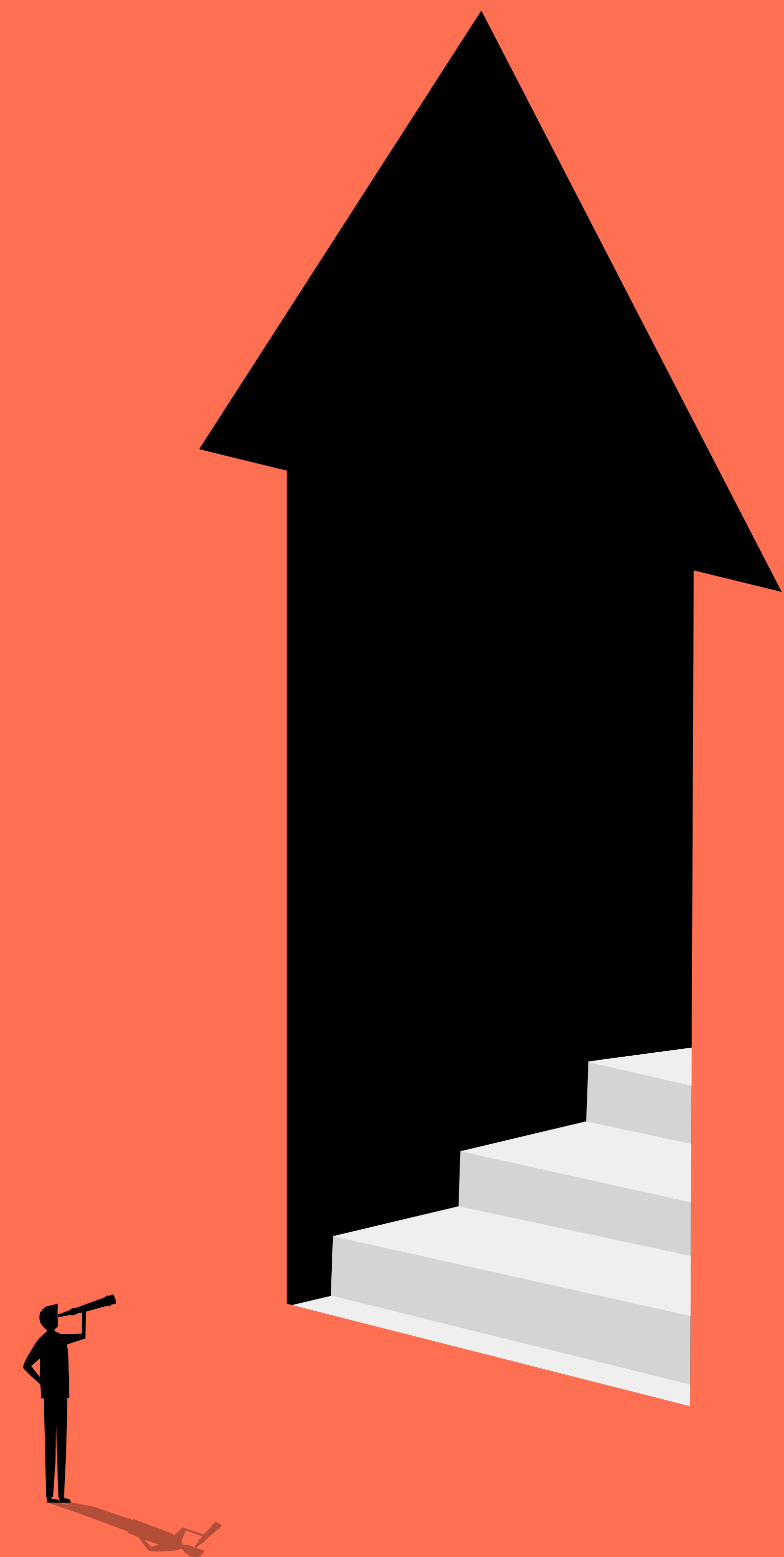
THE PARTNER-LED GROWTH GUIDE

How to build alignment, activate co-sell, and drive conversion



The partner marketing reckoning is here

We're not in a downturn. We're in a recalibration. And the companies that master partner-led growth will dominate the next decade.

The old playbook—spray-and-pray campaigns, generic co-sell motions, marketplace afterthoughts—just became a competitive liability.

Here's the new reality: While you're optimizing email open rates, your smartest competitors are using AI to identify co-sell opportunities 90 days earlier, converting marketplace visitors at 3x industry average, and proving partner ROI that secures 40% more MDF allocation.

The gap isn't closing. It's accelerating.

The partner ecosystem reality check

Three shifts are defining partner success in 2025:

THE ATTRIBUTION IMPERATIVE

CFOs are demanding partner ROI proof. The "influenced revenue" conversation is over. Attribution is now table stakes.

AI-POWERED PRECISION

Manual partner management is becoming competitive suicide. AI-driven account mapping and campaign personalization separate leaders from laggards.

VELOCITY OVER VOLUME

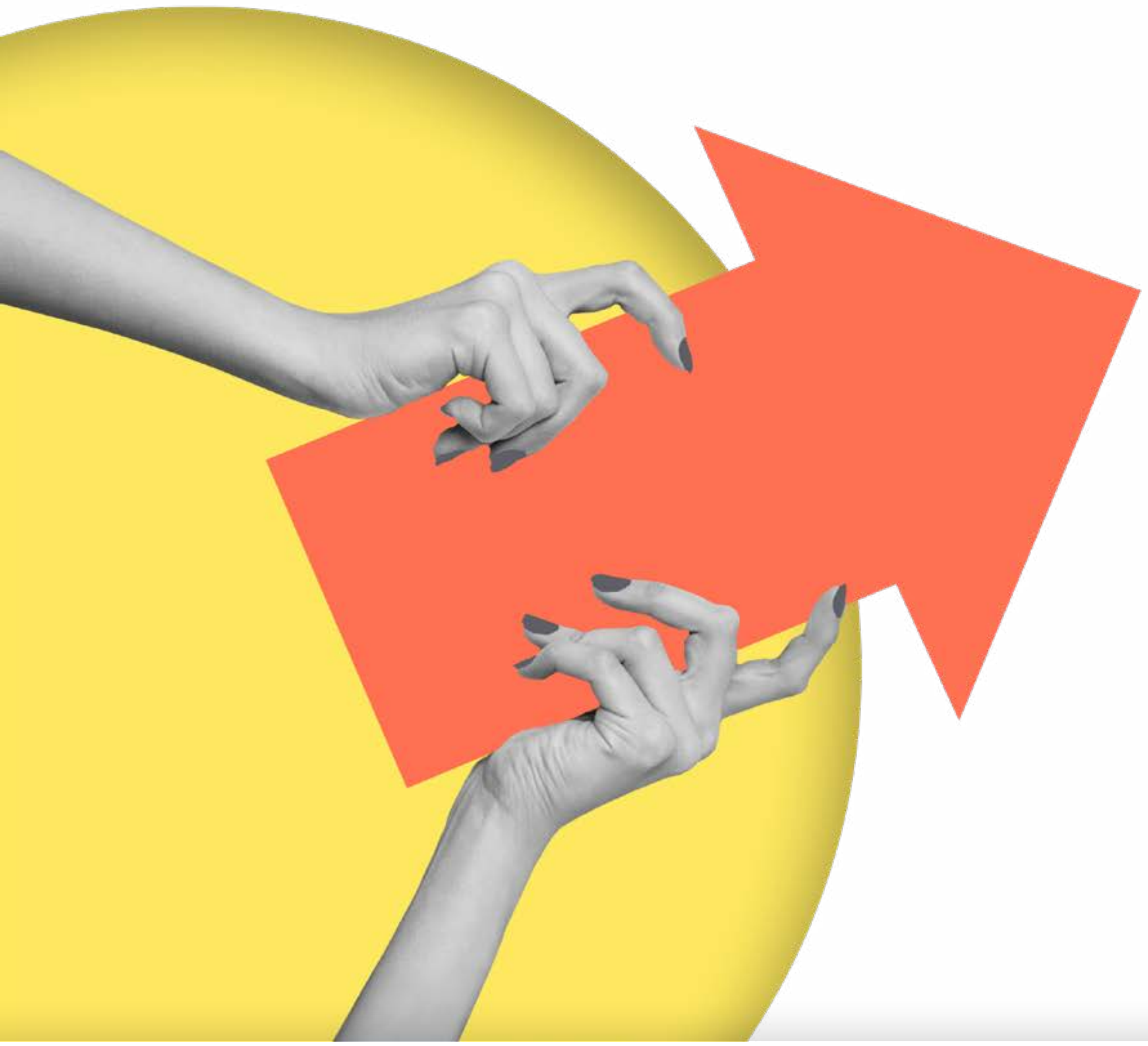
Speed to value beats breadth of relationships. Partners who can execute faster are winning regardless of ecosystem size.

