

SP CE

**A SP CE GUIDE TO
CHANNEL SALES SUCCESS**

**THE STATE OF CHANNEL SALES
IN 2025**

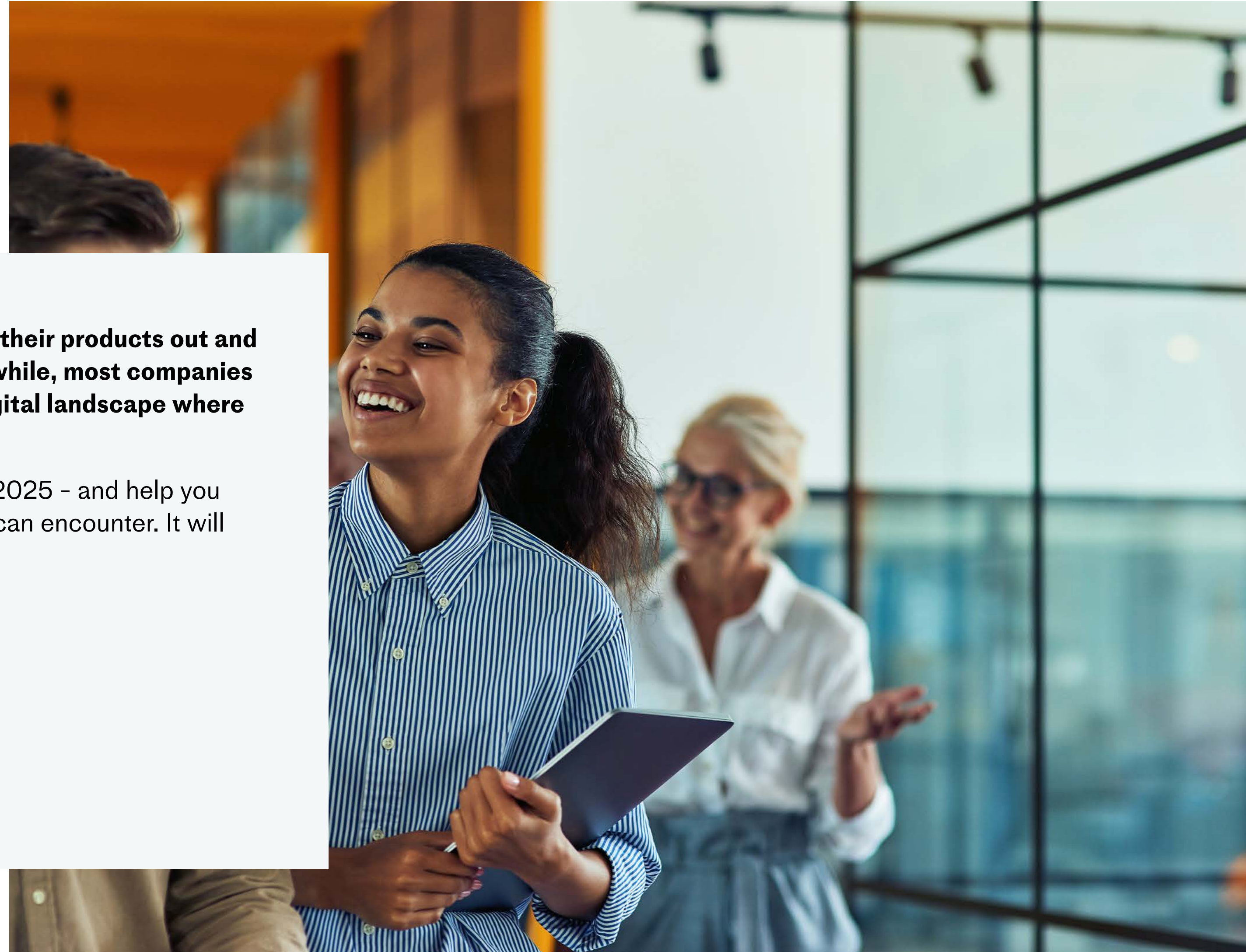


THE STATE OF CHANNEL SALES IN 2025

More and more companies rely on channel partners to get their products out and 75 % of B2B deals are now done through channels. Meanwhile, most companies are trying to navigate the challenges of an increasingly digital landscape where the struggle for attention and mindshare is very real.

