

SPCINTERNATIONAL

CHANNEL ENABLEMENT E-BOOK

Volume 1

**WHAT CHANNEL
PARTNERS
REALLY WANT
FROM THEIR
VENDORS**



Erick Simpson

Senior Vice President and CIO
SPC International, Inc.

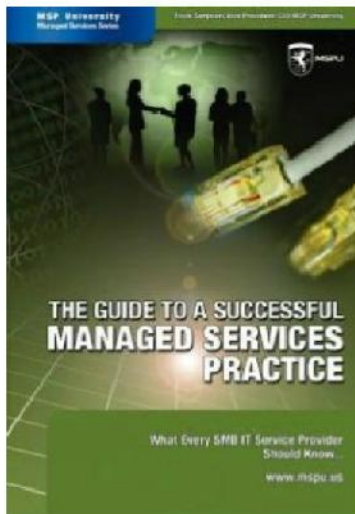


ABOUT THE AUTHOR ERICK SIMPSON

One of the most prolific, recognized and sought-after IT, Cloud and Managed Services business improvement and transformation experts, authors and speakers in the industry, Erick is a strategic IT business executive experienced in improving top and bottom-line business performance by increasing operational efficiencies, boosting marketing and lead generation outcomes, accelerating sales velocity and shortening sales cycles and maximizing service delivery efficiencies.

Erick has contributed to numerous industry publications and events and has authored "The Guide to a Successful Managed Services Practice", the definitive book on Managed Services, and the follow-ups in his Managed Services Series "The Best I.T. Sales & Marketing BOOK EVER!" and "The Best I.T. Service Delivery BOOK EVER!" and "The Best NOC and Service Desk Operations BOOK EVER!". Erick has also co-authored the HTG publication "Peer Power – Powerful Ideas for Partners from Peers".

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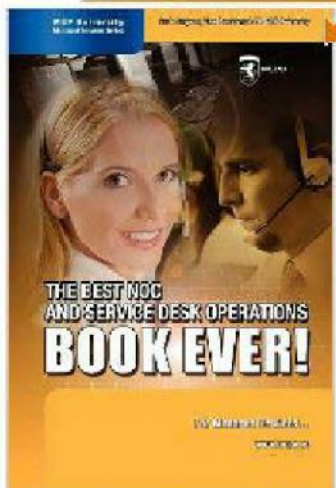
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Leveraging over 20 years in the IT industry as a VAR, MSP, Vendor, Educator and Consultant, Erick's experience uniquely qualifies him to deliver effective IT business improvement and transformation strategies for VARs, Resellers, Solution Providers and MSPs/CSPs.

Erick also leverages his considerable channel expertise and experience in developing and delivering focused Vendor Channel Program Development and Partner Acquisition and Enablement Strategies to improve Distributor, Manufacturer, Vendor and Franchise partner program performance and grow channel revenues.

Honors & Awards:

- SBSC Partner Advisory Board – Microsoft
- Local Engagement Team Advisor - Microsoft
- Managed Services Advisory Council – CompTIA
- Industry Expert– Kaseya
- SMB 150– SMB Nation
- 3 Time MSPMentor 250 – MSPMentor
- IT Industry Advisory Council – Expetec
- Go To Market Program Advisor – Cisco
- Go To Market Program Advisor - Intel
- Go To Market Program Advisor – Zenith Infotech

SPC INTERNATIONAL
THE IT BUSINESS BUILDER

Hundreds of
Vendor
Engagements

Thousands of
Speaking and
Training
Events

Tens of
Thousands of
Channel
Partners
Enabled





WHAT CHANNEL
PARTNERS REALLY
WANT FROM THEIR
VENDORS



MAXIMIZING CHANNEL
ROI



ABOUT SPC
INTERNATIONAL



PARTNER ACQUISITION
AND ENABLEMENT
SERVICES



IT BUSINESS BUILDER
ENABLEMENT
PLATFORM



HOW TO ENGAGE WITH
SPC INTERNATIONAL



WHAT CHANNEL PARTNERS REALLY WANT FROM THEIR VENDORS

What do channel partners really want from their vendors? That's the subject of this e-Book. Knowing the answer to that question can help you more successfully market for and acquire new partners, and provide them the tools they need to succeed in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible. These are the keys to lowering partner acquisition, enablement and overall channel program costs and accelerating program ROI by enabling your partners' success more rapidly and effectively.