Why 67% of partner programs are failing to scale

The B2B landscape isn't broken—it's different. The pace has shifted, the funnel has fractured, and buying behavior has fundamentally changed.

If you're a partner marketing lead at a hyperscaler or a tech company with a broad partner ecosystem, this guide will help you scale partner performance and prove ROI across your programs. If you're a marketing leader at an organization that collaborates closely with larger partners—like an ISV, GSI, or SI—you'll find practical strategies to integrate more effectively and accelerate pipeline.

In today's partner ecosystem, performance doesn't come from more content or bigger events. It comes from alignment. Precision. Speed. And from experienced collaborators who can help turn disconnected tactics into a repeatable, revenue-generating engine.



At Knack, we're seeing three undeniable truths emerge across our client base:

1. **The ecosystems are the growth engine.**
   Two-thirds of B2B organizations expect partner-influenced revenue to grow more than 30% above last year's levels, and around 80% of deals now involve some form of partner influence.[1] A majority of B2B partner ecosystem and channel marketing decision-makers report that they expect expansion in the number of partners within their partner ecosystems.[1]
2. **Conversion is the new currency.**
   Demand generation isn't the finish line. It's the starting block. Leads mean nothing if they don't turn into qualified opportunities, co-sell momentum, and transactions that can be attributed and optimized over time.
3. **Sellers and marketers are overwhelmed.**
   Co-sell motions are underdelivering because sellers and partner marketers lack the tools, messaging, and integrated processes they need to drive action. Partners need enablement, orchestration, and AI-powered marketing motions that scale without adding complexity.

[1] Forrester, Continued Growth In Scale and Complexity: The State of Partner Ecosystems in 2025

Who this guide is for—and what you'll take away

This guide is designed for partner-facing teams across the ecosystem whether you're:

- Partner marketing leaders responsible for building and scaling ecosystem strategies
- Alliance and partner managers driving joint GTM and co-marketing activities
- Partner development professionals enabling co-sell and pipeline growth
- Channel and ecosystem leaders at service providers and technology firms shaping partner-led motions

No matter your role, you'll find actionable insights to help you:

- Drive full-funnel visibility and smarter nurture.
- Build high-performing marketplace strategies.
- Deliver event ROI that extends beyond the booth.
- Activate co-sell motions that actually sell.
- Leverage AI integration to enhance execution, not add noise.

This is your roadmap for making partner marketing and co-sell programs not just visible but measurable, repeatable, and revenue-generating.

Let's dig in.

01

THE REALITY CHECK

Conversion is the new currency

Let’s get real: leads are still coming in, but deals aren’t closing fast enough.

We’re in a “sideways” market where attention is expensive, internal teams are stretched thin, and buying committees are larger, more risk-averse, and increasingly self-directed. The result? Funnels are bloated at the top, thin in the middle, and often disconnected at the bottom.

And the pressure is mounting.

80% of sale interactions in B2B are expected to occur digitally by 2025, pushing teams to adopt more digital and data-driven strategies.[2]

This shift underscores the necessity for structured, data-informed co-sell strategies that align with modern sales processes.

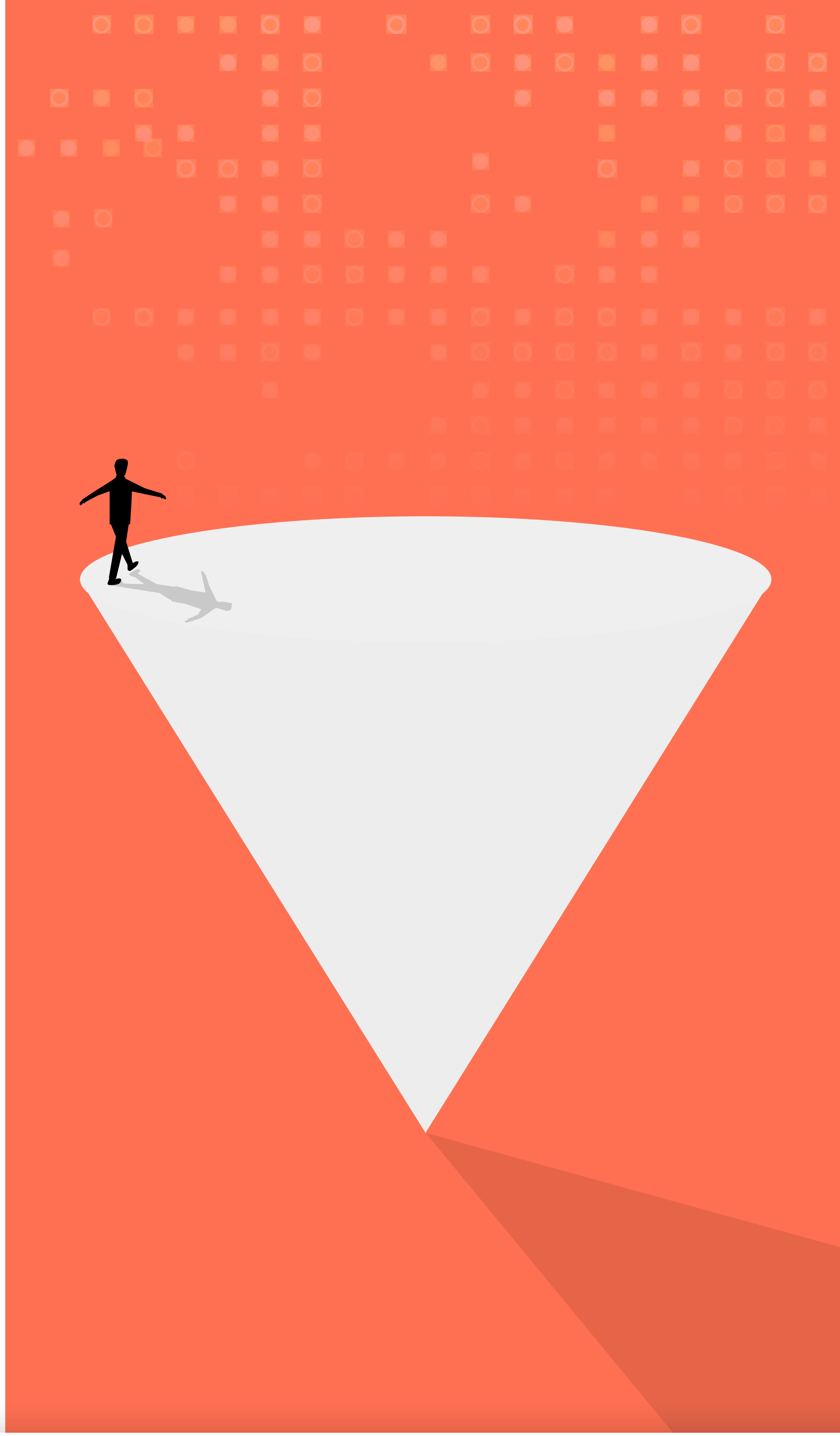
The challenge isn’t generating interest. It’s enabling momentum.

