

The Role of The Partnership Broker

Rubilda Segura & Robin Power



What is the role of the partnership broker and just how can they help create, develop and sustain partnerships?

As a partnership brokerage, Affinity Maker™ helps organisations to:

- spot partnership opportunities between organisations, identify target partners and broker relationships for organisations

- repair underperforming, damaged or broken partnerships for organisations

External partnership brokers, like Affinity Maker™, are independent organisations contracted by one of the partners or by the partnership to:

- Explore the feasibility of adopting a partnership approach

- Facilitate negotiations to develop a partnership and / or a partnering agreement

- Maintain or monitor the effectiveness of partnerships over time

- Help build an internal capability to deliver partnerships and sustain outcomes effectively

Brokers are there to enable the **partners** to be more effective and the **partnership** to maximise its potential.



*Good binding requires no knots
Yet no one can loosen it
The sage takes care of all things
And abandons nothing
Lao Tsu*

To establish efficient and effective partnerships can be complex and challenging, especially when there are a number of parties involved with distinct objectives.

There are many activities required to successfully bring the potential partners together, to help them develop a realistic shared objective, to aid them in developing the necessary partnership processes, to keep them focussed on the main game so that real outcomes are achieved. The question is who should take

on this responsibility?

A partnership broker such as Affinity Maker™ would fulfil that role, because of its skills on developing relationships, facilitating discussions, creating processes that assist potential partners to come together, coaching, supporting and in some cases managing the partnership on behalf of the partners.

Effective partnership brokers always work on behalf of all the partners to ensure the integrity of the process. While the partners bring the knowledge and expertise from their own organisation, it is the partnership broker that can more effectively manage the process so the partners can focus on their organisation's interests as well as their day-to-day activities.

A partnership broker:

- Carries responsibility for the process of building a successful partnership and securing its effective functioning long term

- Supports the partners in designing and implementing the project that they agree to undertake

- Acts as an intermediary and builds collaboration between the partners

- Inspires others in the initiating organisation and the partner organisations to follow the partnership approach

- Encourages the adoption of behaviours to help the partnership to function effectively and grow

- Protects the principles and vision of the partnership

- Implements an alliance management framework to accelerate revenue generation and reduce the time to revenue

- Uncovers breakdowns and removes impediments to the successful development of the partnership

A sustainable partnership is one that is setup to operate on integrity and transparency, one that shares the benefits as well as risk, allows for flexibility and change, has a shared objective, is built around both organisations' teams and encourages their collaboration, and most importantly.... **it needs to be brokered**, through all stages of the partnership process.





Take the ICT industry as an example of where the partnering structure is far from ideal. Many partnerships are formed between a corporation and small to medium sized organisations that make up the distribution or the reseller channel; these are termed 'business partners' of the corporation.

Virtually any organisation can form a partnership; they only need to identify a prospective partner, establish contact, submit the documentation/proposal, negotiate the terms and conditions and then sign a contract. Once operational, the partnership could be reviewed on a periodic basis against a set of pre-determined Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

It seems that easy to establish partnerships using this fairly simplistic standard business process. No consideration is given to 'brokering' the partnership, or discussing the importance of transparency, risk and benefit sharing, availability and use of resources and skills, strategy planning, etc.

By bypassing this important step in developing sustainable partnerships, organisations mostly concentrate in negotiating the contract and get it signed. Once all parties involved have signed the contract the next planned step is to start measuring the success of the partnership using a set of predetermined criteria.

It's hard to imagine how the success of a partnership can be measured based on a set of criteria that was developed without considering the

real interests of each party. It is also hard to imagine that the same set of criteria will apply to all parties involved when they might operate in different industries or market segments; or when they might have different structures, cost models, business drivers and/or core business objectives.

The majority of partnerships that are build using this approach struggle, damaging not only the relationship between the partners but with their customers. This will eventually lead the organisations in spending a considerable amount of time trying to fix the problems that frequently arise. The partnership then quickly transform into nothing more than a contractual agreement between two parties in a very strained relationship and constant pressure to meet the expected KPI's. More than frequently organisations try to deal with this common issue by solving the immediate problems, instead of addressing the underlying issues in the partnership foundations and principles.

An accomplished partnership broker like Affinity Maker™ can guide your organisation through and educate you about the process of setting up and managing partnerships for the long-term gain of all involved.

Affinity Engine™



The Affinity Engine™ was designed to aid organisations who fall into two categories: those looking to establish new partnerships or alliances to grow revenue, introduce innovative products or services or reduce costs. And secondly those that have a partnership or alliance at any stage, from concept through to full functioning and are experiencing challenges to get it to function optimally. Making Partnerships and Alliances Work is all we do. Why step into an unknown and potentially risky venture unprepared when you could arm your organization with a series of tools and techniques that would ensure the greatest likelihood of success.

Affinity Maker™ is an international boutique consulting company that helps clients create new partnerships and alliances and make existing ones work better.

To find out more about our services or to start using the Affinity Engine™ visit our web site www.affinitymaker.com



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