Our guide exists to give you an overview of channel sales in 2025 - and help you navigate the priorities you may have and the challenges you can encounter. It will walk you through:

- 1. 6 C-suite priorities in 2025**
- 2. Top 5 channel-sales challenges**
- 3. Common solutions and pitfalls**
- 4. The SP CE way to channel-sales success**



C-SUITE PRIORITIES IN 2025

At SP_CE, we've had countless conversations with leaders in channel-sales organizations. These conversations have formed the basis for a series of C-suite priorities that these companies have - with the goal of making their channel-sales machine perform in 2025 and beyond.

Now, these priorities do not exist in a vacuum. They are all sprung from a specific market condition, a condition that makes said priority absolutely vital. As you go through the priorities on the next couple of pages, you can always look in the upper-right corner to see the specific condition that has had an impact on the priority that's being discussed.



#1: BE EASIER TO DO BUSINESS WITH

As more and more B2B deals are done through channels, the competitive landscape grows more and more fierce. Partners and distributors are oftentimes carrying products from multiple manufacturers that are all struggling for mindshare, something that puts an enormous pressure on manufacturers: it's no longer enough to have a great product and share the necessary material and information with partners. Now, everything has to be shared in a way that makes it **easy to work with you and your products.**

If a partner feels that it's difficult to find what they need, to reach your team and get the necessary information, odds are they will pick another product to put first. Which, of course, can cause some major problems for your sales results.

**“WE NEED TO BE EASIER TO DO BUSINESS WITH.
SO THAT WE’RE ALWAYS OUR PARTNERS’ FIRST
CHOICE”**

#2 BOOST FORECAST ACCURACY

The pandemic changed a lot of things, one of which was the need to commit to larger volume orders from suppliers. Combine this with an increase in costs and what we have is a perfect storm of risk: you can either buy too much and risk having more than you need - or buy less and have too little. Both of which will come at a high cost.

The savior will be a sales forecast that is actually accurate, something that has historically been hard to get in channel sales - as you don't have the same overview of partner actions and can't always be sure of their projection accuracy.

With that, it's no surprise that one of the biggest priorities right now is to make **projections and forecasts as accurate as they can possibly be.**

“AFTER THE PANDEMIC, SUPPLIERS HAVE MUCH TOUGHER REQUIREMENTS ON VOLUMES WHILE THE COST OF COMPONENTS AND MATERIAL HAVE SKYROCKETED. MAKING SALES FORECAST ACCURACY SO MUCH MORE IMPORTANT.”

#3 DRIVE PARTNER UNDERSTANDING

The world is more uncertain than ever and the global economy is challenging for a majority of companies. In such a situation, it is crucial to make the most of what we have, to make sure partners can continue to perform and to ensure compliance to regulation.

It is more important than ever that **partners can actually articulate your product's value** - and that they are adequately trained. If you're working in a regulated industry, it will also be key to ensure compliancy at every step of the way, to make sure that partners know what to do and act accordingly.

Now is not the time for mistakes; now is the time to control your message and make your partners as well-versed in your product as you are.

“OUR PARTNERS NEED TO ARTICULATE OUR VALUE PROPOSITION AS WELL AS WE DO, AND WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IS PROPERLY TRAINED”

#4 MITIGATE RISKS

Risk mitigation is a priority that has always been there, but now the need has multiplied. A global uncertainty paired with a competitive landscape creates a situation where companies need to **stay in total control** and not leave anything to chance.

The previously mentioned compliancy is as important as ever, while it can be harder to ensure that partners adhere to all local laws and industry regulations. Creating a need to maintain a tighter relationship, and a more thorough oversight, of partner actions and interactions.

This is a priority that will probably just gain in importance moving forward. Making it a good idea to put it near the top of your agenda.

**“INDIRECT SALES COMES WITH GREAT OPPORTUNITIES,
BUT ALSO WITH MAJOR RISK, AND WE NEED TO
MITIGATE THAT RISK IN EVERY WAY WE CAN...”**

#5 GAIN A VISUAL ON PARTNER ACTIONS

Direct sales companies have the benefit of holding their sales force close by default. They know what happens in their operations and have a solid overview of deals, progress and interactions.

Indirect sales companies don't have that luxury and need to actively work to **gain insight into partner actions**. And when the world is uncertain, when suppliers require hefty commitments and every deal is important, having that kind of insight is invaluable.

