



Ensuring Product Launch Success with Channel Specific Marketing Support

Deciding on the most effective channel is a critical decision in any product launch but the hard work doesn't end there. Companies often utilize a variety of channels for the same product and these channels have varying lengths; the number of participants between the producer and the user. Creating a generic marketing package for use by all channels may seem expedient but it risks diluting the impact of the marketing effort in each of the channels. Ideally, each channel provides access to a unique market segment so the marketing package needs to reflect the specific requirements of both the target market and the channel partners involved. This duality needs to be recognized before the launch marketing materials are created so that the value proposition for each target market and channel partner is addressed.

How can companies ensure that all of the value propositions are addressed?

The best way is to follow five simple steps;

1. Create a matrix that shows each channel, the channel participants/partners within that channel and the target market for that channel.
2. Identify the characteristics of each channel, the channel participants and target market that may impact the success of the product launch. This will help when defining value propositions that impact the needs of the target audience.
3. Highlight common characteristics. This will ensure consistency and save time and effort when creating value propositions for channels, participants or markets that have common characteristics.
4. Define the value proposition for each of element within the matrix
5. Review for consistency and completeness.

A value proposition for should always focus on how the product will help the channel partner or end-user achieve their business goals – revenue, market share, profit or customer retention.

What are key elements or areas of the product launch that might require channel or partner customization?

Be sure to consider each of the following areas when developing the product launch support materials for your channel partners;

Training

You will need to combine product knowledge and sales training so they are able to correctly communicate the value proposition

Incentives

Provide incentives for the whole channel including channel partners and the target market.

Supporting materials

The supporting materials need to recognize the need to “sell” the channel partner plus provide materials for the partner to “sell” the next participant in the channel be it another partner or the end-user.

Pricing

Work with your channel partners to arrive at a mutually acceptable pricing model. The goal is that it is easy to understand and implement, flexible and meets profit margin expectations.

Product launches are very complex in terms of the number of stakeholders and their needs. Don't let the complexity negatively impact the effectiveness of the launch. ***Take care of your channel partners and they will take care of you!***