The good news is, we've surveyed our partner channel to discover the answer to this and other critical questions for you – and I'm certain you'll be as surprised at some of the responses as we were. As channel strategists and partner acquisition and enablement experts, our role is to advise our vendor clients as to the most cost-effective ways to structure channel programs that influence their target audience to partner with them, and then enable and incent them to perform.

In addition to leveraging our years of channel training and enablement expertise and prior experience as successful IT Solution and Managed Services Providers to develop these strategies, one of the most important sources of data that we rely on is that provided by our channel of nearly 30,000 IT Solution and Cloud Service Providers and MSPs.

As strategic consultants and partners to our channel, we lead the industry in developing and delivering IT business improvement training, fulfillment and consulting services to help improve our partners' operational efficiencies, increase their lead generation outcomes, accelerate their sales velocity and shorten their sales cycles to increase their top-line revenues and bottom-line profits. As a result, our trusted relationship allows us to ask for and receive data from our channel partners that they normally do not provide to any other channel manufacturer, vendor or distributor. This capability greatly increases the strategic value we deliver to our channel vendor clients.

I trust that the following survey data will provide you a deeper understanding of the stated needs of our representative group of IT Solution Providers and MSPs, or confirm what you may already know or suspect in these

topic areas. In either case, I anticipate that our survey data and its analysis prove valuable in helping you assess your current channel program's alignment with those needs, and determine whether as a result, your developing new; or modifying existing, strategies may be a consideration to help you achieve your channel goals more effectively.

I'll be publishing the results and analyses of future surveys on a regular basis through subsequent e-Books in this series, all aimed at providing you relevant, valuable insight as to IT Solution Provider, MSP and Cloud Service Provider pains, challenges and needs, and I look forward to your feedback. I welcome your requests for survey topics and questions that I can poll our channel with, in order to help you more effectively build your channel and support your channel partners.

About the Survey

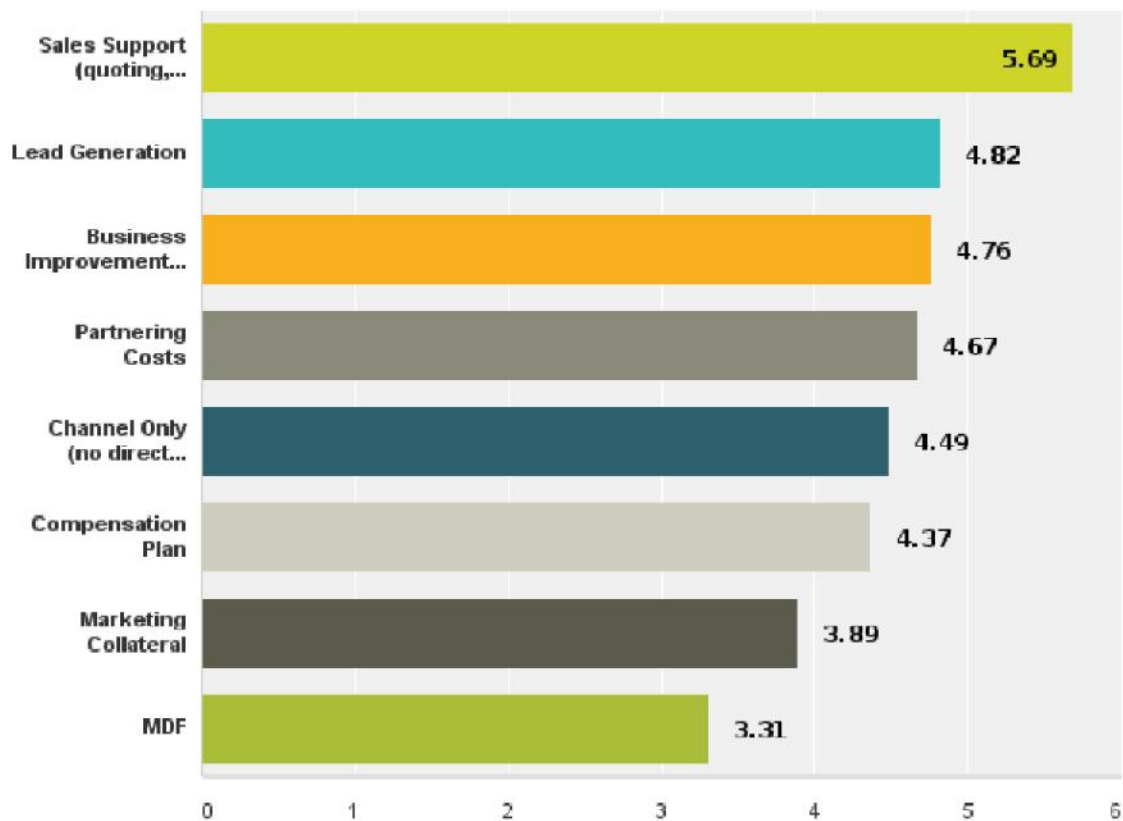
Our survey was administered to our channel partners in March of 2014 within a 24 hour data collection period. 227 Partners responded to our survey, most of whom classify themselves as Managed Services Providers, and were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Please rank the following items you consider when partnering with a Vendor in order of importance, with 1 being the highest importance and 8 being the lowest importance
 - a. Channel Only (no direct sales to end customers)
 - b. MDF
 - c. Sales Support (quoting, meeting with prospects, etc.)
 - d. Lead Generation
 - e. Marketing Collateral
 - f. Compensation Plan
 - g. Partnering Costs
 - h. Business Improvement Training
2. How important to you is vendor-offered business improvement training?
3. Do you want your vendor partners to provide partner enablement services (training, marketing and appointment-setting services, sales support)?
4. Do you currently receive vendor-offered business improvement training?
5. If so, what types of vendor-offered business improvement training have you received?
6. How much has vendor-offered business improvement training improved your business?

