

Komz

PCM:

The New Age of
To-Partner Comms

Intro

In the last two decades, some elements of channel marketing and communications have changed immensely – but some have barely changed at all. As direct market solutions developed, the indirect channel has followed and adapted new technology to help build a more cohesive and engaging experience for partners.

This process of developing platforms specifically for channel use has brought about innovations such as the Partner Relationship Management (PRM) platform, an evolution of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform that rose to power in the early 00s, thanks to pioneers like Salesforce.

Today, the development of channel-specific marketing solutions continues to increase. According to Canalys Ecosystem Landscape 2023¹, it accounts for over **\$2 billion** in annual revenue. In 2022 research published by Foundry – and IDC Company, found that **72%** of B2B organizations were poised to increase their spending on partner marketing alone. The partner marketing tech stack has become a crucial element for many organizations, and one that leaders are willing to allocate substantial budget for.

However, to get the most out of this investment, channel organizations need to find solutions that help with:

- Integration or compatibility with existing platforms
- The ability to scale as partner programs grow
- Personalization capabilities to maintain engagement
- Collaboration and co-marketing features
- Marketing automation for more efficient use of time
- Analytics and insights to inform future decisions

Fortunately, all of these expectations are covered by modern, specialist platforms, helping vendors to keep their partners happy and facilitate their success, from branding to sales. In this eBook, we'll explore the evolution of channel comms technology, and how you can get ahead of the curve and increase Partner Experience (PX) by improving your to-partner comms.

¹ Channels Ecosystem Landscape 2023 ([canalys.com](https://www.canalys.com))

² Partner Marketing research 2022 ([foundryco.com](https://www.foundryco.com))

The dawn of PRM

To fully understand the turning point we've reached, we need to go back to the turn of the millennium. Salesforce revolutionized the direct business landscape with its pioneering Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform, and from that moment on everything changed. Now the CRM is a central tool in any direct business' sales and customer success teams.

Adapting to the channel

As companies began to expand their reach through indirect channels, a new challenge emerged: managing relationships with channel partners effectively. In recognition of this obstacle, the concept of Partner Relationship Management (PRM) was born. PRM sought to apply the principles of CRM to the unique dynamics of the partner ecosystem, enabling vendors to better collaborate with and manage their channel partners.

The emergence of PRM represented a significant change in channel operations, marketing, GTM and sales, empowering organizations to streamline partner management processes, optimize collaboration, and drive mutual success. So much so that PRM is now an intrinsic part of the partner marketing tech stack, with Canalys estimating that PRM deliver **\$710 million** in revenue³.

³ Canalys Insights - Partner Relationship Management (PRM) isn't dead - it's foundational

PRM allowed vendors to:

- **Plan:**
Strategically align resources and initiatives to maximize partner effectiveness.
- **Incentivize:**
Design and implement incentive programs to motivate and reward partners for achieving sales targets.
- **Recruit:**
Identify and onboard new partners that align with organizational goals and values.
- **Onboard:**
Streamline the onboarding process to accelerate partner time-to-value and minimize friction.
- **Manage:**
Monitor and track partner performance, identify areas for improvement, and drive continuous optimization.
- **Enable:**
Provide partners with the tools, resources, and training needed to succeed in selling and marketing products.
- **Co-sell:**
Foster collaboration between vendors and partners to pursue joint sales opportunities and expand market reach.
- **Co-Marketing:**
Enable partners to leverage vendor resources and assets in their marketing efforts, driving demand generation and brand awareness.

But despite its transformative potential, the journey of PRM has not been without its own challenges. PRM platforms need to integrate with other solutions that vendors use, otherwise, recruitment and sales opportunities can be missed. While PRM covers the accounts-based side of to-partner marketing; creative, performance marketing, and automation are still required.

To this end, vendor marketing teams – often small and under-resourced – needed a way to streamline marketing automation in the channel, to create and share co-branded, co-marketing opportunities with partners, that provided partners with assets and campaigns to use in their own GTM activity as they were 'required' to do marketing as part of their partnership agreement.