Across our work with partner marketing and development leaders across technology providers, service integrators, and cloud ecosystems, one consistent pattern has emerged: Conversion isn’t happening because enablement isn’t activated.

Here’s what that looks like:

- Upper-funnel campaigns that drive form fills, but don’t lead to sales conversations
- Mid-funnel content that’s too generic to validate real buyer needs
- Sellers who don’t know how (or when) to engage with partner-generated interest
- Partners who are unsure how to support co-sell readiness, attribution, or next steps

The issue isn’t intent—it’s orchestration.



[2] Direct Sales in 2025: 7 Trends Reshaping B2B Sales Strategies, Martal Group

To drive results in this new reality, partner marketing needs to evolve—

from **broadcast to precision,**

from **volume to velocity,**
from **MQLs to measurable outcomes.**

That shift starts by rethinking how success is defined—and how it's built.

Top-performing ecosystem teams are now focused on:

Campaigns that drive pipeline and prove impact, not just generate awareness

Enablement that activates sellers, not just educates buyers

Orchestrating connected motions across leads, listings, opportunities, and co-sell plays, not just standalone tactics

Prioritizing measurable influence and pipeline contribution, not just clicks and opens

Yes, lead generation still matters. But leads without momentum don't scale. Without strategic planning, seller alignment, and co-sell readiness, they just sit in the system.

The opportunity in partner marketing lies in enabling ecosystems to convert—not just generate. The organizations that help their partners drive funnel performance, seller alignment, and marketplace traction will lead in influence and market share over the next 12–24 months.

At the same time, partner teams are raising the bar. They no longer want just leads from vendors—they want momentum: co-developed plans, strategic messaging, sales activation, and clear next steps tied directly to pipeline.

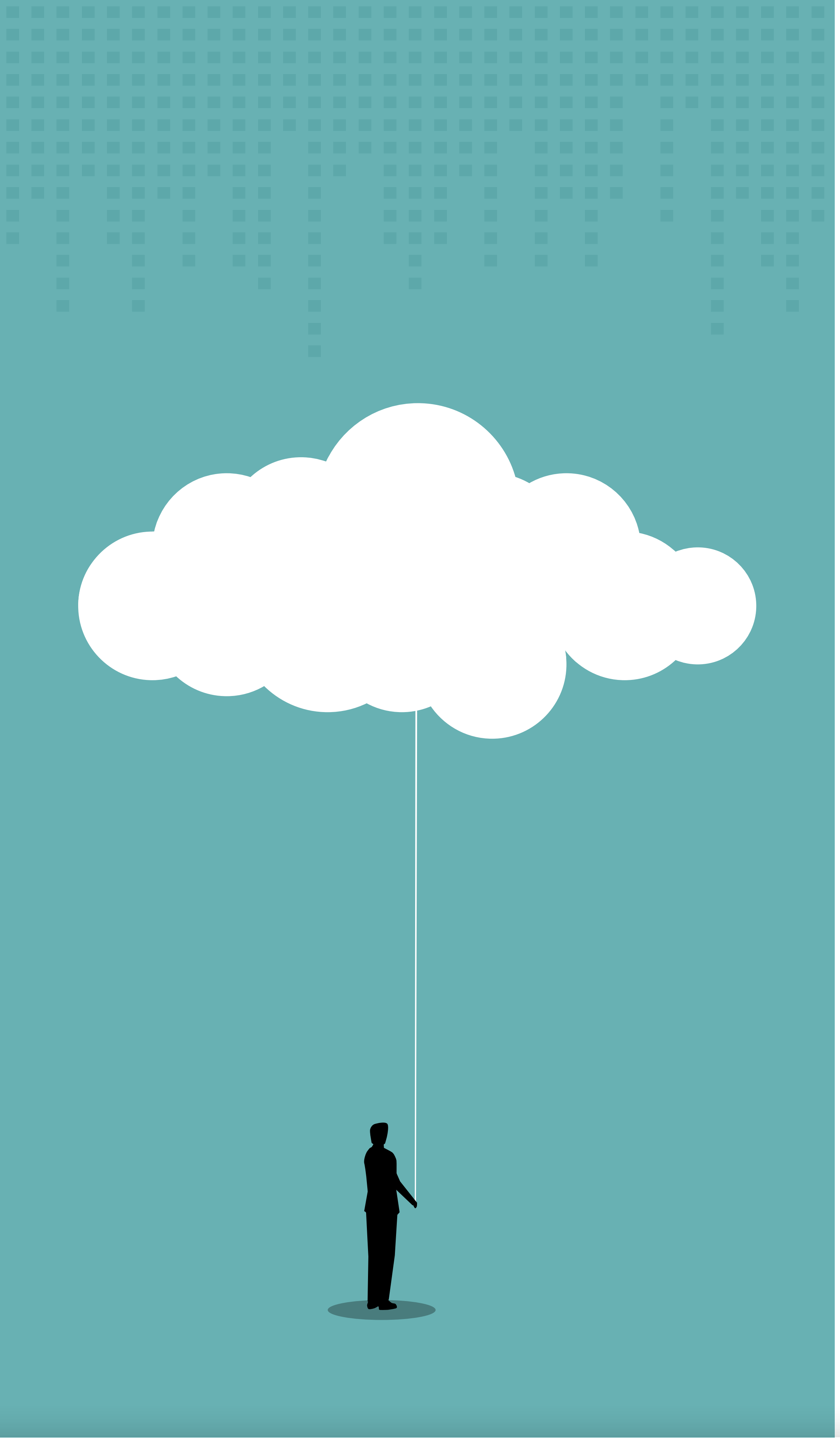
The path to revenue isn't paved with leads alone. It's built through alignment, nurture, and intentional activation across the full partner lifecycle: **Build with. Market with. Sell with.**

Keep reading to find out how.