Responses and Analysis

Q2 Please rank the things you consider when partnering with a Vendor in order of importance, with 1 being the highest importance, and 8 being the lowest importance.

Answered: 227 Skipped: 0



Survey respondents to this question revealed some interesting, expected and unexpected rankings for each of the possible answers to this important question. With an overall average ranking of 5.69, the primary stated need for

sales support is not surprising among all possible answers. And lead generation support can also be expected to rank highly, coming in at second with a 4.82 average ranking.

What is telling and unexpected is the survey respondent's ranking of the importance of business improvement training, only 6 average ranking points behind lead generation. We'll understand why this item is ranked so highly in our survey as we continue our analysis below, and as a result why vendors should focus appropriate attention to this particular data point.

As may be expected, partnering costs and a channel-only focus ranked highly on the list at 4.67 and 4.49 respectively, but what should be noted is that these items were both ranked higher on average than channel program compensation plans. This can be interpreted to indicate that the initial up-front and ongoing costs of partnership with vendors (including required training and certification), and the possibility of competing against direct, retail or wholesale distribution channels is a greater concern than actual compensation and commission plans. To validate this assumption, further polling is in order, but at the very least a review of your program in these areas may be warranted in light of this data.

At a 3.89 average ranking, the availability of marketing collateral to help partners promote and sell vendor products and services comes in at near the bottom of the list, but the message is clear – partners do place a high value on these tools and resources, as they are ranked at number 7 out of 8 in areas of importance from a vendor program evaluation perspective.

And perhaps most surprising of all, the last place of importance on our list of 8 areas that partners consider when engaging with potential vendor relationships is MDF, coming in at an average ranking among our respondents of 3.31.

