



# Partner Program Readiness Self Assessment



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## Your Partner Program Readiness

One of the most effective ways for ISVs to expand market penetration nationally and internationally is to build a high performing partner channel. To do so requires considerable planning and application of best practices. While a comprehensive partner program that enables your partners to actively and self sufficiently win and support customers needs to be tailored to the individual needs of your product and company, you can still make a valid assessment whether or not your current approach is sufficient by taking this self-assessment.

### HOW MANY PARTNERS DO I NEED?

A high performing partner channel is not measured by the volume of partners but by the number of partners that are pro-actively pursuing new sales self sufficiently. Recruiting too many partners in one area can create an unhealthy competitive environment when multiple partners cannibalize each other's business development efforts. Too few partners will leave opportunities unaddressed. To determine the right number of partners needed; research the number of vertical industry customers in their geographical area, estimate how many customers will be in the market each year. This will give you the number of opportunities. Divide this by the number of sales per partner to determine how many partners are needed.

YES       NO      • Have you built a vertical Industry-geographical coverage map?

### WHO IS AN IDEAL PARTNER?

The recruitment of anyone that is willing to sign a reseller agreement can cause you to waste much time and resources servicing non-performing partners. If your current channel follows the 80-20 rule (80% of revenue comes from just 20% of partners) then there is much room for improvement. Recruit only the partners that fit well into your ideal partner profile. The ideal partner will have three key attributes:

1. The ability to reach the market to continuously generate leads
2. The ability to effectively close sales and provide quality on-going support
3. The willingness to allocate resources to marketing, selling and supporting your product

YES       NO      • Do more than 20% of your partners generate 80% of your channel revenues?

YES       NO      • Have you developed your own ideal partner profile?



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## HOW DO I CONVINCING NEW PARTNERS TO SELL MY PRODUCT?

Partners will want to sell your product when they realize that there is a strong business case that will yield new revenue streams. Building a business case requires an understanding of how many potential customers are addressable in their area, how compelling the value propositions are to partners, how differentiated your product is in the market, what will be the partner's return on investments and a set of attractive business terms.

- YES       NO      • Do you have a list of potential customers in the partners' area?
- YES       NO      • Have you developed the compelling value propositions for partners?
- YES       NO      • Have you developed a three year *partner* return on investment model?

## HOW DO I MAKE PARTNERS SELF SUFFICIENT QUICKLY?

Partners will become self sufficient more quickly if they have allocated sales and technical staff that have been formally trained on your product. This will be enhanced with ideal customer profiles to help them identify opportunities and apply the right customer value propositions to win them. A competitive positioning guide is key to partners' ability to self sufficiently deal with the competition.

- YES       NO      • Do you have a partner sales & product certification program?
- YES       NO      • Do you have a set of ideal customer scenarios?
- YES       NO      • Have you developed a competitive positioning guide by customer scenario (not features)?

## HOW DO I MAKE PARTNERS PRO-ACTIVE?

Partners will be proactive if the business case is compelling, new revenue streams are generated, your product has a pull through effect for the partner's other products and services and if the effort invested in the sales development is well justified by the returns. Some tools that can maintain focus and activity on your product include an executive sponsored joint business plan, a marketing plan supported by a marketing development fund (MDF), a tiered discount structure which rewards more sales and quarterly business reviews by executives.

- YES       NO      • Do you develop annual joint business plans with your partners?
- YES       NO      • Do you develop a joint marketing plan with your partners?
- YES       NO      • Do you have a co-operative marketing development fund ?
- YES       NO      • Do you review the progress against the business plan at the executive level quarterly ?



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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- |                              |                             |  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Have you constructed customer scenarios for your solution based on a Dynamics Advanced Management (AM) and Business Essentials (BE) based platform?                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Have you positioned your solution in respect to alternative Dynamics ERP based solutions – for example in comparison to Dynamics GP Vs AX, NAV, SL and competitors such as SAGE? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you assess a potential partner’s vertical industry knowledge?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does your product enable the partner to become a trusted adviser to their clients?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do your partners have set quotas or revenue targets?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Is there a sustainable demand generation engine?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Have you defined the roles and responsibilities of your organization and the partner’s in this partnership?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Have you decided who will be responsible for localizing Dynamics AX, NAV and CRM solutions for international markets?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you look for partners with a compatible culture (e.g. “hunter” Vs “farmer”)?  |

## YOUR SCORE

Each of these areas are an important element of a complete and effective partner program. If you answered “NO” to any of these questions then you have a readiness gap that needs to be addressed.

## ABOUT AIM

Based in Seattle, Washington, AIM provides Dynamics ISVs with the management consulting services to realize their business growth potential by utilizing the market knowledge and insights acquired over 25 years in business development at Microsoft, HP, Intel, Compaq and DEC. AIM services are available throughout North America, Europe and Asia.