BLITZMasters™

A Channel Marketer's Guide to Impactful Co-Selling:

How to Maximize ROI on MDF Spend

Table of Contents

01 Introduction

For most companies, selling through and with your channel is more important than ever. That means channel marketing and how you successfully engage, train and empower your partners is a critical investment. However, as most channel marketers know, maximizing the return on investment (ROI) on your channel budget and MDF spend is a challenge, especially when it comes to sales enablement and co-selling.

While product training is a critical step, what most partners need is help selling your products and services. Sure, sales reps have basic sales skills, but the record proves that everyone can use a little skills update and new tricks of the trade. We need to reimagine our co-selling strategies to meet the needs of partners and their sales teams.

There's an old saying that goes: "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, **you feed him for a lifetime!**" This guide is all about teaching your partners to fish. We'll walk you through the entire co-selling process from lead generation to following through with those contacts, and closing business.

The first step in the process is to arm partners with the tactics to start the sales process with end users, and the second is to empower them to put the tactics into practice immediately. So often, we just put partners through one-directional training without hands-on practice.

Are you ready to dive in? Great! But first, let's talk about the limitations of virtual communications and why sales reps get stuck using the same old tactics.

02 Limitations of Virtual Communications

The challenge with many partner sales reps is they hide behind the impersonal touch of email, texting, and social media. Honestly, they'd probably rather rearrange their sock drawer than pick up the phone and call a prospect! In fact, if you say the words "cold calling," most reps will run from the building!

After twenty years of running sales enablement blitz campaigns for the channel; we know a sale doesn't happen until a sales rep TALKS to a buyer. That's right, a good old fashioned live conversation is what makes or breaks the deal.

"One of the most basic mistakes many businesses make is to try to use new technology as an attempt to replace human activity, rather than as a tool for increased efficiency and improved performance," says Alistair Sergeant, CEO, Equantiis. Exactly! This from the leader of a company that builds digital-enabled businesses!

No matter how good the technology or how much artificial intelligence and machine learning you build into the process, nothing replaces the impact of human-to-human connection when it comes to starting a new business relationship.

03 Teaching them to fish

Partners frequently ask vendors to "give them leads," and many organizations do just that: spend marketing dollars for lead generation then provide their partners with leads, hoping conversion will magically happen. The reality is it's much more impactful to teach them HOW to generate their own leads rather than just handing them over. (Remember, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.")

It's hard to break through all the noise. Partners are inundated with product training from vendors, but what is often missing is basic training on how to start the sales process with end users that ultimately leads to selling vendor solutions.

Partners need tools that are tactical and practical, and easy to implement, in order to be successful at driving revenue for their vendors.

04

5 Key Tactics to starting the sales process

Tactic #1:
A Compelling Opening Statement

The sales process always starts with the appointment, and the appointment starts with a compelling opening statement.

Compelling opening statements include a value proposition that is about 15 seconds long. It should start with: “We help companies” and end with a description of how your solutions create a business outcome, or how they solve a problem. Value propositions should NOT mention a product (unless you want your partner sales reps to get hung up on immediately)!

Contrary to popular belief, the purpose of a first call with a new prospect is not to sell anything. Rather, that first call is all about booking a meeting at a future date in order to have a deep-dive discovery call, when the prospect has made time for the conversation. What a relief for the buyer when they learn you are just trying to make an appointment for the future and not give them some hard sell. Yet, so many sales reps try to shove a sales pitch into the first 30 seconds of a brand new relationship.

Tactic #2:
Getting Past Gatekeepers

Next in the process is understanding how to get past gatekeepers.

Gatekeepers have been trained from day one to NOT let sales reps into their organization. Therefore, it is necessary to provide guidance to partners on how to navigate this prickly piece of the sales process.

A great way to speedily get past the gatekeeper is to immediately ask for the sales department, the I.T. help desk, or accounts receivable, since none of these folks have gotten the message to not let sales reps through to the decision maker.

Tactic #3:
Getting Voicemails Returned

The other tactical piece of the sales process partner reps struggle with is getting voicemails returned. We often hear them say things like, “I don’t leave voicemails, because no one ever returns them.” To this I say: “That’s because you’re doing it wrong!”

The single purpose of voicemail isn’t to sell anything, it’s not even to set an appointment, it’s just to get a returned call – that’s it.

Mastering the art of getting voicemails returned significantly increases the number of appointments set. In fact, as many as 50% of returned voicemails will become an appointment, and appointments then become an opportunity to start to sell!