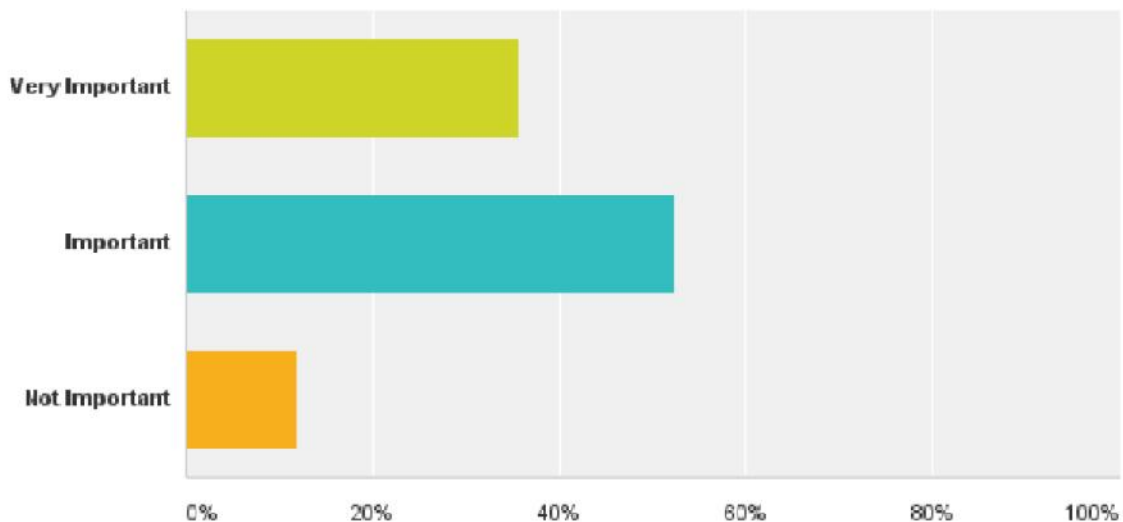
This is another area that requires further polling to truly understand. Does this signify that partners are not aware of the assistance that MDF can provide them in lead generation activities, or do they not fully understand how to request and utilize MDF? Or perhaps some of the vendors they are currently partnered with do not provide MDF or make it difficult to receive, or process MDF payments slowly. If you do provide MDF to your partners, how well are you promoting its availability? Additionally, assess its

relative difficulty to qualify for, and the length of time it takes for your partners to receive it.

While this broad question asked our partners to rank each of their possible answers in order of importance, what is evident is that each and every one of them is an important consideration for them. Developing a compelling partner enablement program that distinguishes you from your competitors requires careful consideration of how each of these areas are structured and how they are perceived by your channel prospects and partners.

Q3 How important to you is vendor-offered business improvement training?

Answered: 227 Skipped: 0



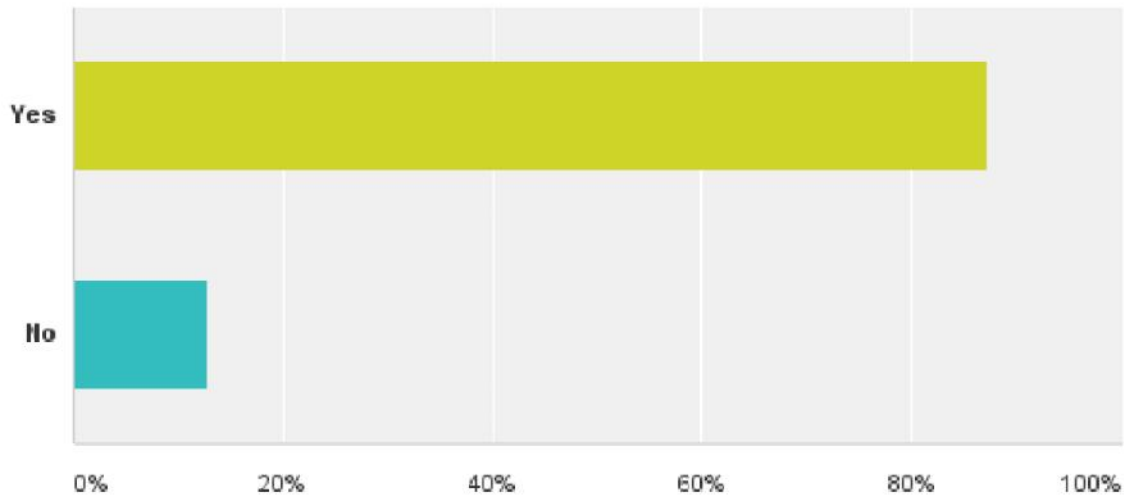
Ranked at number 3 in our previous question as to its importance in our survey respondents' evaluation of vendor partnerships, this question asks our partners to rate exactly how important vendor-offered business improvement training is to them.

A whopping 88% responded that vendor-offered business improvement training is important to very important to them. This indicates an increased level of business maturity and degree of acumen for today's IT Providers and MSPs, as they are signaling their understanding of the importance of; and hunger for, training that is not technical in nature.

How effectively does your channel enablement strategy meet this need for your partners? If it does so effectively, great – but if not, look to evaluate your options in providing operational, marketing, sales and service delivery training to your partners, as we'll see its positive outcomes further along in our analysis.

Q4 Do you want your vendor partners to provide partner enablement services (training, marketing and appointment-setting services, sales support)?

