



**Tapping into partner
marketing funds.**



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Not just for big partners

Many of you will recognise Intel's 'bong' jingle and Intel Inside logo that appears on adverts for laptops that contain their processors, or the iPhone and Samsung ads that end with a particular phone dealer's branding. This is co-funded partner marketing at its best.

But it's not only for the big resellers or major high street name phone shops. Partner marketing funds are available to smaller, lesser known brands, because they know SME's like to buy from other SMEs, so it makes sense for the IT vendors and comms networks to help their smaller partners spread the word and increase sales (and nurture stronger relationships) in the SME market.

So, are you tapping into this potential source of funding to help improve your marketing, lead generation and sales revenue? If not, you really should start looking into it.

My perspective

I spent the first half of my 20+ year marketing career at Intel, Vodafone and NETGEAR working with channel partners (resellers, dealers, integrators and distributors) across the Europe, Middle East and Africa region.

Managing these partner programmes included a big focus on getting the best results from jointly funded marketing campaigns and rebate programmes.

Then most recently, I was on the other side of the fence, putting together proposals and winning requests for partner marketing funding, having co-founded a CX/CRM solutions practice selling Oracle, Salesforce and Microsoft solutions.





Do the groundwork

The reality is that partner marketing funding pots are limited and very often come with strict requirements, such as sales growth rates, lead generation volumes, accreditations, and partner programme membership tier level.

But don't look at these requirements as blockers, because once you put in the initial investment to achieve the criteria, the potential to help your business grow beyond that point with funding from the technology or telco partner is a real opportunity to help you achieve your growth goals.

You're also far more likely to get increased focus and support from senior sales leaders in those businesses, because they love a partner that wants to go the extra mile to help their sales numbers.

Elements of a solid proposal

As I've already mentioned, most, if not all vendors and networks will have a clear list of criteria that needs to be satisfied for partner marketing funding to be considered, but there will be many other partners vying for a piece of this budget, so you need to go beyond ticking off the basic requirements.

The following 3 points will be really key to you being in the best position to get funding, whether it's part of a formal process or an adhoc activity you want to present.

1. Relationships

2. Solid plan with ROI figures

3. Successes and pipeline

Take your time to plan the detail, including suppliers, timelines and any requests from the vendor for resources other than the money, such as time from product specialists for videos or use of event kits (virtual and face-to-face).





1 Relationships

The reality is that the more you can help a sales director or partner manager at your IT vendor or comms network to achieve their sales targets, the more likely they'll support your request for funds.

This is why relationships with these key stakeholders is critical to make sure you're first in line for budget. You should look to build a really strong connection with these people by participating in partner forums, being active in promoting their brand and showing you're there to help them as much as you are to grow your own business.

Work closely with these contacts to develop plans that not only help your sales figures, but also clearly align to the goals they have too, which could be a mix of revenue increase and new customer numbers. Or maybe growth in particular sectors or geographic locations.



2 Solid plan with ROI figures

When I was managing the partner funding requests for Intel and Vodafone, it was so much easier for me to approve requests that were backed-up with a clear plan of how the funds would be spent, the expected results and historical evidence that it was achievable.

Work with your partner manager to understand what their key goals are, which products are in focus and build your proposal with those goals and products clearly targeted and as priority.

Sometimes you'll be given a template to submit your proposal, but if not, remember to provide a good summary, followed by the detail. This needs to include clear and a realistic ROI calculation, backed by the detail of what you'll actually use the funds for to achieve the goals. Just putting "£x for marketing" isn't enough. Go into detail.



3 Successes and pipeline

Everyone wants to back the right horse, so prove you've already had successes delivering results through case studies.

Note that some vendors and networks have funding specifically available to create case studies.

Plan ahead and use the months before you put forward your request for funding to build a solid sales pipeline to show you have the capability to manage and convert leads into sales. Make it clear the funding will help you grow that pipeline.

Let your partner manager know that you've decided to get laser focused on their products and keep them up to date with everything you do and all the wins you have. This builds a great story that they'll share with their bosses, so when it comes to the funding request, the key people will have already heard about the effort you've put in and the successes you've had.



One last idea...funding from multiple pots

One other thing you can look to do is dip into pots from several vendors. For example, with a strong plan, you could approach both the mobile network and the handset manufacturer. This collaborative approach will give you the strength of both brands behind you and provide two or more additional outlets of your own brand.

From an IT vendor perspective, working with non-competing component manufacturers or a hardware and software provider could be a win for everyone.

Getting it done

You need to remember this is investment in your growth, you just need to jump through a few hoops and build some key relationships to get it done.

I've given you an insight into the key elements you need to work on, but if you want help or advice to get to a position where a major IT vendor or network is willing to invest in the growth of your business, I can help you build your plan. Just give me a call or drop me an email.

Good luck

Michael

Chief Thinker and Do-er

Beyond-Consulting

+44(0) 7816787293

michael.evans@beyond-consulting.co.uk