02

FROM LISTING TO REVENUE

Making marketplace a performance channel



The strategic reality

Marketplaces aren't just where software solutions live—it's where deals are starting, progressing, and closing.

Hyperscalers are increasingly tying partner goals to marketplace metrics. Sellers are pointing buyers to them to transact. Budget holders are already trained to look. But most listings? They're still treated like a one-time upload.

Your listing isn't a formality. It's a performance channel.
And if you're not managing it like one, you're leaving revenue behind.

Where it breaks down

The most common breakdowns we see:

- Outdated, undifferentiated messaging that fails to convert
- Poor SEO or metadata, making listings invisible in key searches
- Zero retargeting or follow-up strategy to recapture hand-raisers
- No coordination between listings, sales, campaigns, or content strategy

The result? Partners do the work to be listed and then get little to no pipeline in return.

And here's the kicker: many of these listings are technically compliant, but commercially unable to drive impact.

The mindset shift that matters

Treating listings like digital brochures instead of demand channels ignores what's changed about how B2B buyers want to engage:

- They want to validate independently.
- They want transparency on pricing and value.
- They want frictionless access to transactable offers.
- They want to discover solutions when they're ready, not when you're sending an email blast.

This is your opportunity to build a conversion engine—not just a storefront.

What great marketplace performance looks like

- **Findable**
  Strong SEO, intentional tagging, metadata built to surface in-platform and in search
- **Clear and differentiated**
  Messaging that validates need, speaks to specific personas, and shows proof of value
- **Integrated**
  Tied to your campaigns, co-sell motions, demo experiences, and post-event follow-up
- **Trackable**
  Data visibility and attribution are wired in
- **Living, not launched**
  Maintained and updated regularly with refreshed offers, proof points, and CTAs

Marketplace should be a GTM extension—not an afterthought.

The Knack difference

At Knack, we help technology providers and their partners shift from passive presence to performance. We don't just fix listings, we connect them to the full GTM strategy.

We support:

- Full-funnel listing audits (CRO + SEO)
- Multi-partner offer planning and seller alignment
- Paid media and organic campaign development
- Traffic-driving content that leads to conversion
- Attribution frameworks that prove ROI to help you meet your marketplace performance goals

According to Canalys, cloud marketplace transactions are expected to hit $85 billion by 2028, rising from $16 billion in 2023. By 2027, more than 50% of marketplace sales are expected to flow through the channel."[3]

[3] Canalys, Hyperscaler cloud marketplace sales to hit US$85 billion by 2028

03

CO-SELL THAT CONVERTS

Turning shared opportunities into measurable wins

Why co-sell underperforms more than it succeeds

For all its promise, co-sell often feels like a missed opportunity—full of potential, but rarely fully realized.

The reason is simple: we've confused enablement with execution.

We've invested in assets before alignment. We've pushed messaging before mapping shared intent. And too often, we've handed off leads without ever building a shared strategic plan.

Co-sell doesn't fall short because of a lack of interest. It falls short because of a lack of orchestration.

ACCORDING TO GARTNER, BY 2026,

65% of B2B sales organizations will transition from intuition-based to data-driven decision-making using technology that integrates workflow, data, and analytics.[4]

This shift underscores the necessity for structured, data-informed co-sell strategies that align with modern sales processes.

The implication is clear. "Your co-sell motion isn't a secondary activity, it's your go-to-market strategy. It needs to be treated with the same rigor, data, and integration as any internal sales plan."

[4] Gartner, Press Release, 2022

KNACK'S POINT OF VIEW: Co-sell readiness essentials

We believe effective co-sell requires three integrated components:

1. **A shared strategic account plan**
   Developed collaboratively between technology providers and their partners. This includes shared ideal customer profiles, target account overlap, pipeline priorities, and clear roles.
2. **Joint messaging and positioning**
   Not just about "why your product is great," but why this solution matters now, to this account, from this seller. Messaging must reflect real buyer pain and deliver seller confidence.
3. **Precision GTM activation**
   Campaigns, plays, and outreach efforts tied to shared accounts. Activation must happen across channels—email, social, seller call-downs—and align with the buying journey.

Without these three, co-sell becomes a game of pass-the-deck. And no one wins deals that way.

The role of technology—when strategy leads

Partner technology doesn't solve co-sell. It scales it, if you already have a plan. High-performing co-sell programs start with strategy:

- Joint account planning
- Clear messaging and value props
- Coordinated activation plays
- Rigorous attribution frameworks

Technology is what enables these motions to scale and optimize. When applied strategically, platforms like PartnerTap—and others—become powerful enablers of precision execution.

As both a PartnerTap client and advisor, we've seen how tech can shift co-sell from chaotic to intentional—but only when it's plugged into the right GTM foundation.

Using PartnerTap and other tech, we help our clients:

- Automate co-sell account planning.
- Translate account plans into personalized GTM campaigns and ABM strategies.
- Enable sellers through battlecards, messaging kits, and activation plays.
- Build attribution frameworks that track performance across motions.

What high-performing co-sell looks like

- Account-mapped campaigns tied to strategic priorities
- Sellers briefed, activated, and enabled with real messaging
- Joint follow-up plans with clear KPIs and roles
- Attribution frameworks that track what moves and what closes

And, critically, they use technology to amplify strategy—not replace it.

Co-sell can be your growth engine. But only if it's built with intention, activated with data, and driven by a team who knows how to make it real.

CO-SELL READINESS CHECKLIST →

04

FROM BOOTH TO BOTTOM LINE

Turning events into full-funnel growth engines

Third-party events as deal accelerators

The era of "booth presence" is over. At industry conferences, trade shows, and third-party events, the companies winning aren't the ones with the biggest booths. They're the ones using these shared platforms to accelerate deals already in motion.

Smart event strategies focus on three outcomes:

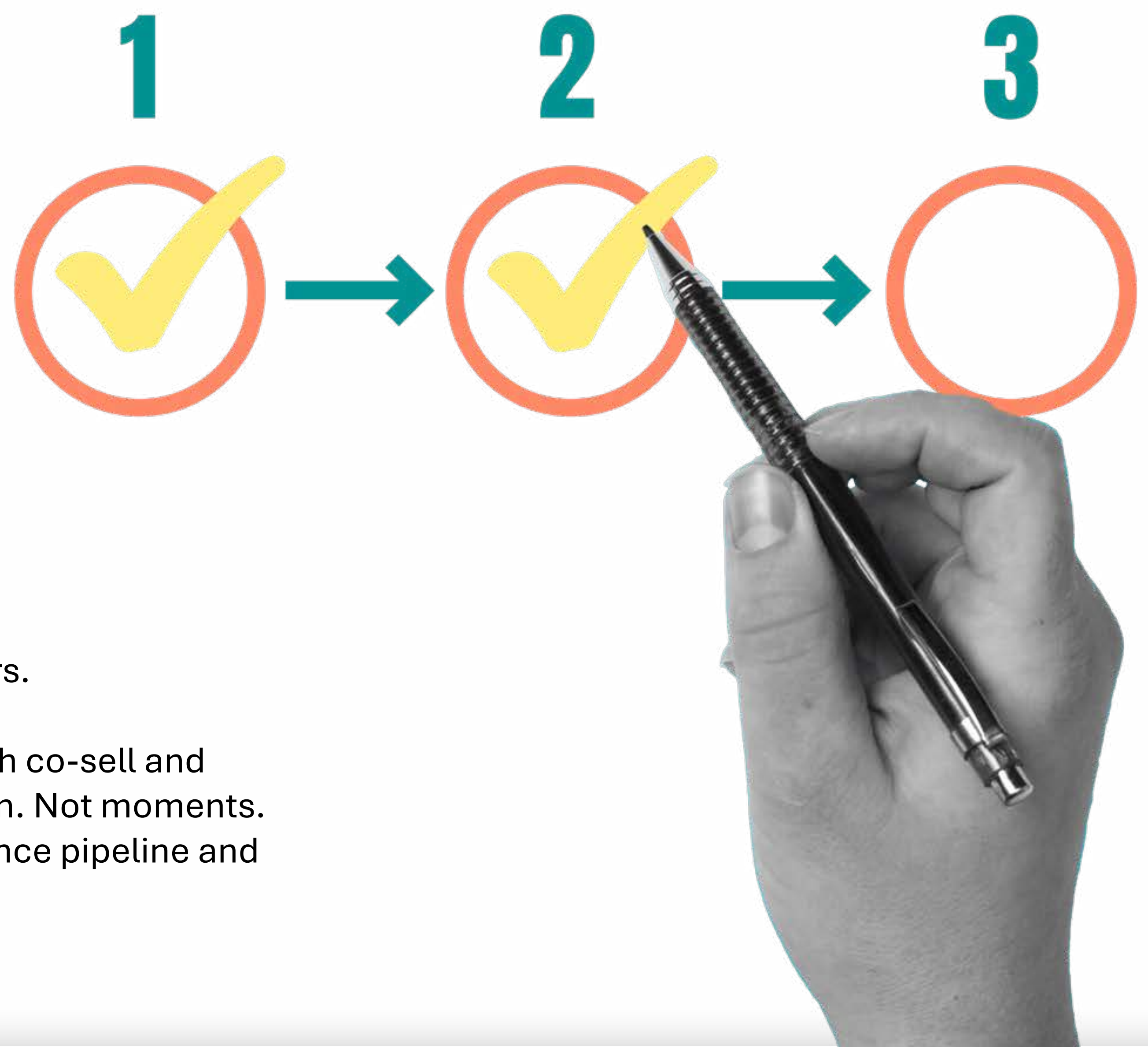
1. **Moving existing opportunities forward** (not generating new leads)
2. **Activating dormant co-sell relationships with partners also attending**
3. **Capturing content that drives pipeline for 12+ months**

Whether it's AWS re:Invent, Microsoft Ignite, Dreamforce, or vertical industry conferences, third-party events now need to prove their ROI in weeks, not months—especially when you're competing with dozens of other exhibitors for attention.

Yet too often, they're underperforming. Across the ecosystem, partners and vendors still treat third-party events like traditional advertising campaigns—short bursts of activity built around a booth, a few pre-event emails, and a hopeful scan of the badge report post-show.

That approach might check a box, but it won't move pipeline when you're one of 500+ exhibitors.

In today's B2B ecosystem, third-party events must be strategic GTM activations, integrated with co-sell and marketplace plays, powered by smart data, and designed to accelerate deals already in motion. Not moments. Not "presence." Not swag. But orchestrated, measurable, revenue-focused motions that advance pipeline and partner performance in a crowded field.



What third-party event strategies often miss:

- **A targeted audience strategy** connected to pipeline and strategic accounts
- **A clear plan for co-sell alignment** and seller activation pre-event
- **Coordination with other partners** attending the same event
- **An onsite plan** built around pre-event conversations and appointments
- **Content capture and reuse** that maximizes long-tail value
- **A defined post-event conversion plan** tied to opportunity stages, not just follow-ups

And most critically: they're disconnected from marketplace and partner motions, missing the opportunity to create integrated experiences for prospects visiting multiple partner booths.

KNACK'S POINT OF VIEW

We believe events are not one-offs. They are live extensions of your GTM strategy and must be designed as such.

That means events should:

1. Reinforce your joint value proposition to shared customers.
2. Advance real pipeline opportunities tied to strategic accounts.
3. Activate sellers with timing, messaging, proof points, and context.
4. Create content that can live far beyond the event itself.

When you walk into an event, you should already know:

- Which accounts matter
- Which partners will support the message (and how)
- What content will be captured
- How the experience will convert

The new event model

- **Account-first**
  Every third-party event should be grounded in strategic account mapping. Tools like PartnerTap enable shared targeting and co-sell preparation weeks before the badge scans begin.
  The goal: advance 15–20 specific opportunities, not generate 500 new leads from a crowded expo hall.
- **Seller-ready**
  Internal and hyperscaler sellers must be briefed and equipped with appointment targets, talk tracks, demo flows, and a clear follow-up plan.
- **Marketplace-connected**
  Your presence should ladder into a full-funnel strategy. That includes marketplace visibility, campaign tie-ins, and listings that support hand-raisers and conversions.
- **Content-rich**
  Events are some of the few moments you can capture customer feedback, executive soundbites, product stories, and peer proof. Take full advantage of them to extend well beyond the event moment.
- **Conversion-focused**
  Every post-event workflow should be rooted in the funnel stage. Not everyone needs the same email. Not every lead is ready. Events are the start of the conversation—not the CTA to schedule a demo.

Knack's role

We design event-based GTM programs that drive conversion. That means:

- Pre-event appointment setting with target accounts and co-sell partners
- Mapping co-sell targets with PartnerTap before the event
- Aligning sellers, partners, and messaging across the journey
- Coordinating strategic meeting schedules and booth traffic optimization
- Capturing live content onsite—then turning it into assets that work
- Launching post-event campaigns designed to drive conversion

Why now?

Third-party event budgets are back, but expectations are higher. Leadership wants proof that every booth investment, meeting, and session moves pipeline when you're competing with hundreds of other exhibitors.

The teams who use industry conferences as mid-funnel accelerators—backed by data and orchestration—will win faster and more predictably in crowded event environments.

Download our insights for designing event formats that drive revenue.

DRIVE REVENUE AT EVENTS →

05

DATA & AI INTEGRATION & STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

From hype to impact: operationalizing data and AI

The data and AI advantage gap is accelerating

Data and AI adoption in partner marketing isn't optional anymore—it's table stakes. But 74% of companies struggle to achieve and scale value from AI adoption.[5] The difference? Teams that build data and AI-ready foundations versus those that bolt AI onto broken processes.

Here's what should worry B2B marketing leaders: While you're evaluating AI tools, your competitors are already operationalizing data and AI in co-sell motions, marketplace optimization, and pipeline acceleration. The window to catch up is narrowing fast.