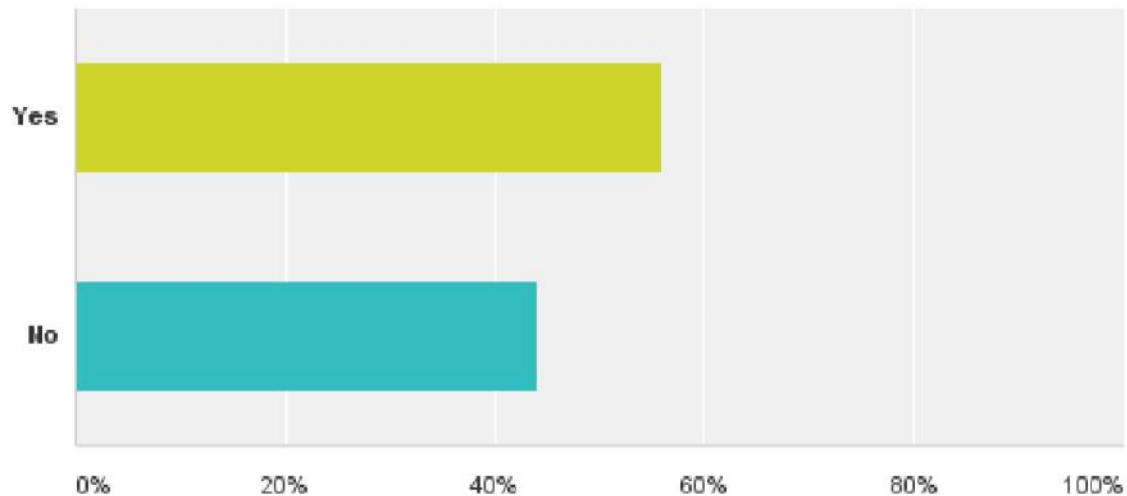
Answered: 227 Skipped: 0



There are no real surprises here, as 87% of our respondents indicated their desire for partner enablement services that include training, marketing, appointment-setting and sales support services. What is a potential concern is that 13% of our respondents signaled that they do not want these types of support services. Further polling is indicated to explore this data point in more detail.

Q5 Do you currently receive vendor-offered business improvement training?

