

ENABLING PARTNERS, DRIVING GROWTH

The Background

A leading networking and information technology company needed to revamp its channel partner programs to improve customer satisfaction and drive partner sales growth.

The Challenge

The channel partner program was large and complex, and not clearly differentiated between two internal offerings. Communications surrounding the program needed to be simple and straightforward.

The Request

"We've never clearly distinguished between our reseller channel program and our managed services channel program. We need to rename the programs to differentiate the two and highlight the benefits of each in a way that's clear for our partners."

Positioned as a renaming project, the goal was to rebrand the programs and refresh the collateral.



The First Step

I began the project by reviewing source material which often raised more questions than it answered. Because the reseller and managed services programs had not been not clearly differentiated, it was difficult to see which features belonged with which program, or why certain features still existed at all. Also, internal-only terminology and acronyms were found in customer-facing materials.

I generated a detailed list of questions. The more the project manager and I dug into the "what" and "why" behind the programs, the more extensive this project became.

The simple renaming project turned out to be a blank slate and the unique opportunity to start over, clarifying program benefits for customers old and new.



What Changed?

- Internal jargon was eliminated from the documentation.
- Collateral was reduced to only what was needed. This eliminated several lengthy brochures and guides, replacing them with quick start guides that answered the most common questions.
- Detailed technical information moved to the partner portal for easy updating. Partners could opt-in to be notified of updates.
- Key differences between the two programs were highlighted on the public-facing website for all to see, and in email blasts and direct mail campaigns for existing customers.

The Company

Revenue: \$39 billion

Employees: 66,000

Industry: Networking

Image courtesy Luis Llerena via Unsplash.com.

The Process

Once we had identified the needs, it was time to lay out the scope. Working closely with the project manager, we decided that instead of updating the existing materials – including brochures, guides, slide decks, portal and web content – we would rebuild from the ground up.

The new programs would have a three-pronged focus:

- For prospective customers: Simple web copy to introduce the programs.
- For current customers: Email blasts and a direct mail campaign explaining why they had been recategorized; partner portal content detailing program incentives.
- For all customers: Brochures, brief slide decks and quick start guides to explain how to quickly maximize program incentives.

Rather than attempt to edit and make the old content fit the new format, I rewrote everything to address the specific needs of each partner type.

The Result

What was originally estimated as a six-week renaming and editing project took nearly four months and an entirely new scope of work. However, the end result was a clean, straightforward communication of the new partner programs that led to improved customer engagement. The content was modular, flexible and easy to update in-house.

The new structure also set the stage for the possible addition of a third type of partner program that was being discussed internally.