Building Successful Partner Channels: in the software industry

By Hans Peter Peter Bech

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"Building Successful Partner Channels" is a book laying out the roadmap for achieving global market leadership through independent channel partners in the software industry.

The book applies the business model and business model environment frameworks developed by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur and concludes that taking the indirect route to market adds an additional layer of complexity to our business model as we leave the control of finding, winning, making, keeping and growing happy customers to third parties.

The book explains that the direct and the indirect go-to-market approach are not options we can choose freely between, independent of the nature of our business model and business model environments and it discusses when the indirect go-to-market approach is applicable and advantageous and when it is not. The book concludes that taking the indirect route to market requires that the channel is an integrated element of our product offering and value proposition.

The indirect route to global market leadership requires developing and maintaining a channel partner program and the book lists all the elements of this program including the critical channel partner P&L model. The book concludes that our partner program will change substantially as we move from early stage channel building to the mature mode where most of our revenue comes from existing channel partners.

The book describes the process for channel partner recruitment, and concludes that the initial process is very similar to the process of hiring top performing sales people. However, where we pay staff to perform their duties from the day they join, channels partners will have to make substantial investments before they reap the benefits of the cooperation. Channel partner recruitment is therefore initially a long process requiring substantial investments.

The dynamics of channel partner recruitment changes as we move from the early mode channel development stage to the mature stage and the book recommends

that we should recruit as many channel partners as we possibly can. We then let them demonstrate where they belong in the channel pyramid classifying channel partners and the book discusses how we should manage each group.

A full chapter is devoted to discuss adopting the indirect channel approach at a later stage after having applied a direct approach first, introduces some simple sanity checks to verify if switching is feasible and explains how this switch can be accomplished.

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Building Successful Partner Channels: in the software industry By Hans Peter Peter Bech Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #294446 in Books

- Published on: 2015-04-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .48" w x 6.00" l, .67 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 210 pages

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Editorial Review

Review
"When Microsoft acquired Navision there is no doubt that the price they paid was heavily influenced by the value of our channel partner ecosystem. I can think of no one better suited than Hans Peter to write a book with the title Building Successful Partner Channels." - Preben Damgaard, Co-founder and CEO of Navision

"Predictable growth and market leadership through independent channel partners are on every software industry CEO and sales executives' mind. However, it is rarely achieved. With "Building Successful Partner Channels" Hans Peter Bech provides a great tactical approach toward reaching this goal."Torulf Nilsson, Product Executive, Visma Retail, Oslo, Norway

"Hans Peter Bech has been at the forefront developing indirect channels in the software industry for more than three decades and his track record is impressive. I'd highly recommend this book to anyone searching for the route to global market leadership in the software industry." - Yusuf Soner, School of Management at the Sabanci University, Turkey

"Building Successful Partner Channels provides a powerful, practical approach to building a strong network of independent channel partners, so as to optimize sales and marketing activities. The book helps sales and marketing executives understand how to work in concert to achieve global market leadership through the indirect-channel approach." Toke Kruse, Founder and CEO at Billy, San Francisco, USA

From the Author
I started building independent channel partner networks in 1986. Coming from a small domestic market I was forced to build international channel partner networks very early in the lifecycle of the companies where I was responsible for revenue generation and I also had to do it with very limited resources. I learned that you do not have to be big to be smart. Even small software companies can build powerful independent channel partner networks over time if they understand some fundamental business principles.

From 1997 to 2001 I was responsible for Damgaard's activities in the German speaking markets and in this capacity I had the unique experience of introducing and building the channel for AXAPTA (now Microsoft Dynamics AX) in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. After the merger with Navision I was made responsible for our joint operations in Central Europe.

I left Navision in 2001 to start my own business and in 2003 I acquired a major share of a Microsoft Dynamics AX reseller and held the position as CEO of the company. In this capacity I had intimate insight into the daily life of a value added reseller of a product that I was previously responsible for launching to independent channel partners in the German speaking markets. Having served on both sides of the table helped me to deepen my understanding of the principal/partner relationship and the completely different businesses that they run.

Since 2007 I have been working as a management consultant and workshop facilitator helping clients in the software industry with global growth including building networks of independent channel partners. However, as a management consultant I can only serve a few clients at a time.

With this book I hope I can help many more software companies around the world make the right choices on

how best to serve their customers and grow their global market share, when they apply the indirect go-to-market approach.

From the Back Cover
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Kyle Gill:

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