74% of marketers said that AI is either "critically important" or "very important" to their marketing in the next year.[6]

This shift underscores the need for data and AI-powered approaches that enhance campaign performance, improve co-sell conversion, and drive marketplace impact.

In short: Data and AI need to accelerate how you market with partners—not just how you manage partnerships.

[5] AI Adoption in 2024: 74% of Companies Struggle to Achieve and Scale Value, Boston Consulting Group
[6] 2025 State of Marketing AI Report, Marketing AI Institute and SmarterX

Why B2B marketing teams are failing at data and AI (and how to fix it)

Despite the potential, most partner marketing teams face critical hurdles that go deeper than tool selection:

THE SILO TRAP:

Partner marketing, demand gen, and sales enablement teams operate as separate kingdoms—each with their own tools, metrics, and priorities. AI doesn't bridge these gaps; it amplifies them. We see teams implementing AI-powered personalization while their partner teams manually track co-sell opportunities in spreadsheets.

THE GOVERNANCE VOID:

Data lives everywhere and belongs to no one. Customer data in Salesforce, partner data in separate systems, campaign data in yet another platform. All with zero governance or integration. AI needs clean, connected data to work. Instead, it's trying to make sense of organizational chaos.

THE ACTIVITY THEATER:

Marketing is still measured as a collection of individual efforts—campaigns, events, content pieces—rather than an integrated system driving business outcomes. AI generates insights about what's working, but teams can't act on them because there's no shared definition of success or unified decision-making structure.

These challenges demand a focused, **GTM-aligned** approach to data and AI adoption—one that accelerates existing marketing motions and co-sell plays rather than creating new complexity.

The data and AI readiness gap

Only 26% of marketers say their companies have internal AI-focused education and training, which impacts the ability to leverage AI effectively.[7] The rest are just automating chaos.

The adoption numbers tell a compelling story: **only 3.98% of companies are unwilling to integrate AI, with 39.40% very open to adopting AI.**[8] Yet this enthusiasm hasn't translated to measurable results. **Only 49% of marketers currently measure the ROI of their AI investments, though another 22% plan to in 2025.**[9]

Reality check for partner marketing leaders:

- ☑ Can your current data support AI-driven insights?
- ☑ Are your processes documented enough for AI to enhance them?
- ☑ Can you measure AI's impact on pipeline and revenue?
- ☑ Do your teams have the skills to operationalize AI recommendations?

If you answered "no" to any of these, fix your foundation before buying more AI tools.

[7] Top 51 AI Marketing Statistics for 2024, Influencer Marketing Hub
[8] The State of AI In Marketing 2025, CoSchedule
[9] The 2025 State of AI in Marketing: Trends and Insights from 500+ Marketers, Jasper

The competitive reality

Partner marketing teams leveraging data and AI effectively are seeing:

- 31% faster deal velocity in co-sell motions
- 45% improvement in marketplace conversion rates
- 52% reduction in campaign planning and execution time

(Based on Knack client performance data across 12-month implementations)

While you're planning, they're performing.

Strategic applications of AI in partner co-marketing and co-sell motions

For partner marketing and co-sell leaders, the question is no longer, “Should we use AI?”

It’s: “Where will data and AI create the most impact in our revenue-driving motions?”

Here are the priority use cases we’re helping clients operationalize now.

Account & pipeline intelligence
AI can analyze CRM and sales data to surface the highest-potential joint accounts for co-sell motions—enabling better account prioritization, territory planning, and marketing alignment.

Content personalization & dynamic messaging
AI-driven tools can tailor off-the-shelf campaign assets, messaging, and value propositions to reflect specific industries, account segments, and buyer roles—enhancing relevance and improving conversion rates in co-marketing and seller-led outreach.

Campaign automation & optimization
AI can streamline the execution of partner co-marketing campaigns—automating audience segmentation, optimizing subject lines and content for engagement, and delivering performance insights in real time.

Predictive engagement & next best action
AI can model historical engagement patterns to recommend optimal timing, channels, and messaging for partner marketing and co-sell activities—helping teams move from static campaign plans to responsive, data-driven activation.

Attribution & performance measurement
AI enhances multi-touch attribution models, helping partner marketers and co-sell teams understand which marketing and sales activities are truly influencing pipeline and driving revenue so they can invest with more precision.

90-DAY DATA & AI IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Days 1–30: Assessment
Evaluate current marketing capabilities and identify GTM areas where data and AI can add the most value.

Days 31–60: Pilot programs
Start with high-impact motions, like ABM campaigns, partner email personalization, pipeline intelligence.

Days 61–90: Integration
Embed AI into existing marketing workflows, not as a side initiative.

Months 4–6: Scaling
Expand AI-backed marketing motions across campaigns, regions, and partner segments.

Ongoing: Continuous optimization
Regularly tune models and processes to improve conversion performance and attribution.

Data and AI integration pitfalls to avoid and best practices to implement

DON'T

- Buy AI tools before fixing data governance.
- Automate broken partner processes.
- Use AI without human strategic oversight.
- Implement AI without attribution frameworks.

DO

- Start with pilot programs on high-value use cases.
- Integrate AI into existing successful workflows.
- Train teams on AI–human collaboration models.
- Measure AI impact on business outcomes, not just efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Integrating data and AI into partner marketing isn't about ecosystem architecture. It's about driving better marketing motions—faster, smarter, and at scale. By applying data and AI where it matters, partner marketing leaders can move beyond activity metrics to real conversion outcomes.