The rise of Through-Channel Marketing Automation (TCMA)

As the landscape of marketing automation evolved, so did the needs and dynamics of channel marketing. In response to the growing complexities of indirect sales channels, the concept of Through-Channel Marketing Automation (TCMA) emerged. TCMA exists to provide a tailored approach to marketing automation, specifically designed to address the unique requirements of channel partners.

The evolution of marketing automation

Before delving into TCMA, it's essential to understand the evolution of direct marketing automation. Platforms like Marketo, Eloqua, and HubSpot revolutionized how businesses executed marketing campaigns, enabling the automation of various tasks such as email marketing, lead nurturing, and campaign management.

These solutions are essentially one-stop shops for all marketing activities. They primarily catered to the needs of direct sales and marketing teams, offering sophisticated tools to engage with prospects and customers.

They also allowed for integrated insights and greater analytics to help marketing teams develop materials that are altogether more valuable.

Adapting to the channel

While traditional marketing automation platforms were powerful tools for direct sales, they lacked the flexibility and scalability needed to support channel partners effectively. In fact, 60–70% of content produced by B2B marketing organizations goes unused due to a lack of buyer insights⁴. Recognizing this problem, TCMA platforms were developed to address the unique challenges faced by channel marketers.

These platforms offer features tailored to the needs of channel partners, including:

- **Co-Branding capabilities:** Enable partners to customize marketing materials with their own branding, ensuring consistency and alignment with their brand identity.
- **Localized campaigns:** Empower partners to create and execute marketing campaigns tailored to their local markets, driving relevance and resonance with target audiences.
- **Lead management:** Streamline the distribution of leads to partners, ensuring timely follow-up and maximizing conversion opportunities.
- **Asset sharing:** Facilitate the sharing of co-brandable marketing assets, collateral, and resources between vendors and partners, fostering collaboration and alignment.
- **Performance tracking:** Provide partners with insights into the performance of their marketing efforts, including metrics such as email opens, clicks, and campaign effectiveness.

⁴ Forrester Helps Organizations Grow Through Customer Obsession

TCMA's impact on partner-led marketing

Whilst the overall success of TCMA platforms at scale, they have had a profound impact on partner-led marketing initiatives. By giving partners the tools and resources they need to execute effective marketing campaigns, TCMA solutions have helped drive greater alignment between vendors and partners, resulting in increased sales and revenue for many partners and the vendors they work with.

Despite the benefits of TCMA, challenges remain in achieving widespread adoption and success. From user adoption issues to integration complexities, organizations must navigate various hurdles on their TCMA journey.

However, with proper planning, training, and support, organizations can overcome these challenges and unlock the full potential of TCMA to drive channel success.

As the channel marketing landscape continues to evolve, TCMA will play an increasingly critical role in enabling channel partners to succeed in an ever-changing marketplace. By embracing TCMA platforms and strategies, organizations can enhance partner engagement, drive demand generation, and maximize revenue opportunities in the channel.



The next frontier: Partner Communication Management (PCM)

Partner Communication Management (PCM) is emerging as the next stage in the evolution of channel marketing technology, promising to revolutionize how vendors communicate and collaborate with their channel partners. In this chapter, we will explore the significance of PCM, its potential impact on partner engagement, and the strategies for harnessing its power.

What is PCM?

PCM is still a relatively new concept and acronym which represents the latest stage in the evolution of indirect GTM tech.

PCM is not just about sending email comms to partners, it's about managing the success and engagement of the whole process of sharing comms with partners. Unlike traditional email marketing or generic communication tools, PCM allows vendors to personalise, automate, manage and distribute content to partners whilst saving time, resource and associated costs. PCM uses advanced delivery techniques, matchmaking tech and content filtering to help make it easier for partners to find the content and updates they need to see.

Driving partner engagement

Effective communication is essential for fostering strong relationships and driving engagement with channel partners. When asked what the biggest communications challenge was, 35% of strategic communications specialists said that cutting through the noise was no.1. This is a challenge that PCM aims to alleviate.