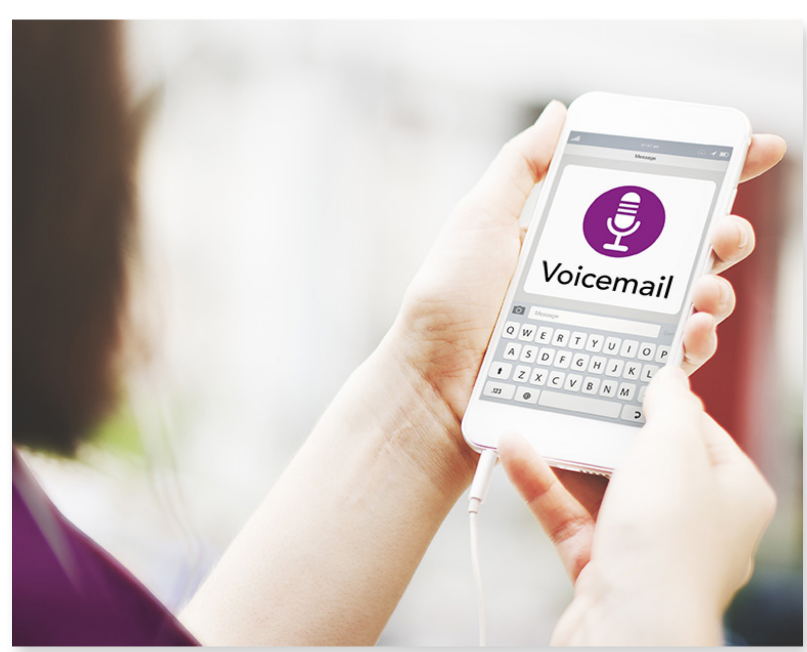
The key is “Less is more”. The mistake most sales reps make is “pitching the prospect” over voicemail (and they wonder why no one calls them back!). An effective voicemail also has a “hook” that compels the prospect to return the call.

Here is an effective voicemail script you can share with partners to help them get their voicemails returned:

“Hi (prospect first name), this is (rep first name) with (rep partner name). I’m calling about (vendor, i.e. your company name). Will you please return my call? I can be reached at (rep phone number). Thanks!”

By simply dropping the name of your company, without an explanation of WHY they’re calling about your company, the rep creates curiosity and compels the prospect to return the call.

When the prospect returns the call and asks the rep why they were calling about your



company, the rep should then explain their partnership with you and how your solutions can create a business outcome or solve a problem for the prospect. (If the rep doesn't immediately refer to WHY they dropped your company name on the voicemail, the prospect can feel "tricked" into returning the call, so it's important the rep make that immediate connection between what they said on the voicemail, and why it's relevant to the prospect.)

Tactic #4:
Handling Common Objections

Next in the process is handling common objections. Although there are about a dozen common objections reps hear when calling prospects to set an appointment, the all encompassing objection is "I'm not interested", because no matter what the specific objection is, it's likely a form of "I'm not interested."

Here's a great way to combat that objection:

"That's exactly what (current customer) said when I first called them. They've since become a customer, and as a result, we've helped them (describe an outcome your solutions create).

Tactic #5:
Asking for the Appointment

The final step in the process is asking for the appointment. Often reps leave it entirely up to the prospect to set the date and time of the appointment. Although this may seem the "polite" thing to do, it actually sends a message that the rep isn't busy, has nothing else going on, and therefore is free to meet whenever the prospect is available.

Instead, it's much more impactful to say, "how does Tuesday at 10:15am work for you?" The more specific, the better. This indicates the rep is busy, and that Tuesday at 10:15am works for the rep.

It also makes it easier for the prospect to look at one place on his calendar to determine if he's available at that time, and it often changes the conversation from "if we should meet" to "WHEN we should meet".

Putting it all together, it goes something like this:

Rep: "Hi (prospect), this is (rep name) calling from (rep company). We help companies (your value-proposition). The reason for my call is to schedule an appointment to learn more about your role, and see if we can add value. How does Tuesday at 10:15am work for you?"

Prospect: "I'm not interested."

Rep: "That's exactly what (current customer) said when I first called them. They've since become a customer, and as a result, we've helped them (describe an outcome your solution creates). How does Tuesday at 10:15am work for you?"

Prospect: "Sounds great! See you then."

05

Putting it into practice

Once you've armed your partner sales reps with these proven prospecting techniques, the next step is to give them a structured time to make calls to actual prospects. The goal of these calls will be setting appointments where the reps can discuss the powerful outcomes your solutions create.

Partners really appreciate vendors who offer training that not only helps them understand the vendor's products, but also helps the sales reps be better at their jobs!

Running co-selling blitz days is a great demand-generation activity that can help promote upcoming events or serve as a follow-up after events. They're also a great way to drive sales incentives, launch a product, or as part of a competitive take-out campaign. Sales blitzes can also be used to recruit new partners or as part of onboarding new partner reps.

06

Tracking and Measuring Results

Of course, none of this means anything if you don't track and measure the results of the campaign.

While BlitzMasters offers a digital co-selling platform designed for tracking blitz results, you can also create an Excel spreadsheet that allows you to measure the number of dials, decision-maker conversations, appointments, voicemails left, and voicemails returned.

