



# MAXIMIZE PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:

## identify and incent non-sales behaviors

by Dan Hawtof, parago VP of Business Solutions, Global Channel

Earlier this month, I hosted a webinar during which I talked about parago's recent channel marketing survey. One thing our research pointed out was channel marketers' desire to grow beyond pure sales incentives and start including the behaviors that support sales. But they also told us they're having difficulty figuring out how to pull it off.

During the Q&A portion of the webinar, an attendee asked how to go about identifying exactly which non-sales behaviors he should be incenting. It's a great question, because it's one of the biggest stumbling blocks channel marketers face. To layer on additional incentives that will result in a measurable bottom-line increase, you need to 1) know which behaviors to focus on, and 2) have a channel platform capable of handling it.

So how do you figure out which non-sales behaviors are the most profitable within your channel?

### identifying your top performer

To determine which behaviors to focus on, you need to identify which of your partners are consistently bringing in the most sales, and what behaviors or engagement they exhibit:

- 1. look at your sales totals to identify your top performer(s)**
- 2. review your organization's sales process**
- 3. define the behaviors that support your sales process**
- 4. determine which behaviors your top performers have adopted that your low- and non-performing partners have not**

When you're finished, you'll be able to put together a basic behavior profile of your most engaged channel partner.

Let's call him Bob.

### Bob-ifying your channel program

Now you need to figure out how to get the rest of your partners behaving like Bob. But before you can do that, you need to understand why they aren't already.

Start by talking to your low- and non-performers about those Bob-like behaviors. Why aren't they already engaging in them? Does your current channel program make it difficult in some way? If that's a big issue, stop right there. You know what you need to fix.

Address the problem, then sit back and watch your process for a few months to see if things improve. (My hunch is that while a program glitch or two will certainly have an impact, it's likely not the whole story.) If the problem persists, now you know it's purely a matter of motivation.

Next, you determine a plan for incenting these behaviors. The idea is to overlay additional incentives on the desired behaviors when they lead to actual sales.

Implement your plan, then sit back and watch again.



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### an example

Let's say Bob always, without fail, registers his deals. Registering doesn't benefit him financially, but being the first to register the deal appeals to his competitive nature. Your low- and non-performers aren't as competitive, and since they have no financial incentive to register, they don't bother.

You adjust your program so that now, when a seller registers the deal before making the sale, his or her sales incentive increases. By tying a reward to the deal registration behavior, you drive more participation in your program, incenting more sales and increasing partner engagement.

### evaluate and tweak

So assume now that you've 1) come up with several non-sales behaviors to incent, and 2) made the necessary program changes. You've watched the numbers for a while to see how well your low- and non-performers do at keeping pace with "Bob."

If they're neck-and-neck, fantastic. If they're doing better, but not great, you might consider incenting an additional behavior or two to see what happens. Keep in mind that a different behavior/incentive combination could prove to be a more effective motivator for this non-competitive group. And it also may work for Bob, kicking his totals up even higher.

### the secret sauce

You may be thinking, "This makes sense and all, but I'm still left with the problem of designing and managing a complex incentive program that I have neither the time to do nor the staff to manage."

This is where parago comes in.

Our channel platform is capable of handling the most complex incentive program, and monitoring and reporting on its performance. Plus, we can make changes and adjustments 'til the cows come home and you're seeing the results you want. You just tell us what you need, and we'll figure out how to do it.

Dan Hawtof is parago's VP of Business Solutions, Global Channel. For more than 25 years, he's been involved in almost every aspect of the channel. He's been affiliated with large enterprises and small startups, working in every department, from sales and strategy to product marketing and management, and more.

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