

# Channel Partner Marketing Benchmark Survey

---

Budgets On The Rise,  
Partner Programs  
Increasing



# Executive Summary

While there's still an undercurrent of economic uncertainty, channel ecosystem professionals are somewhat confident that significant gains in revenue attributed to partners are possible. Specifically, 71% of respondents to the "2024 Channel Partner Marketing Benchmark Survey" anticipated that partner-generated revenue will climb more than 10% this year, while one-quarter anticipated more modest increases between 1% and 10%.

The anticipated sales gains are allowing for channel program budget increases, as more than three-quarters of respondents will marginally or substantially increase their budgets. With that in mind, it's clear that part of those budgets will be funneled into new partner acquisition. About 60% of respondents anticipated a slight increase in the number of partners in their program, while just 15% of respondents said they would not be adding to their ecosystem, representing a 10% decrease from the 25% who indicated no changes in 2023.

As companies strive to better engage current customers and prospects at every step of the buyer's journey, this report will review data that suggests a more disciplined approach to channel program planning and operations in 2024. This includes:



Maintaining more manageable rosters to partners;



Adjusting programs to include and support non-transacting partners such as referrers and influencers, and



Aligning channel partner marketing support activities with the digital, self-service B2B buyers journeys.

# Partner Ecosystems Responsible For **More Revenue**

In general, channel professionals agree that their partner ecosystems will account for more attributable revenue in 2024. Specifically:

Expect partner attributed revenue to climb

21%

Anticipate an increase by 11% to 20%

50%

Are planning on gains of 1% to 10%

25%

Said partner attributed revenue will be unchanged

4%

Channel leaders are more optimistic about the gains they anticipate in their primary measures of success. When asked to rank the following measures of success of their partner ecosystem program in order of priority, respondents indicated:

- Channel-acquired new customers - **3.20**
- Partner ecosystem engagement - **3.08**
- Attributable channel partner ecosystem generated revenue - **3.04**
- Channel-generated leads - **2.84**
- Retention of channel assigned accounts - **2.84**

The respondents are mostly confident that their programs and partners will achieve desired results, with at least 77% anticipating gains to their primary measure of success.

Naturally, the confidence that many channel leaders have in their ability to meet their prioritized measure of success was fully matched by their assessment of the overall effectiveness of their programs. While just 15% rated their programs as very effective in 2023, a whopping 37% said the same for 2024. Meanwhile, 55% described their channel programs as somewhat effective, and a cumulative 8% said their programs were either not very effective or not effective.

In general, partner program professionals agree that they've already made smart investments in their channel technology stacks. For example:



**41%** said their channel technology stacks were high-performing and scalable to support growth; and

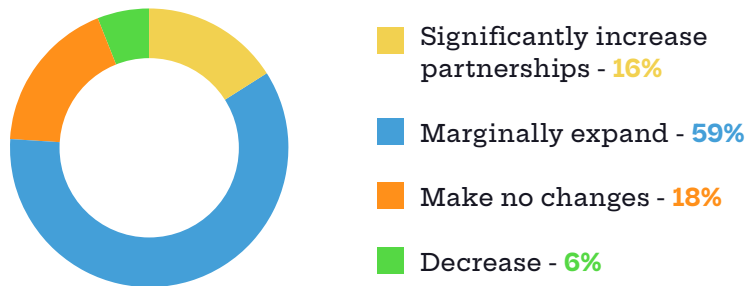


**54%** said they were right-sized to drive near-term revenue goals.

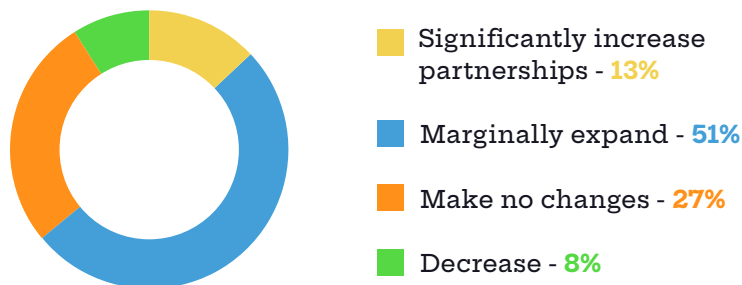


# Partner Ecosystems Expanding Quickly

Across the board, there was optimism concerning the expansion of partner programs. When asked about their plans regarding the number of partners in their channel ecosystem, respondents planned to:



When compared to the year-over-year results, the 2023 survey found:



Interestingly, despite anticipated expansions, the number of structured referral programs remained relatively stagnant year-over-year, as the 2023 survey uncovered 25% of respondents had structured programs, while only 23% could say the same in 2024.