It's no surprise that this is now a high priority: without this kind of oversight, it will be difficult to achieve an accurate forecast, control your product message and earn mindshare.

“DIRECT SALES COMPANIES HAVE VISIBILITY INTO WHAT HAPPENS IN THEIR OPERATIONS. WE DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF CONTROL OF WHAT GOES ON IN OUR PARTNERS' ORGANIZATIONS.”

#6 MAKE MORE TIME FOR SALES GROWTH

Channel managers and sales reps in indirect sales organizations spend a lot of time just providing partners and distributors with answers and material. It's a time thief that oftentimes takes time from more value-adding sales activities. On top of which the current economic situation may mean that there are fewer channel managers supporting a wide network of channel partners.

Companies that find ways to **save time spent on supporting partners** can let their channel managers engage with partners on a deeper level, creating an engagement that translates to sales results and nursing relationships that are built to last. Something that can be a cornerstone for driving mindshare and staying top of mind at all times.

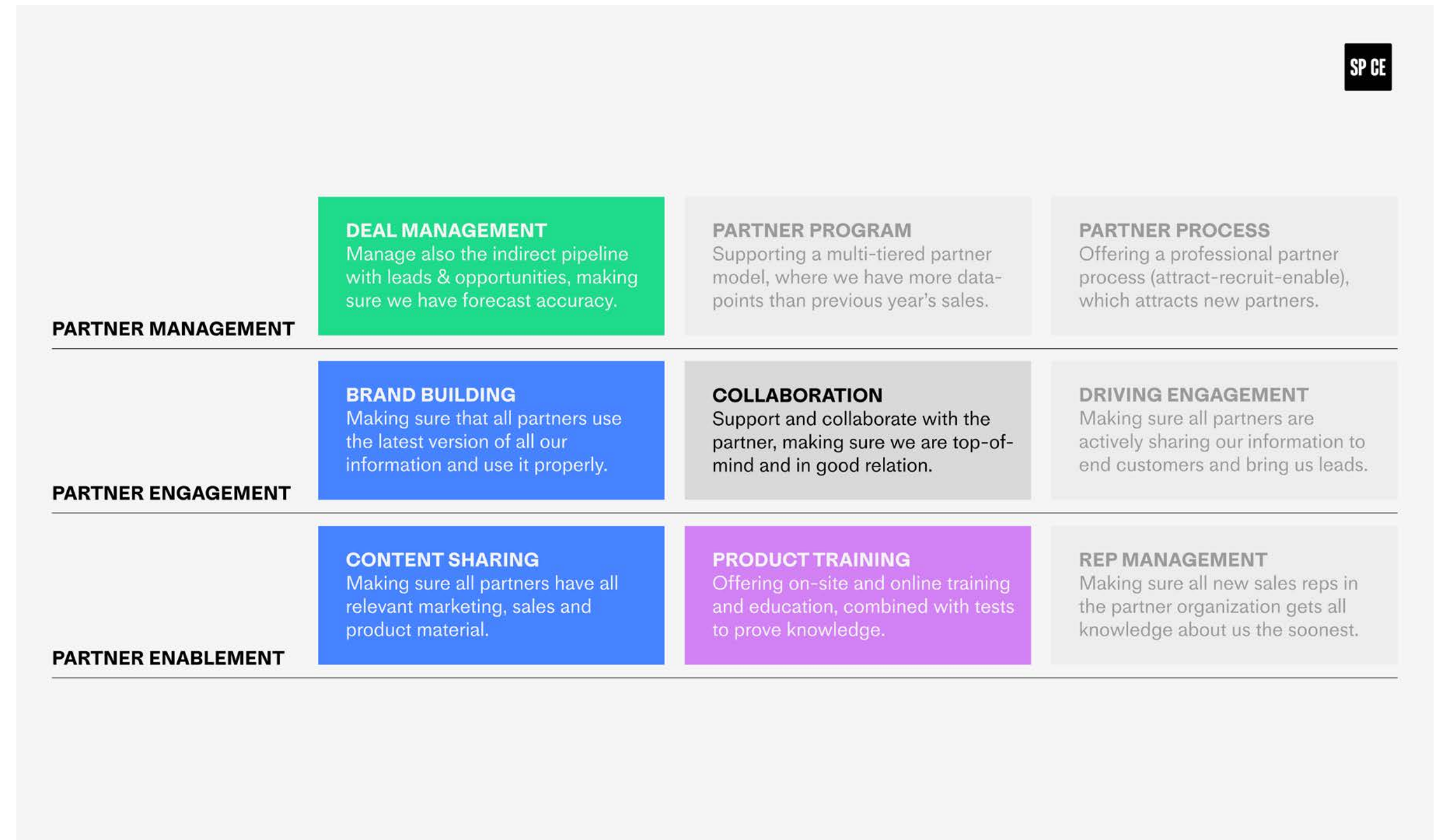
“EACH OF OUR CHANNEL MANAGERS SPEND 15+ HRS PER WEEK SUPPORTING PARTNERS WITH MATERIAL, BUILDING BRAND AND ENSURING AWARENESS...”