MANAGER DASHBOARD

Rep Name	Team	Dials	Decision Makers	Opportunities	Voicemails	Returned Voicemails	No's
Christine Smith	NW Team	55	8	3	35	1	1
Bob Bryant	NW Team	31	3	1	20	0	0
Justin Durant	NW Team	51	8	4	25	3	1
Jane Elliott	NW Team	30	6	2	19	0	0
Nancy Johnson	NW Team	21	1	0	5	0	0
Jason Witten	NW Team	33	6	2	23	4	0
Danny Jones	East Team	36	4	3	25	0	0
Tom Butler	East Team	40	6	2	30	2	0
Bill Jones	East Team	31	4	2	14	1	0
Rob Bennett	East Team	60	10	5	45	3	1
Jennifer Mahon	East Team	28	6	4	15	0	1
Doug Baldwin	South Team	44	8	2	34	2	0

07 Following through

In order to keep the momentum going after the blitz is over, follow through with partner sales reps at the 30, 60, and 90 day mark, and offer to help them close the business. Perhaps you have technical support that can accompany them on their appointments with prospects, or executives who are available to meet with prospects who represent a larger opportunity.

Running contests and offering sales incentives to those reps who close business from the appointments set during the blitz will keep them engaged throughout the sales process, and keep the lines of communication open should they need guidance from you and your company along the way.

By working with them throughout the process, and not just at the beginning, you show them you are willing to invest in their success both in the short term and the long term. You'd be surprised how many vendors do ad hoc activities, training or wine and dining, but then leave their partners high and dry when they need that extra help.

08 Summary

You are an amazing Channel Marketer.

What you need is a consistent return on your channel marketing investment, and a way to really show value to both your sales leaders and your partners. Co-selling that follows these proven methodologies and tactics will do that and more!

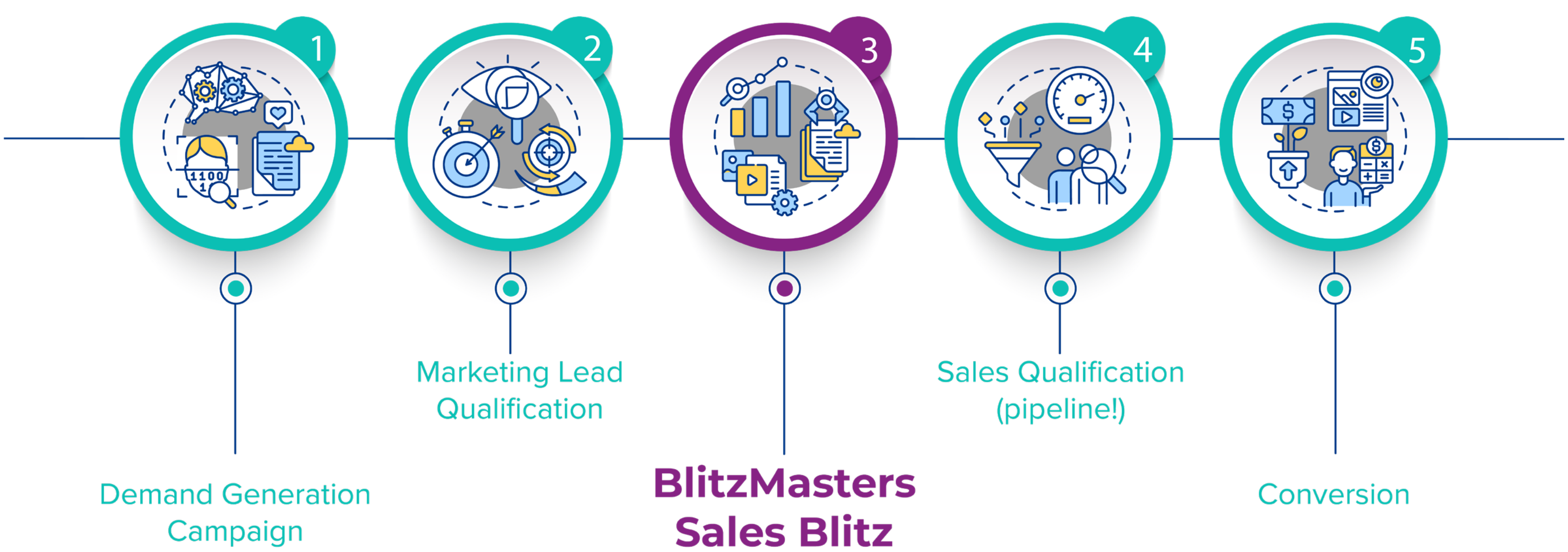
The tools and processes in this guide give you all you need to achieve maximum impact. Follow the steps outlined here, and you'll be prepared to drive sales with partners, while nurturing your relationships along the way.

By leveraging our sales blitz methodology, you'll create a proven and repeatable process in which to engage partners in an impactful way that leads not only to better partner relationships but higher revenue and sales of your products and services.

Since 2002, BlitzMasters has helped its clients generate over $1 Billion in pipeline.

Thank You

Ready to maximize ROI on your MDF spend?
Add channel sales expertise from BlitzMasters to your co-selling plan.



Let's get started:

Contact Form

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Prefer to get in touch directly? Email andrea@blitzmasters.com today!