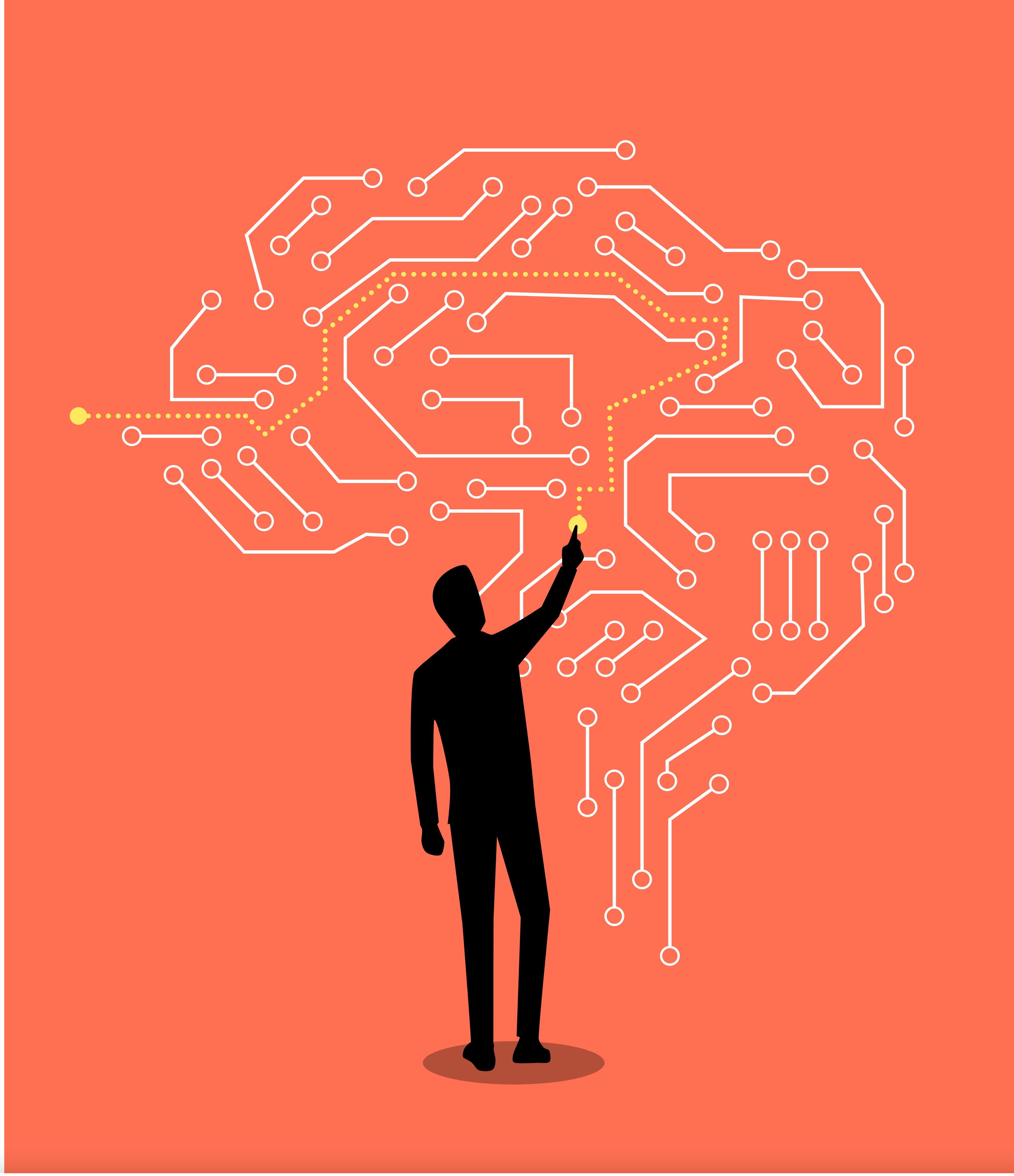
The brutal truth: AI won't save broken partner marketing operations. But for teams with solid foundations, data and AI becomes a revenue multiplier. The question isn't whether to adopt AI—it's whether you'll be ready when your competitors are already winning with it.

Ready to accelerate your partner marketing with data and AI?

The difference between AI success and failure isn't the tools you choose—it's the foundation you build. Start with strategy, add the right tools, and measure what matters.

Need help building your AI-ready partner marketing foundation? Let's discuss your specific challenges and opportunities. Or, click the link below to discover how today's smartest teams are accelerating co-marketing and co-sell performance.

DATA & AI TOOLS FOR PARTNER MARKETING →



06

MDF ROI

Incentives are not a budget.
They're a growth strategy.

The missed opportunity

Every year, millions of incentive dollars go unused or underutilized—not because partner teams aren't trying, but because the process is fragmented, opaque, or too focused on one-off tactics. Most incentive programs were designed for execution, not for defined business outcomes or measurable contributions to pipeline. And in today's performance-driven market, that's a problem.

When used strategically, MDF, co-op, and incentive budgets can fund what matters most:

- Validated joint messaging
- Seller-ready enablement
- Marketplace performance
- Pipeline-moving campaigns
- Partner onboarding and scaling

But too often, these dollars fund disconnected activities that are impossible to attribute, difficult to scale, and invisible to sales leaders.

KNACK'S POINT OF VIEW

Incentive strategy should be treated like capital allocation—not marketing reimbursement. That means clarifying upfront:

- What motions are we accelerating and can we prove impact?
- Where do we have funnel gaps and how will we measure movement?
- What do sellers need to move opportunities forward? Can we track it?
- Which partners are ready for scale? Which require foundational investment?

And then designing programs—from event activations to ABM plays to content packages—that are:

- MDF-eligible
- Attribution-first
- Performance-focused
- Conversion-aligned

If you can't measure it, you can't prove value. And in today's environment, **unproven value = unrenewed budget.**

DATA POINT: AS MUCH AS

40% of MDF is never claimed by partners, frequently due to poor enablement, lack of communication, and burdensome processes.[10]

That's not just inefficiency—it's lost influence and competitive advantage.

[10] Source: SiriusDecisions (Paid Report)

1. **Plan it backward**
   Start with business outcomes and buyer behavior. Plan budget usage around the funnel stage and KPIs you're trying to impact—not just the asset you're creating.

2. **Make attribution the first requirement**
   Design for attribution from the start—not after the spend. Whether you're funding marketplace campaigns, co-sell readiness, or events, define attribution models and reporting workflows upfront. Work with sales ops and CRM owners early.

3. **Prepackage solutions**
   Offer MDF-ready content kits, event bundles, and GTM plays that partners can activate quickly. Pre-built attribution frameworks should be baked in.

4. **Align with partner tier and maturity**
   Not all partners are ready for the same tactics or attribution rigor. Build offerings that reflect their stage, capability, and market opportunity.

5. **Map to hyperscaler priorities**
   Show how every dollar spent advances Microsoft, AWS, or other platform priorities: co-sell readiness, marketplace transactions, AI GTM plays, etc.—and prove that alignment in your reporting.

Because if you're not using incentive dollars to move the funnel—and prove you moved it—someone else will.

The partner marketing ROI framework

TIER 1: ACTIVITY METRICS
(table stakes)

- Leads generated, events attended, content downloaded
- Most programs stop here

TIER 2: ENGAGEMENT METRICS
(getting warmer)

- MQLs, opportunity creation, sales accepted leads
- Shows momentum but not impact

TIER 3: REVENUE METRICS
(this is what matters)

- Pipeline influenced, deals accelerated, revenue attributed
- Directly tied to business outcomes