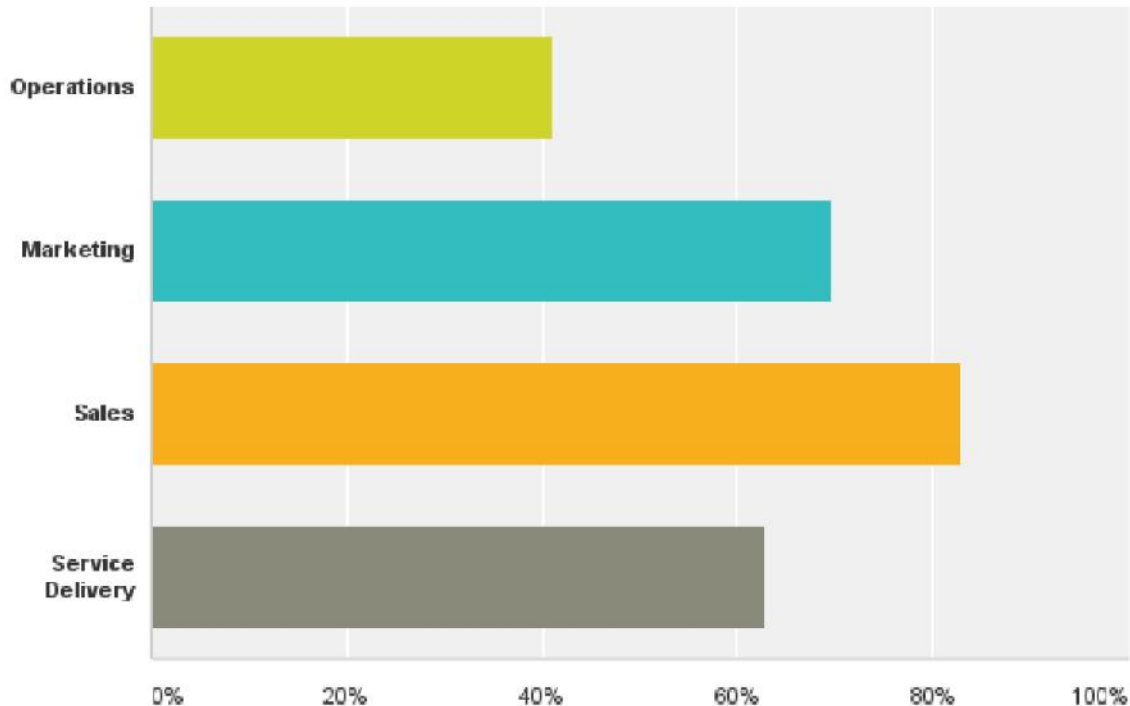
Answered: 227 Skipped: 0



Responses to this question were nearly evenly split, with the nod going to the 56% of respondents that indicated they do currently receive vendor-offered business improvement training. This question; when answered in the positive by a respondent, triggered 2 additional questions. The 44% of respondents that answered in the negative were excluded (skipped) from being presented these 2 remaining questions.

Q6 What types of vendor-offered business improvement training have you received?

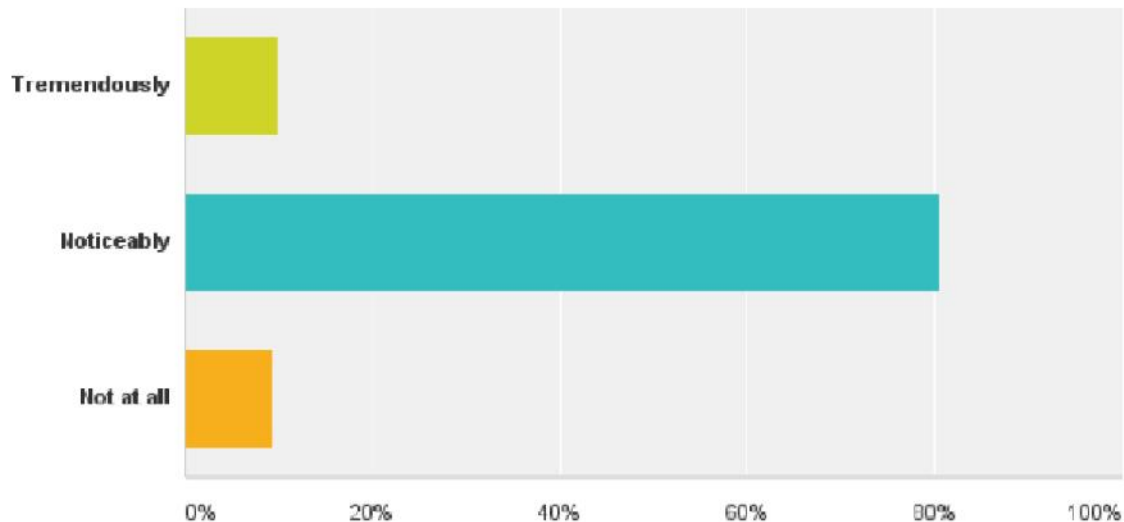
Answered: 129 Skipped: 98



The 56% of survey respondents that stated they do receive vendor-offered business improvement training were asked to select which of the following types they receive: operations (41%), marketing (70%), sales (83%) and service delivery (63%). This distribution is unsurprising, based upon the priority that vendor programs generally assign to these areas in order to address their partners' greatest needs. If you offer business improvement training to your channel partners, does your program reflect these statistics? If not, identify where it deviates and why to ensure its alignment with your partners' needs.

Q7 How much has vendor-offered business improvement training improved your business?

Answered: 129 Skipped: 98



The responses to this final question clarify the reason that our partners ranked business improvement training as the number 3 area they evaluate when making vendor partnering decisions. An overwhelming 91% of the respondents that receive vendor-offered business improvement training indicate that it has noticeably or tremendously improved their businesses.

If you offer business improvement training, clearly communicate that benefit in your new partner acquisition marketing campaigns and activities and promote it heavily to your existing channel partners. If it improves your

partners' businesses significantly, it's a safe bet that it will positively impact your channel revenues.

If you don't offer business improvement services to your channel today, evaluate your options to develop these services in-house, or to outsource their creation, delivery and administration.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth



MAXIMIZING CHANNEL ROI

You have invested significant time, effort and expense to acquire each and every one of your partners. In order to increase retention and loyalty and improve the performance of your existing partner channel, you must also distinguish and differentiate these programs from those of your competition.

The design of your Partner Enablement Program must be comprised of performance incentives, spiffs, MDF and training deliverables that increase your partners' readiness and capability to market, sell and deploy your products and services.