TOP 5 CHANNEL SALES CHALLENGES IN 2025

The mentioned C-suite priorities give us a good overview of what channel-sales leaders think will be key to drive business moving forward. These priorities are all based on current market conditions and come with a number of obstacles that are preventing them from being realized, challenges that many channel sales companies are facing right now and that can be placed in a number of categories that make them easier to understand.

The visualization to your right shows these challenges and in what category they're placed in. It also shows additional challenges for channel sales companies, but that our research and conversations have shown not to be as high priority right now for channel sales leaders.

Next, we'll go through these five challenges along with common solutions and pitfalls.



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#1 DEAL MANAGEMENT

THE CHALLENGE: MANAGING AN EXTERNAL PIPELINE

Managing the indirect sales pipeline is a major challenge for many channel-sales companies. It is, quite simply, a lot more difficult to get a solid view of partner actions, interactions and deals in progress, and oftentimes you have to rely on your own, or someone else's gut feeling. Instead of having hard data to go on.

This lack of oversight can lead to uncertain sales results and a forecast that is anything but accurate. Something that may leave you with added cost and unsold inventory, especially when suppliers tend to require that you commit to higher order values from the start.

COMMON SOLUTIONS

Common solutions to this include:

Using a CRM: CRMs can be used to manage partner pipelines and gain a slightly better oversight. A partner can be given access via a partner module and add their own information or an internal channel manager can talk to partners and insert the data themselves.

Using Excel: You can talk to partners and keep all the information you gather in a simple excel spreadsheet that is updated continuously.

PITFALLS

These solutions are, however, not optimal. This, since **using a CRM** doesn't solve the actual problem. Giving a partner the task of updating the CRM with their own deals may not help the data quality one bit. Simply put, partners aren't as motivated to keep the CRM updated and their engagement level will directly impact data accuracy. And having an internal channel manager talk to partners and insert the data doesn't ensure that the data provided from the partner is accurate.

Using Excel is not without its problems either. It requires that your spreadsheet is updated as should and that partners give accurate and current information. Two things that are far from given - and that can make your forecasts into guesswork.

#2 BRAND BUILDING

THE CHALLENGE: MAKING SURE MATERIAL IS USED

Partners should use your marketing and sales material - and need to use it the right way. This is not just a matter of ensuring compliancy to the regulations that govern your industry, but it's also a matter of building your brand instead of diluting it. And if partners don't know what material to use, or use their own, your brand will risk being dilluted.

COMMON SOLUTIONS

Many companies depend on **emails**, sharing material and updates continuously and hoping that partners notice the material and use it. Others let partners download material from their web and then there are some that use more advanced **DAMs** as well as **Dropbox** or **Drive**.

PITFALLS

The problem that often comes with these solutions is a lack of **customization** and **control**. If you rely on emails, for example, you can't be sure that channel partners have even seen it. What's worse, you can't be sure that there aren't old versions floating around in the ether.

Having partners download material from a web or DAM gives you a little bit more data, but the crux of the matter remains: we can't know what material is used and who uses it. Something that puts your brand at risk of dillution and can prevent it from growing as it should.

#3 COLLABORATION

THE CHALLENGE: TO SUPPORT & ENGAGE PARTNERS

Maintaining a strong partner relation is key for channel-sales growth. It's also something that is getting more and more challenging, as the landscape has become more competitive and staying top of mind has turned into a time-consuming struggle.

