

Designing Partner/Reseller Training

9 must-consider topics

 By Gauri Reyes

Online training is an effective way to arm your partners and value-added resellers with knowledge. It's scalable — you can train thousands at once while retaining your own corporate brand in the training materials. A highly trained, extended sales force can increase your revenue through increased sales of your products and services. And, you can sell your online training courses themselves to your partners and resellers, should you choose to do so.

When creating an online training program for your partners and resellers, consider the following topics:

1. Convey the Company Culture

Your partners and resellers are effectively an extension of your sales force. As they are often in front of your end customers and are effectively representing your products and services, expose them to your company culture, norms, behaviors, values, beliefs, and vision. The more you align your culture with theirs, at least when it comes to reselling your products and services, the more you can ensure a unified, positive experience to the end customer.

2. Opportunity Registration & Dispute Resolution

If you work with multiple resellers, your resellers could potentially compete for the same opportunity with the same end customer. Avoid sticky issues and reduce inter-reseller conflict by covering topics related to how to register customer opportunities, rules of engagement, and how to resolve disputes when two or more partners claim the right to call upon a customer.

3. Ask for a Performance

Make partners prove that they're ready to go in front of your customers. You can stipulate that partners complete a minimum set of courses, or a series, before they are allowed to resell your products/services. You can set-up training-based certifications and accreditation to give them the official stamp of approval that they're qualified to sell for you. Also, consider asking your partners to complete a "homework assignment" to prove that they're ready to hit the ground running. For example, ask a partner to present a product pitch to you (via video, for example) to prove their sales-readiness.

4. Position Top-producers as SMEs

If you have certified or named partners who have shown loyalty and dedication to your company by achieving a target sales number or other goal, consider positioning them as the "in team" as part of your reseller rewards structure. Beyond providing wholesale discounts, financial rewards or other perks, ask these top-producers to be your subject matter experts (SMEs) for other resellers. And, when possible, ask these SMEs to create additional online training modules for you, to add to your repertoire of reseller training content.

5. Ping Partners on their Training Needs

What do your partners want to better understand your product/service? What do they need from you in order to effectively partner with you? What existing training content needs to be updated to reflect the rapidly changing marketplace? In addition to phone, email and face-to-face conversations, add online training to your tool bag as another method to gather feedback. Incorporate quizzes and surveys in your online training and open up two-way communication through online collaboration tools to ensure that you are creating compelling training content and supporting your partners' ability to sell your product and services.

6. Reduce Churn Rate

Process efficiency is imperative, both internally and externally. Look for ways to streamline communication and reduce the need for lengthy

conversations, questions, and problem-solving sessions. Comb through the list of frequently asked questions by partners and resellers and create training content that addresses all questions. Provide clear instructions on who to call when, how to escalate issues, how/who to engage for specific types of questions, and where to find needed information on your website. Weave all these points into engaging, informative training and you've got a module that addresses a true business need.

7. Promos, Incentives, Offers... Compliance

Ideally, online training will be completed by every one of your partners or resellers, resulting in 100% compliance. Promotions, incentives, offers and other perks help towards increasing training completion rates. Consider adding a training module that covers these perks (formal certifications, continuing professional education credits, prizes, giveaways, rewards, volume discounts, etc.) to ensure that all your partners are aware of the rewards of completing (and learning) your online training offerings.

8. Positioning and Messaging

Conveying your product positioning and messaging to your partners is required. Create training content that covers what to say (who to target, etc.) to successfully sell your products and services, and what *not* to say (who *not* to target, etc.). Likely, this type of training will require frequent updates, so work content upgrades into your program plan.

9. Your Products and Services

Sensational training on your specific products and services is the crux of any partner or reseller training program. Product training is often the most boringly-delivered training content of all. But, without real product knowledge, at least functionally if not technically, partners or resellers will not be able to consistently deliver effective sales presentations in the field. Pull out all the stops to create unforgettable online training on your products and services.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle — Create a "Green" Training Program

Part of the value-add of online training is the ability to reuse content. If you view your partners and resellers as an extension of your workforce, chances are that a significant portion of your online training for your internal employees can be repurposed for your partners and resellers. Conversely, partner and reseller training (training on products, internal escalation paths and dispute resolution, and company culture, as examples) could be reused for internal employees.

Also, portions of your partner and reseller training might be appropriate for your end customers. If you've created excellent training content for one group, maximize your benefits by repurposing that content for other groups.

What topics do you find invaluable in your training programs for partners and resellers? What order would you list the topics (from least to most conventional use of training for these groups)? **TEL**

The article first appeared on online training platform [Mindflash](#) and [The Daily Mindflash blog](#).



Gauri Reyes is a talent developer and learning leader with extensive experience in roles ranging from software management to managing the learning function in organizations. She has now added to her digital audit trail the admission that she is wary of her own digit audit trail and what it says about her, but hope that the admission encourages others to participate in the conversation. She is Principal Learning Strategist and CEO at Triple Point Advisors and Founder of the YOUth LEAD program.

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