And in order to maximize your channel ROI, your programs must be designed to influence improved partner performance and reward their successful completion of tasks, goals and objectives that help them realize these desired outcomes.

Gone are the days of distributing MDF to partners with little to no justification for it, or forecasted return. The distribution of Partner Enablement benefits must help teach your partners how to fish, and increase their

operational, marketing, sales and service delivery and implementation efficiencies and effectiveness as a result.

Instituting these types of qualifiers for MDF consideration and distribution can only be achieved through a robust performance measurement and reporting process. But ultimately, your partners' growth and success; along with your channel ROI, will improve as a result.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth



ABOUT SPC INTERNATIONAL

Our years of partner acquisition and enablement and go-to-market channel strategy development success is a result of our experience and expertise on both sides of the channel – as successful IT solution and managed services providers, and later as effective IT manufacturer, vendor and distributor go-to-market channel growth strategy specialists.

This offers us a unique insight as to the best ways attract your target audience and improve your existing channel partners' performance.

Our success at delivering effective ROI to our channel manufacturer, vendor and distributor clients validates our keen understanding of how to structure successful partner acquisition and enablement deliverables to meet your needs.

In fact, we have developed an amazingly effective Partner Acquisition and Enablement Program proven to lower partner acquisition costs and accelerate channel program ROI.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth

We increase vendor channel revenues through the marketing for; and training of, new channel partners from our pool of 30,000 IT Solution Providers and MSPs – just the type of partners you're looking for – from start to finish.

This results in capable, productive partners that understand your products, services and solutions and leverage their years of experience; along with our training and enablement outcomes, to grow their businesses and your channel revenues.

Contact us today to discuss how we can help you achieve your partner acquisition and enablement goals and lower your associated program costs while accelerating ROI with our proven channel growth strategies and solutions.





PARTNER ACQUISITION

We work with our channel manufacturer, vendor and distributor clients to deliver effective partner acquisition outcomes by:



DEVELOPING

unique online and offline marketing strategies and leveraging cutting edge technologies such as our online IT Business Builder Training and Resource Centers to attract prospects



PRODUCING

one-of-a-kind live training events, providing face-to-face engagement opportunities between vendors and solution provider prospects



UNDERSTANDING

our clients' criteria for success from our engagements and instituting robust KPIs and reporting processes to evaluate performance and ROI for continual improvement



PARTNER ENABLEMENT

We work with our channel manufacturer, vendor and distributor clients to develop and administer measureable partner enablement programs and outcomes by:



DELIVERING

as well as monitoring and tracking solution provider training, performance improvement and program outcomes via our online training platforms and robust reporting processes



DESIGNING

effective Websites and marketing collateral and architecting marketing plans and strategies to improve lead generation outcomes for their channel partners



LEVERAGING

our unique sales training tools, platforms, methodologies and techniques to accelerate sales velocity and shorten sales cycles for their channel partners



Channel Partner Enablement with SPC International's IT Business Builder Training Center

Our IT Business Builder Training Center for vendor, manufacturer and distributor channels and independent IT providers is unlike any other learning management system you may have seen in the past. We've leveraged our combined decades of experience in developing effective channel growth, partner acquisition, enablement and training strategies for some of the largest vendors, manufacturers and distributors in the world to develop this unique solution from the ground up.

We've left out all of the "bloatware" and unnecessary features that add management overhead and complexity for users that you'll find in other solutions, and focused on designing only the features needed to achieve training objectives. And we've accomplished all of this in an amazingly simple, clean interface that is so intuitive that doesn't required studying a complicated manual to use it!

But don't assume that because we've made our system so simple and easy to use that it won't meet your channel

enablement needs. It's packed with powerful training measurement and reporting features that will make your job enabling your partners through training extremely easy.

Our IT Business Builder Training Center includes over 350 videos, 2,000 customizable marketing collateral, lead-generating newsletter articles and blog posts and additional resources to supercharge business improvement. It also includes tests covering all of our 101, 201 and 301 curriculum for IT operations, marketing, sales, service delivery and advanced and emerging technology solutions in a structured training environment.

With these resources you can develop a more capable and effective channel; trained and tested on IT business improvement best practices that will accelerate business growth and profitability, and help you increase channel revenues and reduce costs.