Your channel managers may already be stretched thin, spending countless hours supporting and engaging their partners with new material, updates and answers. And, odds are, it will only be more difficult to keep a partner engaged and active moving forward.

COMMON SOLUTIONS

The **email** is commonly used here, too, and many channel managers spend their days on the phone or in their inbox. They may have communication tools like **Teams** or **Slack**, and they may share links to DAMS, Drives or Dropbox when partners ask for material.

PITFALLS

The pitfall that many encounter is two-fold. For one, channel managers have been known to spend 15 hours a week just supporting partners with questions and material and don't have time to properly grow the relationship, to properly engage partners, drive sales and do all the other things included in their day-to-day job.

Secondly, the communications tools that are being used are oftentimes made for internal communication and lack the necessary functionality to engage partners who may be working with products from a ton of vendors. Something that can hurt your chances to stay top of mind.

#4 CONTENT SHARING

THE CHALLENGE: SHARING CONTENT WITH ALL PARTNERS

We previously walked through the challenge of getting partners to use the right material, but here we're dealing with something more basic. How do you actually share material with partners and make sure that everyone has access to what they need?

It's a problem that many channel-sales companies encounter and the risk is obvious: partners may lose sales momentum if they don't have the content they need when they need it, and might even go with another product just because they have easier access to relevant material.

COMMON SOLUTIONS

The **email** is a common way to solve this problem as well. Channel managers will, quite simply, share the material partners need and send updated files as they go along.

Some companies also use central repositories like **DAMs**, **Dropboxes** and **Drives**, and share links and guest access to the partners that should have access to the material.

PITFALLS

While these solutions all present a problem when it comes to controlling your content, solutions like Drives and Dropbox also tend to leave partners with a generic folder of files that is hard to navigate and filled with information they may or may not need. This lack of customization can be a source of frustration and make it harder to work with you and your products. Which, in turn, can make it more difficult to work with you and your products.

#5 PRODUCT TRAINING

THE CHALLENGE: EDUCATING CHANNEL PARTNERS

As you probably know, this is a big one. Properly training partners can give them the means to articulate your product's value, relay the right message, successfully sell and do so with compliance to industry regulations.

But it's not always easy: you may need to hold training sessions, share a lot of material and, more importantly, make sure that everyone understands your product. Something that's oftentimes easier said than done.

COMMON SOLUTIONS

Companies use a variety of means to make this happen. Some have **live training sessions** with personal guidance from an educator, some share **video tutorials** via content repositories or add them on Vimeo or Youtube. Some have substantial **Learning Management Systems (LMS)** and some use a combination of all three.

PITFALLS

In-person training may be absolutely necessary, but it can also be time-consuming and very hard to scale. It may need to be complemented by other ways to ensure that partners don't have to wait for their training. And while video tutorials are relatively easy to create and share it's hard to gauge knowledge levels among those who have seen them.

The LMS offers the most comprehensive solution and tackles this with tests and assessments, but oftentimes they're disconnected from the other systems being used. There is also the cost of the system, which can be substantial.

ALL SOLUTIONS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

You probably recognize some of the challenges we've gone through, and may even have the same priorities as the Channel-Sales Leaders we've talked to. And you may be wondering why it feels so difficult to overcome the obstacles and actually make said priorities a reality.

The truth is that a lot comes down to the solutions we use, and that oftentimes require a time-consuming, manual effort for everyone involved. Including your Marketing teams, Sales reps and all Managers who are responsible for sharing material in emails, gathering data from partners, managing the pipeline, answering questions by phone, summarizing and managing KPIs etc. These efforts are also prone to human error, limited by time constraints and relying on guesswork - making it as difficult to maintain a solid forecast accuracy as it is to drive sales growth in a time of uncertain market conditions and a harsher competitive landscape.

Simply put, these manual solutions are not made for driving channel-sales success, and trying to do so can feel like trying to use a hammer as a screwdriver. But there is an option.

