

Get Early Results

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I can't build new partnerships and a program at the same time, there's just one of me!

You're launching a new partnering program, or your company is making another run at partnering after poor results last time. Now you find yourself with a fulltime job setting up early, winning partnerships and "another" fulltime job building an organization and program. You're out on the road 4 or 5 days a week meeting with new partners. You're also looking at candidates for your open partner manager positions ... in your spare time. You might have to settle for one of the internal candidates; he's good technically, but you're going to have to teach him a lot about partnering. If you had a little more time to focus on hiring you know you could find better candidates.

Perhaps you took the other path – focused on building a strong foundation for your program. You know getting the right people in place pays off; choosing the wrong people can kill your efforts. You're doing it right: designing a program, carefully considering the skills and resources you'll need, and making sure you're getting the right people onboard. You're also building support inside the company. If you're a partnering veteran brought in to build a new program you know that shaping opinions and building support back at HQ is critical, and you have to watch your backside. But while you're "doing it right" you're falling behind in results. No one cares about foundational work when they're looking for results at the end of the second quarter.



Cloning yourself, by bringing in a "rented" partnering veteran while you hire your team, allows you to produce quick results and still build a solid foundation for success.

Clone Yourself

You need to clone yourself — spend 100% of your time out managing partners, while spending the other 100% laying the right foundation, hiring partner managers, and shaping a pro-partnering culture at HQ. There is a way to do that, you know? There's a way to function at full capacity before you bring in even the first partner manager. And when that first partner manager comes on board, she can walk into solid, producing relationships. You can show early results without having to do it all yourself.

This magic is simple – actually, it's not magic at all. The magic is partnering; personally partner with someone who will complement the solution you deliver to your company, partner with someone who will extend your personal reach into markets you lack the time to reach. The magic is to work with veteran partnering managers to fill your resource gap and produce results, while you build your program. "Renting" partnering veterans will jumpstart your alliance partner program and put you on the short road to results and money in your pocket. These veterans, by getting your first alliance going, save you months while you bring in and train a permanent alliance manager. You get crucial, initial partnering preparation work done by partnering specialists and then transition to your team when they're ready.

Magic Rules

As with any magic, there are rules for its proper use – three in this case:

1. Only "rent" partner management services from someone with a clear, strong, and compatible partnering approach,
2. Only work with partner managers of the highest quality and
3. Be certain to develop "crystal" clarity around the exact role they will play in working with you.

Partnering Approach

If you are new to partnering, don't be misled into thinking that there is a single, well-understood process for managing partnerships. As explained in the 3-Dimensional Partnering Approach, as many as 70% of partnerships fail to produce the intended results and these failures are rarely because of poor joint solutions or problems in the marketplace. Partnerships fail because partner managers lack robust approaches that address the full set of requirements for partnering success. If you are an experienced alliance executive, you know how to produce results and you need someone who will work to adapt their approach to be compatible with, or even complement and augment, your proven approach.

When you "rent" a partner manager, be sure he uses a proven set of processes, tools and techniques. Don't work with anyone who "just knows" how to partner; you have no assurance that her intuitive approach will work with your partners. Insist on professionals with a balanced approach to working with partners; one that builds a sound alliance foundation by creating a joint solution, a solid market position and a trust-based team with a common purpose.

Experience and Quality

You will love the results you'll see when you bring in an experienced alliance manager to start that first alliance — if you get a good one. Great alliance managers can be hard to find and they take time to develop. But, an experienced partner manager, using a sound partnering process and backed by a strong support team will be miles ahead of repurposed sales or project managers taking on their first alliance assignment. Alliance Managers are experts at influencing people, at building networks, at team building, at seeing and acting on possibilities and at

operating in ambiguous environments with firm objectives. Match the alliance manager to the opportunity. If you're starting a new relationship, you want an objective oriented hunter who rises to the challenge and shares your objectives. Remember, you're setting the tone for the future of the relationship and your company's reputation is being built by the alliance manager. Working with the best alliance managers, even for this relatively short, initial period, is critical to long-term success.

Clear Roles

Finally, consider the role you want your "partnering partner" to play. If you need someone to work for you, building and managing your first partnerships, don't bring in a consultant who views his role as telling you how to partner while leaving you the task of actually doing the work. Look for someone who can explicitly define what roles they will play in your organization, and what they will not do. They should have a simple and clear means of describing each step, each deliverable they will provide to you. Without this level of clarity up front, you risk satisfaction in the end.

Different partnering executives have different priorities and skills.

We described how bringing in a "partnering partner" to manage early steps of the initial partnerships can be the magic you're looking for. You may prefer a partner to design and set-up your program while you start building the new alliance relationships. You may prefer help with recruiting or some other aspects of getting a new program launched. The considerations are the same, work with experienced partnering veterans with a strong, robust approach that addresses all three dimensions of a successful alliance, only work with the best, and work with people who can clearly define the roles they will play, alongside you, in building a winning program.

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