Our purpose-built IT Business Builder Training Center for vendors, manufacturers and distributors is the tool that can help you achieve these outcomes, and it is available via cost-effective subscriptions on a month-to-month basis with no long-term agreements. This allows you to enable as many or as few partners as you wish on a short, medium or long-term basis.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth



Licensing Your Own White-Labeled IT Business Builder Training Platform for your Channel, Internal Staff and Vendors

If you already have a library of training curriculum comprised of webcasts, videos, best practice guides, white papers and so on; but don't have a simple, effective platform to deliver your great content to your channel with, we've got you covered with our Licensed IT Business Builder Training Platform.

Our IT Business Builder Training Platform Is the brand-able, white-labeled version of our Training Center that you can leverage to create a great delivery vehicle to showcase all of your great content and maximize your ROI in it.

We've left out all of the unnecessary features that add management overhead, complexity and cost for administrators that you'll find in other solutions, and focused on designing only the features you need to achieve your training and enablement objectives.

And we've accomplished all of this in an amazingly simple, clean interface that is so intuitive you won't need to study a complicated manual to use it!

Because this is your own platform, you can create training for your internal staff and external strategic vendor partners as well, allowing you to leverage the same simple, effective platform to enable, train and test multiple groups.

And in our Licensed IT Business Builder Training Platform, you can even supplement your own content with our library of white-labeled IT business improvement training to enable your channel partners or customers to succeed.

This allows you to customize and create your own "best of breed" training programs for your channel partners, your own internal staff and external strategic partners by creating customized training curriculum for each of these unique groups.

Our white-labeled IT Business Builder Training Platform is the tool that can help you achieve these outcomes, and it is available via cost-effective licensing packages.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth

ENABLE YOUR CHANNEL FOR AS LITTLE AS \$5,000!

No matter what your budget, our channel enablement packages will help you transform your partners into successful channel champions.



SUBSCRIPTION LICENSING

Our IT Business Builder Training Center offers over 350 videos, 2,000 marketing collateral pieces, lead-generating newsletter and blog articles and additional resources to supercharge business improvement. It also includes tests covering 101, 201 and 301-level training for IT operations, marketing, sales, service and emerging technology solutions in a structured training environment.

PLATFORM LICENSING

Customize and create your own "best of breed" training programs with a brand-able, white-labeled version of our Training Center. You can even supplement your own content with our library of white-labeled IT business improvement curriculum to enable your channel partners or customers, staff and vendors to succeed.

SPCINTERNATIONAL

THE IT BUSINESS BUILDER

Leverage Our **Experience** To Obtain The Results You Need

Our years of channel training and enablement expertise and prior experience as successful IT Solution and Managed Services Providers offers us a unique insight as to the best ways attract your target audience and improve channel partner performance.



600

CHANNEL ENGAGEMENTS



30000

PARTNERS TRAINED



17

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Why choose **SPCINTERNATIONAL**?

Contact us today to discuss how we can help you achieve your partner acquisition and enablement goals and lower your associated program costs while accelerating ROI with our proven channel growth strategies and solutions.



EXPERIENCE

Our years of channel training and enablement expertise and prior experience as successful IT Solution Providers and MSPs affords us a unique insight as to the best ways attract your target audience and improve your existing channel partners performance.



CHANNEL STRATEGY

With hundreds of successful channel vendor engagements, our experience and performance speaks for itself, and uniquely qualifies us as the most capable, cost-effective and successful channel strategists and partner acquisition and enablement resource in the industry.



COST SAVINGS AND ROI

Our success at delivering rapid ROI to our channel manufacturer, vendor and distributor clients validates our keen understanding of how to structure successful partner acquisition and enablement deliverables proven to reduce channel growth costs.



PARTNER ACQUISITION

To deliver successful new partner acquisition outcomes, we develop unique online and offline channel marketing strategies and leverage cutting edge technologies and incentives to attract and introduce our channel of nearly 30,000 VARs and MSPs to your programs.



PARTNER ENABLEMENT

To improve partner performance and grow channel revenues, we administer successful partner enablement programs by delivering effective solution provider training and measuring performance via our online training platforms and robust reporting capabilities.



TRAINING CURRICULUM

Our IT Business Builder Training and Resource Center hosts the largest library of vendor-agnostic training resources in the industry, with thousands of classes, courses, videos and resource downloads designed to grow leads and shorten sales cycle.

Learn more >>

www.spc-intl.com/channelgrowth