In terms of incentivizing partners, that number has grown steadily year-over-year. When asked whether or not they incentivize, reward or otherwise compensate various partners to influence potential customers, 13% of respondents indicated they did in the 2022 survey, while 19% said the same in the 2023 edition and now 25% utilize incentives and/or other rewards.

Presumably, it's a strategy that's working for companies that have implemented it and one that's gaining traction with more brands. According to the most recent poll:

- **33%** will launch a structured referral program that compensates non-selling partners for generating leads that are ultimately converted to partners; and
- **33%** will incentivize, reward or otherwise compensate a variety of partners – thought-leaders, influencers, and/or subject matter experts to influence potential customers.

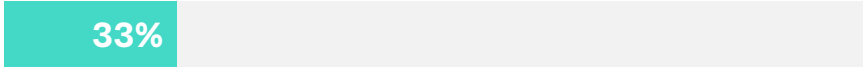
As previously noted, most partner program professionals are satisfied with ability of their channel stack to support their partner ecosystem program. Indeed, responses to the 2024 survey suggest that investments in partner program tools were made in 2023. For example, the percentage of respondents using through-channel marketing automation tools jumped to 50% from 25% in 2023, while channel incentives and program management tools are being used by 33% of the respondents.

Overall, of the tools available to channel partner teams:

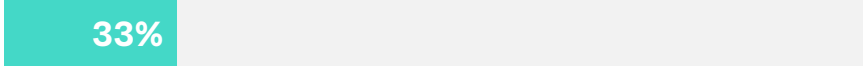
Host a partner portal



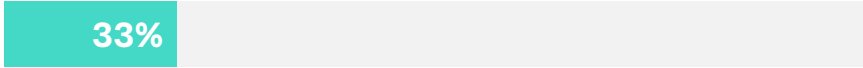
Deployed a partner relationship management platform



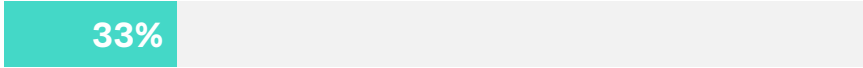
Have channel incentives and program management



Have implemented through channel marketing automation



Monitor and manage channel data

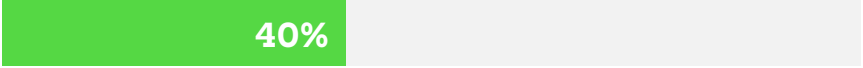


Further, channel teams continued to prioritize familiar partner support activities such as sales training and customer event programs. They include:

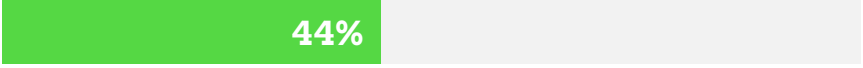
Marketing training



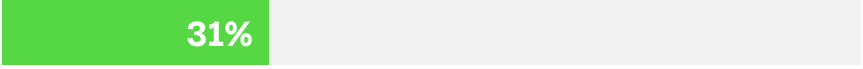
Account-based marketing



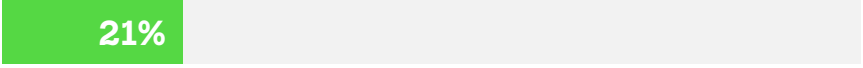
Sales training



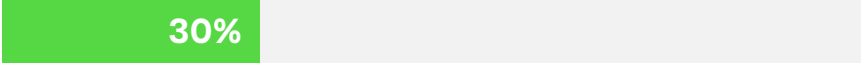
Customer event support/funding



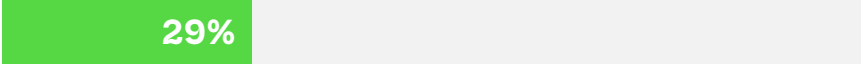
Partner locator on website



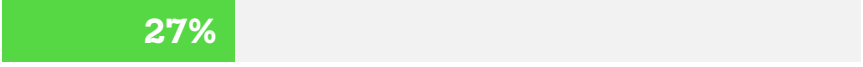
Social messaging syndication



Through-channel marketing automation



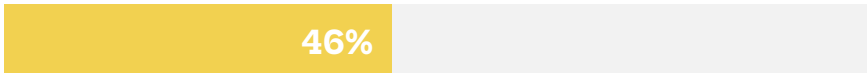
SEO support



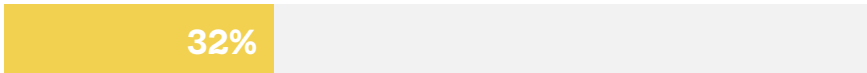
And to help their partners promote their products and services to their customers, companies offered a broad mix of marketing content materials.

