Frank Lynn & Associates, Inc.
MARKET STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

Communiqué Classics

Channel Partner Account Management – Key Issues

Your Channel Account Manager, who manages your relationships with channel partners, sits at the interface between two organizations that have complementary but often different priorities. The most common partner complaint that Frank Lynn & Associates hears is that vendors keep changing their account managers, followed closely by difficulties in contacting their current account manager.

Vendor Priorities:

- **Access** to target customer segments
- **Resources** to provide sales, logistics and sales administration
- **Sales** (and profits) that contribute to the achievement of the vendor's targets

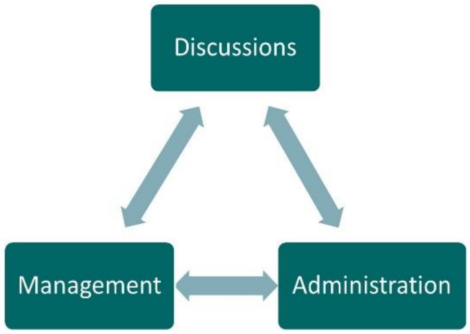
Partner Priorities:

- Needs of current **Customers** who are generating income
- Additional customer **Demand** that a vendor generates
- Role and relative importance of the vendor's **Products** within the Partner's business.

Many organizations divide their sales teams into experienced field-based account managers and less experienced office-based sales administration. This often makes the most experienced staff inefficient and unavailable, as field-based staff travel a lot and may only have 6 meetings each week. It also pushes the contact to office-based staff who are usually less experienced and unfamiliar with the partners but efficiently manage 100+ contacts each week. Rotating staff between the field and office and managing skill sets can balance sales efficiency and effectiveness.

FL&A has identified three key functions, within the account relationship, that create a successful partnership:

- **Account Discussions** on shared objectives, plans and problems to resolve. These can be face-to-face but, more importantly, need to be regular, agenda driven and collaborative. Initial meetings should be face-to-face, but ongoing meetings can be by video or telephone. This role is usually provided by an account manager.
- **Administration** to manage schedules, orders, action items, and plans. The administration function must be available, efficient, informed, and friendly. An ineffective or unfriendly administration function creates more pressure on account discussions and management. This role is often performed by a sales administrator in a team with the account manager.



- **Management** to support the account discussions, referee conflicts with the partner, bridge gaps in the account or administrative resources and provide access to senior resources. This role is usually provided by a regional or national manager.

If you believe that team selling issues are important to your organization and the sales growth you are seeking, then FL&A can help. Feel free to contact Stephen Martin at smartin@franklynn.com for further discussion.