



**From Authorized to Engaged...Turning on Your VAR Channel  
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## Flipping the Switch and Getting Your Reseller Involved

Creating a productive reseller channel requires many steps, but the primary step is the conversion from authorized (signed) to engaged resellers. This is the most important, and most difficult, component to an effective channel campaign.

Anyone can get resellers to fill out channel partner applications and agreements. Most resellers do it to ensure they are included in case the opportunity generates bluebirds. Believe it or not, that is the number one reason resellers complete partner agreements — they don't want to miss out on the next great opportunity that would pay the most reward for the least amount of effort. Who can blame them? It's very difficult to determine at first blush which product will succeed, so, if it has a remote chance, filling out the agreement will guarantee they are on board in case this is that next great opportunity.

What does that do for you as the supplier? Nothing, other than creating a distraction until it results in revenue. Babysitting and begging resellers is counterproductive and your time would be better spent trying to close deals directly rather than waiting for your channel to help do something.

So, why not sell direct? Typically, because you can't afford it — it is too costly and far too long of a ramp up. So you leverage the channel because they have customers, can provide local support and, hopefully, will proactively market your product to their customer base.

## Time to Reset Your Expectations

Resellers, just like you, are in business to make money. Expecting them to abandon a proven revenue opportunity (their existing business) to work for you for free (yes, free. You didn't show up with a bag of money, just “the greatest opportunity a VAR could have”). Like before the agreement was signed, they will continue to do what makes them money after the agreement is signed. If they have a customer who is looking for your type of product, they will present it and then go back to doing what pays the bills. How do you change this mind set? **BECOME THE ONE THAT PAYS THEIR BILLS!** It's that simple.

## How to Become the One that Pays Their Bills

- 1. Be honest** with yourself and with them. Don't suggest your product defies market trends and should sell within a 30- or 60-day sales cycle, one-call close, etc. Tell them exactly what your experience has been and the work it will take to succeed. This will set their expectations appropriately and impress them with your honesty and humility.
- 2. Set your expectations to your low water mark.** They are not going to drop everything to sell your product, plain and simple. If you expect very little, you won't be disappointed. Once you realize you have a lot in common (you both need revenue, don't like distractions, maybe have other things in common), you will begin to develop a working relationship that may result in positive results.
- 3. Listen and learn.** They are the local expert. Learn from what they know, have experienced, etc. and exploit this knowledge and know how as effectively as you can. They will tell you how to succeed in their market if you listen close enough.

**4. Recognize your partner for the value they provide.** They are a local reseller who will:

- Professionally represent your product if trained properly
- Follow up on leads you provide
- Be a local resource to end users who are afraid of buying from an out-of-state or out-of-country no-name supplier like you

**5. Provide adequate training.** They MUST be sales trained or signing the agreement was a waste of time. If they want technical training, provide it. The more they invest in these two components, the more they will invest in your product line.

**6. Build your marketing campaign around them** by leveraging their customers and prospects without expecting them to do the heavy lifting. Remember, they will always have a better chance of selling locally because people buy from people and people will buy from the local guy before they buy from a remote stranger. This is their value: Local relationships.

**7. Capitalize on the Internet and modern marketing tools** (social media, e-marketing, etc.). The typical reseller is not fully immersed into these concepts (some even lack a useful Web site), so you can help them here and provide a value they currently lack. You can utilize this added Web presence for your products to create more awareness and Web site traffic for your own company.

**8. Provide a Jumpstart™ service** that helps them get out of the starting gate, targeting local end users in their market on their behalf, getting local press for the new relationship, establishing a local “foothold” in their market to their and your benefit.

**9. Build on successes.** Whether you provide case studies for positive results within their market or help them actually close an opportunity, use this as momentum to build on. Celebrate and announce wins and get press for the two of you based on big and small victories.

**10. Continuously reinvigorate the relationship.** They are regularly approached by competitors and other “distractions,” so you need to regularly replenish the relationship with new reasons to continue to work together. Leads, new product info, case studies, spiffs are a few of the many ways to keep in touch, but come with an agenda. Coming to “check in” occasionally will turn the relationship into a nuisance.

***Following these steps will ensure you are on the path to success with your reseller channel.***



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