They include:

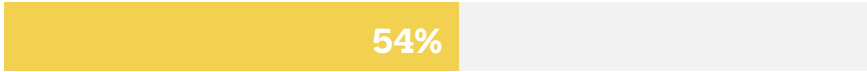
Website content



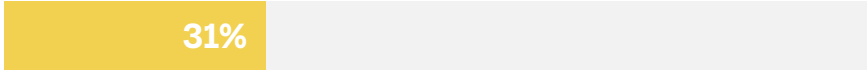
Co-branded collateral



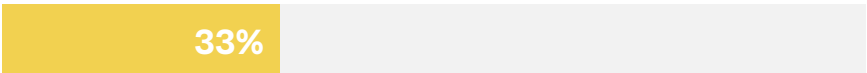
Social selling/marketing messages



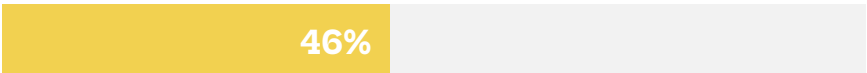
Thought leadership content



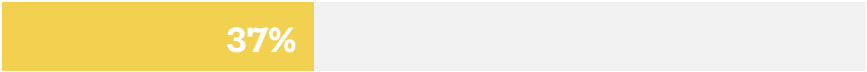
Co-branded email campaigns



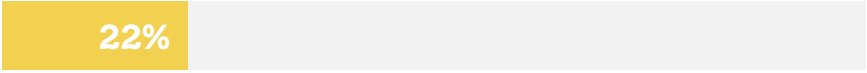
Video/interactive assets



Product information/sell sheets



Campaigns-in-a-box



# Keeping In Touch

Subtle shifts in the way channel leaders communicate with their partners suggest a greater focus on in-person interactions and stronger digital interactions. Specifically, hosting in-person events skyrocketed from 44% in 2023 to 53% in 2024. On the web side, 33% of companies will maintain an online community (up from 30% in 2023), while 46% will rely on online meetings.

Interestingly, there was a resurgence in email marketing, as the category has climbed and dove over the years. In 2022, 79% of channel leaders connected via email, which dropped to 63% in 2023. However, that number's starting to climb again, as 66% utilize email in 2024.

In a unique parallel, the number of companies that send out email newsletter sharply decreased from 35% in 2023 to a mere 22% in 2024. This shift is most likely attributed to the increased personalization 1:1 emails can offer, as opposed to the generalized nature of newsletters.

Overall, communication tactics included:

## Email



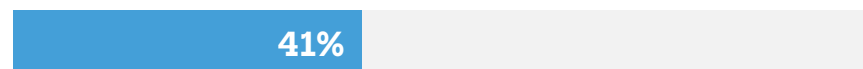
## Online meetings



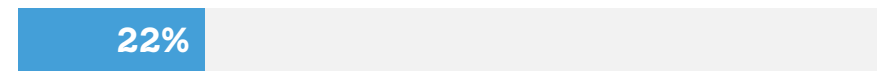
## In-person events



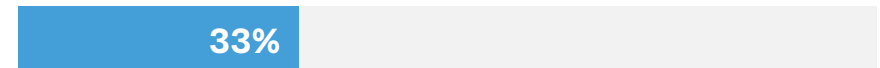
## Partner portal



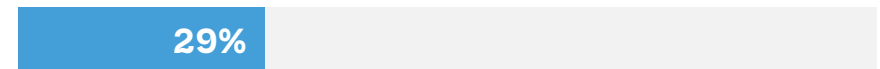
## Regularly scheduled newsletters



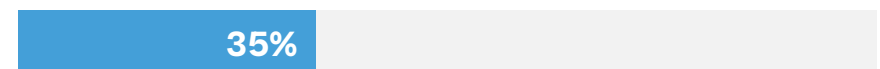
## Online community



## Partner surveys



## Outreach by channel/partner account manager







## Conclusion

As so many reports have demonstrated, the "2024 Channel Partner Marketing Benchmark Survey" reaffirms the significant capabilities of partner ecosystems to generate attributable revenue for brands. The results of this year's survey, however, indicate a more deliberate and thoughtful approach to marketing, one informed both by careful review of established practices as well as concern that the overall B2B economy could falter.

Consequently, channel leaders are taking appropriate action to build channel ecosystems that engage customers at every touchpoint on their buyer's journey. They are communicating with their partners via more effective digital tactics. And while it seems that many companies are tapping the breaks on their overall investment channel programs, many firms continue to allocate funds for necessary channel program enabling solutions.



*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

**201.257.8528**

**[INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM](mailto:INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM)**



**Kelly Lindenau**

is an editor and writer who loves covering the latest B2B marketing trends, research and industry insights. She's a New Jersey native, runner and reader who always has a GIF from The Office at the ready.