PCM enables vendors to manage the timely delivery of relevant and personalized communications to their partners, fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration.

Partners don't have to wade through overfilled inboxes or dig through reams of content to find what they want. PCM works based on preference and choice, matching partner/user preference with available vendor content.

Enhancing Partner Experience (PX)

A seamless and intuitive communication experience is critical for enhancing partner experience (PX) and maximizing partner satisfaction. By providing partners with user-friendly interfaces, streamlined communication workflows, and valuable content and resources, PCM empowers partners to succeed in their sales and marketing efforts through better engagement with the content they want to receive.

The role of dedicated PCM solutions

While existing marketing automation and email marketing tools may offer some communication capabilities, dedicated PCM solutions like Komz are specifically designed to address the unique challenges of to-partner communication. By offering features such as partner-specific messaging templates, personalization, automated communication workflows, and performance tracking, PCM streamlines and optimizes communication processes for maximum effectiveness.

Predictions for the future

As PCM continues to gain traction in the global indirect GTM space, industry experts predict significant growth and innovation in the years to come. PCM is expected to emerge as a cornerstone of the evolution in channel marketing technology, driving increased partner engagement, revenue growth, and overall channel success.

To leverage the full potential of PCM, organizations must prioritize investment in dedicated PCM solutions and strategies. This includes conducting thorough research to select the right PCM platform, providing comprehensive training and support to partners, and continuously monitoring and optimizing communication processes for maximum impact.



⁵ Forrester Helps Organizations Grow Through Customer Obsession

Introducing Komz

We're on the cusp of another huge evolution for channel marketing. Adapting to this change as soon as possible will give organizations the time they need to prepare for a new world of to-partner communications.

Current partner engagement metrics (such as email open rates) won't cut it in the to-partner comms world of the future. Engagement will be much more granular, with partners specifying personal preferences on which content they need from vendors. The information overload of daily emails looks set to subside, with only the most urgent and important information getting through. So providing choice over what content your audience receives and wants to consume will ultimately boost success.

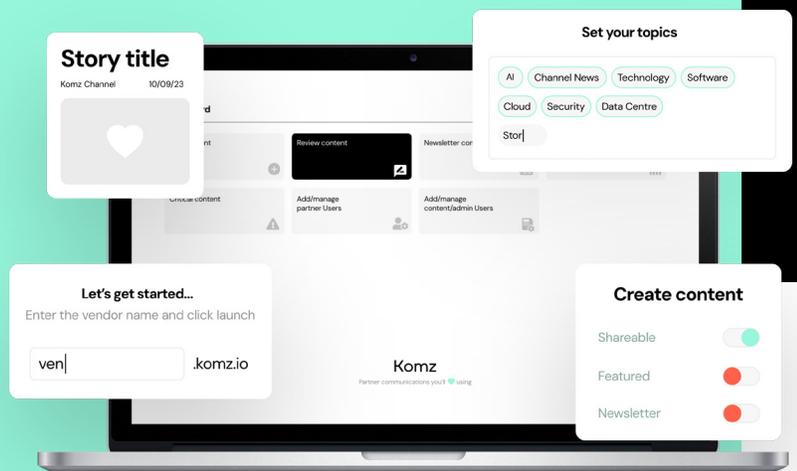
So where will the rest of it go?

Komz is the communication-first, partner-led solution that is helping channel organizations engage with partners by putting them in the driver's seat.

It's time to simplify your comms process, improve partner engagement and increase PX, whilst reducing time, resources required and the costs associated with sending partner comms.

Komz features:

- ✓ Personalized content filtering
- ✓ Cross-channel delivery capabilities
- ✓ Desktop/mobile/tablet notifications
- ✓ Create, Curate and Aggregate content
- ✓ No-code interface for accessibility
- ✓ Data-driven analytics
- ✓ CREST-approved security credentials
- ✓ Integrate with SSO, portals, PRM, CRM and more



Find out more today

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Partner communications you'll  using