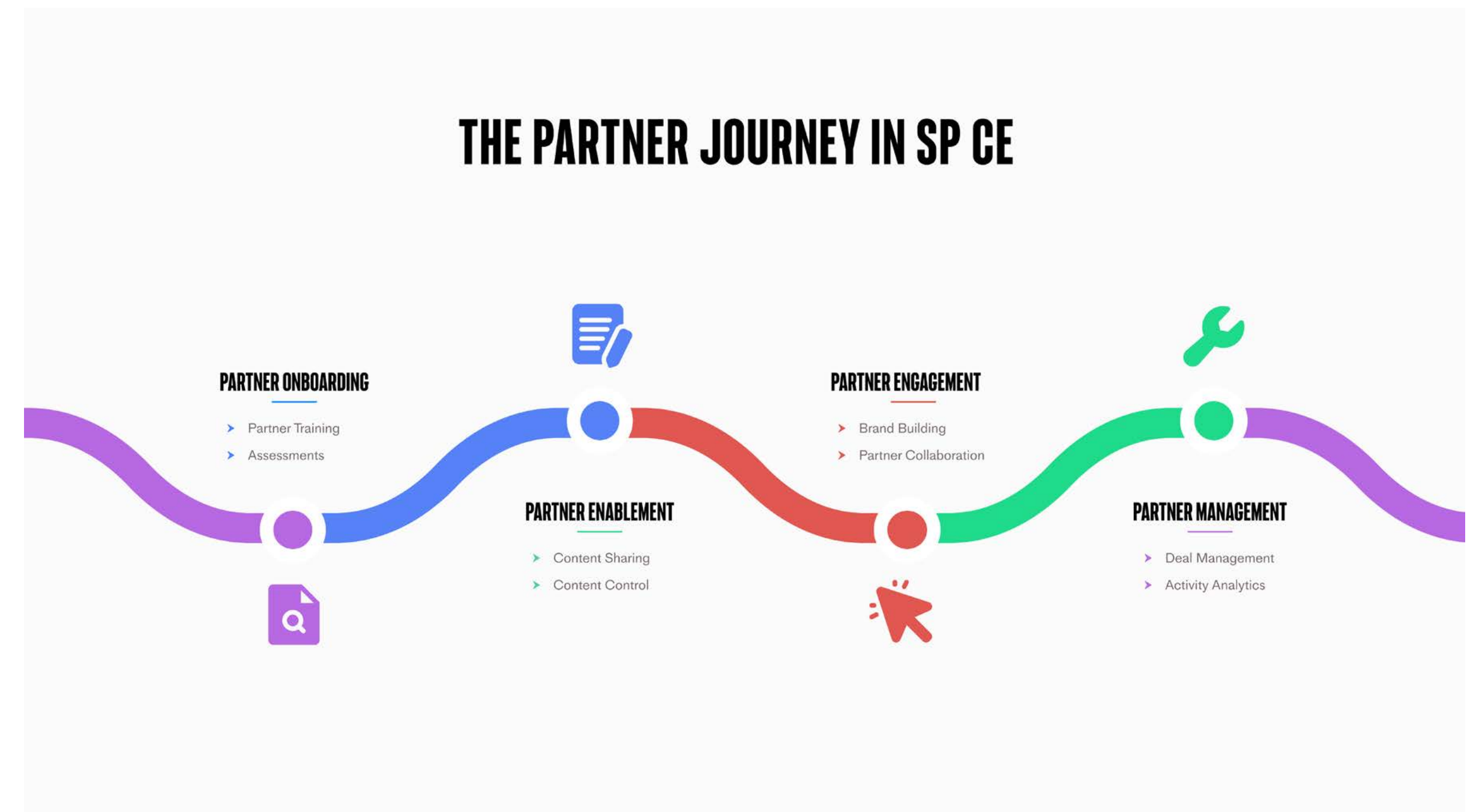
We call it the SP_CE way to channel-sales success.



THE SP CE WAY TO CHANNEL-SALES SUCCESS

The SP_CE way is to gather the partner journey in one place. A place where your partner can reach everything they need, where they can access material and ask questions, receive training and learn everything there is to know about your product. All while you can seamlessly update content everywhere with a click, see detailed analytics of partner interactions, track progress and maintain total control of everything you share.

You will have an easier time managing your partners - and your partners will have a smooth journey from day 1.



CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE?

Do you want to talk more about your unique priorities - or learn more about how SP_CE can help you actualize them? Simply send us an [email](#) and we'll get back to you as soon as humanly possibly.

And, if you want to get more tips and tricks on making your channel-sales machine, you can follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or visit our web. There, you'll find our [Channel-Sales Hub](#) where we've gathered a ton of relevant material and best practices.



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