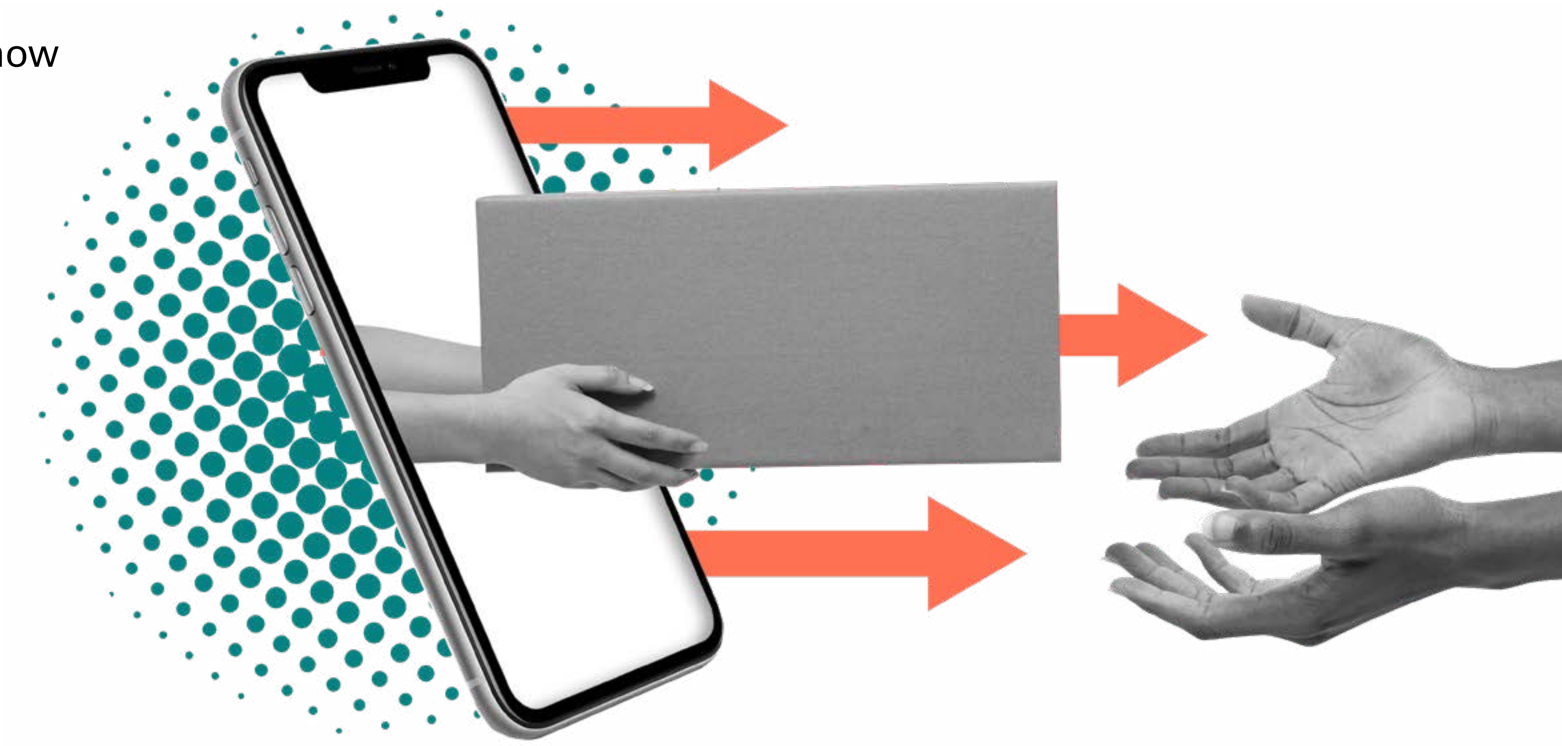
TIER 4: STRATEGIC METRICS
(competitive advantage)

- Partner ecosystem velocity, co-sell win rates, marketplace transaction volume
- Proves partner marketing as growth engine

Campaign-in-a-box isn't a strategy

Let's be clear: if templates could close deals, we'd all be at quota. It's a tactical shortcut that ignores the reality of how buying happens today and how partner motions succeed. Partners are still being told to "just download the campaign in a box," but the ecosystem has evolved.

This templated approach ignores how the ecosystem has changed. The Partner Ecosystem Platforms Software Market is valued at $5.2 billion in 2024 and expected to reach $12.3 billion by 2033,[11] driven by demand for sophisticated, data-driven partner collaboration—not simple template distribution.



Prepackaged campaigns are not a substitute for a data-based GTM strategy.

To win in this market, you need:

- Real data driving account selection and timing
- A clear, differentiated JVP, not a features list
- Messaging mapped to buyer stage, persona, and industry context
- Campaigns built to support co-sell and marketplace conversion, not just brand awareness
- A reporting infrastructure that closes the loop and proves ROI

Anything less is spend without strategy—or ROI.

[11] Partner Ecosystem Platforms Software Market Outlook 2024–2033: Trends, Innovations, & Strategic Growth Opportunities, LinkedIn

CONCLUSION

THE PARTNER MARKETING TRANSFORMATION IS NOW

The reckoning we described isn't coming. It's here.

What separates winners from laggards in 2025

We've moved beyond the era of "best practices" and entered the age of competitive advantage through operational excellence. The partner marketing leaders who will dominate the next decade aren't just implementing these strategies—they're executing them faster, smarter, and with better attribution than ever before.

The evidence is clear:

- **67% of B2B organizations** expect partner-influenced revenue to grow 30%+ this year.[12]
- **$85 billion** in marketplace transactions projected by 2028.[13]
- **74% of marketers** say AI is critically important to their strategies.[14]
- **74% of companies** still struggle to scale AI value effectively.[15]

The gap between those who get it and those who don't is accelerating.

For partner ecosystem orchestrators

Your ecosystem's success depends on empowering partners to convert—not just generate. The organizations that help their partners drive funnel performance, seller alignment, and marketplace traction will lead in influence and market share over the next 12–24 months.

Your 2025 imperative: Transform from lead-distribution engine to revenue-acceleration platform.

For partner growth drivers

The expectations from your ecosystem are shifting. Partners no longer just want leads—they want momentum: co-developed plans, strategic messaging, sales activation, and clear next steps tied directly to pipeline.

Your 2025 advantage: Become the partner who proves value, not just claims it.

[12] Continued Growth In Scale And Complexity: The State Of Partner Ecosystems In 2025, Forrester
[13] Capturing the marketplace opportunity, part three: Scale through the channel ecosystem, Microsoft
[14] 2025 State of AI Marketing Report, AI Marketing Institute and SmarterX
[15] AI Adoption in 2024: 74% of Companies Struggle to Achieve and Scale Value, BCG

The path forward

The strategies in this guide aren't theoretical—they're operational. Every framework, checklist, and recommendation comes from real implementations driving measurable results:

PIPELINE IMPACT

- 40–60% improvement in partner-influenced pipeline
- 25–35% reduction in deal cycle time
- 3–5x improvement in co-sell conversion rates

ROI ACCELERATION

- 200–400% improvement in MDF utilization efficiency
- 15–25% increase in marketplace transaction volume
- 30–50% better attribution accuracy across partner motions

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- 60–80% reduction in campaign planning time
- 90%+ partner satisfaction improvement
- 50%+ increase in seller engagement with partner programs

(Results based on Knack client implementations over 12–24 month periods)

We believe

- **Pipeline should flow**—not stall out mid-stream.
- **Events should activate strategic accounts**—not just engage audiences.
- **Sales teams need enablement that drives action**—not just delivers deck.
- **MDF should build repeatable results** and prove business impact.
- **AI should scale strategy**—not stand in for it.

Whether you're leading alliances, driving partner growth, or accelerating ecosystem plays, the fundamentals remain the same: alignment beats activity, attribution beats assumptions, and execution beats intention.

Your next move

The transformation starts with a single decision: Will you continue optimizing yesterday's playbook, or will you build tomorrow's competitive advantage?

Ready to turn strategy into measurable growth?

Choose your path:

Download our Partner Marketing Audit Checklist—get immediate tactical improvements you can implement this quarter.

Schedule a Partner Growth Strategy Session—get specific recommendations for your ecosystem and market.

The partner marketing leaders who act now will shape the industry for the next decade.

The rest will watch from behind.

KNACK COLLECTIVE