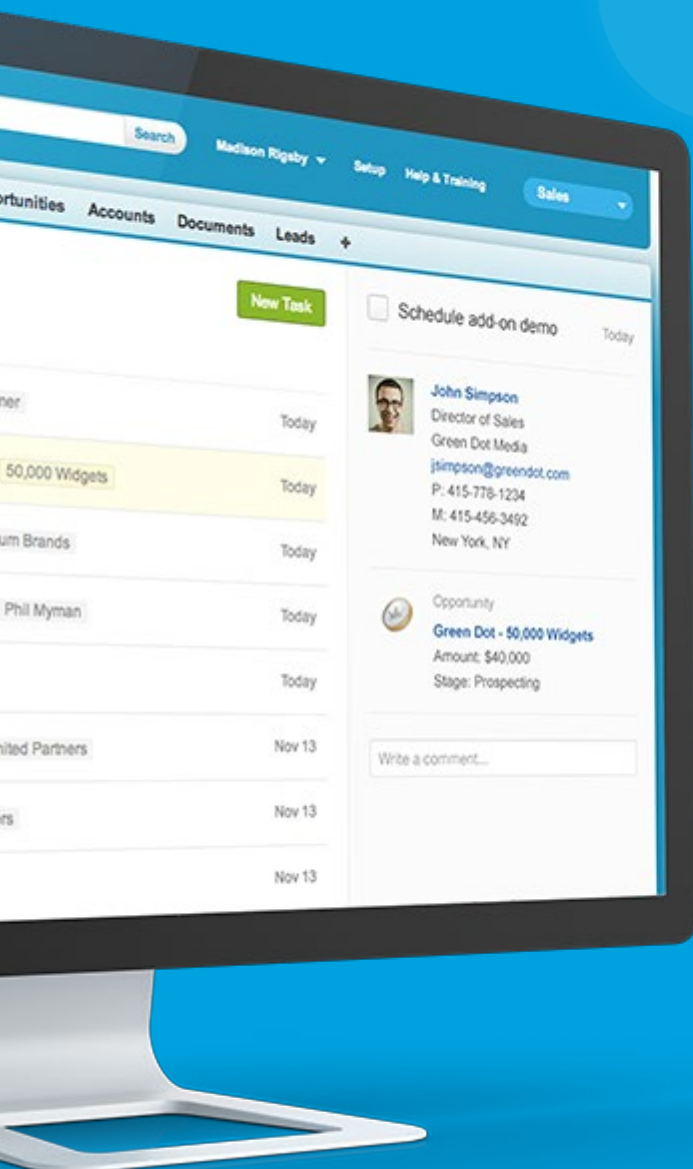
The Salesforce Advantage

Business is all about growth and change — and a partner community is a critical piece of the puzzle. With Salesforce, it's easy to add new tools to support your partners when you need to — such as with a certification program or learning management tools. Plus, sales teams have more visibility into the partner activities, which leads to smarter conversations, better planning, and higher revenues.

In the past, companies kept their critical information in silos: first in paper files, then in software systems that required on-premise storage. Needless to say, this approach to information storage limited collaboration and slowed down business processes. Hunting down the right file in order to share crucial information could take days, which impeded collaboration and limited productivity.

Finally, the world of siloed information is disappearing. Today, companies can leverage cloud technology to store, access, and share vital information — anytime, with anyone,





sharing simpler than ever before — they're also designed to make parsing through all of that data simple and accessible to anyone. The partner community centralizes all of your most important information into one feed for easy, collaborative, secure access to the data you need to keep your business moving. The Salesforce1 Mobile App lets you can take your community with you wherever you go, so you can collaborate, share information, and close deals from anywhere.

Partner communities go beyond just giving you the data you need; they also help you find information and insights you might not have known you wanted. As soon as users join the community, they receive suggestions on users to follow, groups to join, and documents to view. You can follow documents to receive notifications when changes or updates are made. As you continue to use the community, it learns from your actions and makes additional relevant suggestions. And a partner community's built-in rewards system fosters participation by ranking, scoring, badging, and highlighting top contributors.

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At Salesforce, we know that even the most amazing functionality isn't enough. Security is always our top priority, which is why we've built partner communities on the secure, trusted Salesforce1 Platform used by thousands of companies around the world. This way, you know your data is always safe — and that you can share information with the right people at the right time, with the knowledge that it's secure.

A photograph of three people in a modern office setting. Two men and one woman are seated around a table, smiling and engaged in a discussion. The man on the left has a beard and glasses. The man in the middle is looking towards the woman on the right. The woman is wearing a blue top and has her hand near her face. In the background, there are glass partitions covered with numerous colorful sticky notes in shades of pink, yellow, and green. A whiteboard is visible on the left side of the frame.

Conclusion

When used effectively, channel partnerships can be a gold mine of value for your business. Collaborating with channel partners can increase your value proposition and strengthen your bonds with your customers, while also improving your productivity and augmenting your profits. With partner communities, it's all about gaining valuable insight from your everyday partner interactions, which are more integrated and actionable than ever before.

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