



# Building the Operating System for **Partner-Led Growth**



What does it take to transform a standard partner program into a true growth engine? Learn from **Christina Ferrari**, a seasoned partnerships leader who has done exactly that. From building co-selling programs at **Amazon Ads** that generated \$300M+ in incremental revenue impact, to standing up a brand-new partner strategy from scratch at **Udemy**.

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## What You Will Learn

This guide explores how partnership leaders can move beyond managing partners and build a true partner-led growth engine that creates measurable business impact.

- Learn how to design a partner operating system before you scale, starting with business goals, partner fit, enablement, and internal alignment
- Understand the difference between having partners and having a partner-led growth motion, and why revenue attribution is the foundation of both
- Discover how to shift from reactive partner management to proactive partner growth by creating incentives, building trust, and aligning around shared outcomes
- Learn practical ways to get sales, marketing, product, and leadership teams invested in partnerships by connecting partner value directly to their goals
- See how successful companies create smooth handoffs between business development and partner success teams to improve long-term partner performance
- Learn how to identify and track partner influence across customer relationships, sales motions, and revenue outcomes

These insights will help you build partnerships that are aligned with business objectives, supported across the organization, and designed to drive sustainable growth over the long term.

# Meet Your Expert Guide

## Christina Ferrari

Head of Consumer Partnerships & Growth at **Udemy**

With a career spanning some of the most important shifts in partner-led growth, Christina Ferrari has built her work around a simple question:

*"How do we take a business goal and leverage partners as a path to that goal and then what needs to be true on the operations and strategy side to launch and scale it successfully?"*

At Amazon Ads, she helped shape partner motions during a period of major expansion, building co-selling programs that aligned sales teams and agency partners around shared customer outcomes. Today at Udemy, she is building distribution partnerships from the ground up, helping expand platform reach while balancing strategy, execution, and partner success in a fast-moving environment.



### Partner-Led Growth Architect

Designing partner strategies that connect business goals to measurable growth outcomes.

### Ecosystem Revenue Builder

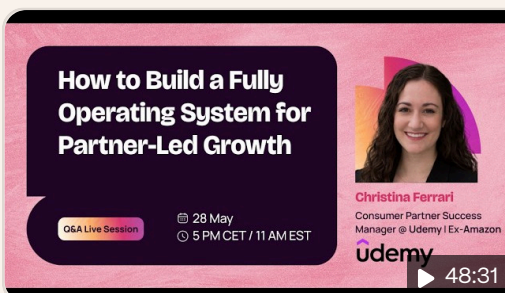
Creating co-selling and distribution motions that align partners around shared success and revenue impact.

### Program Architect & Operator

Building partner programs from the ground up while balancing strategy, execution, and long-term scalability.

*Christina recently joined us for a live Q&A on building partner programs that drive business outcomes, aligning partner strategy with company goals, and what it takes to scale partnerships inside high-growth organizations.*

## Watch the Complete Session



YouTube



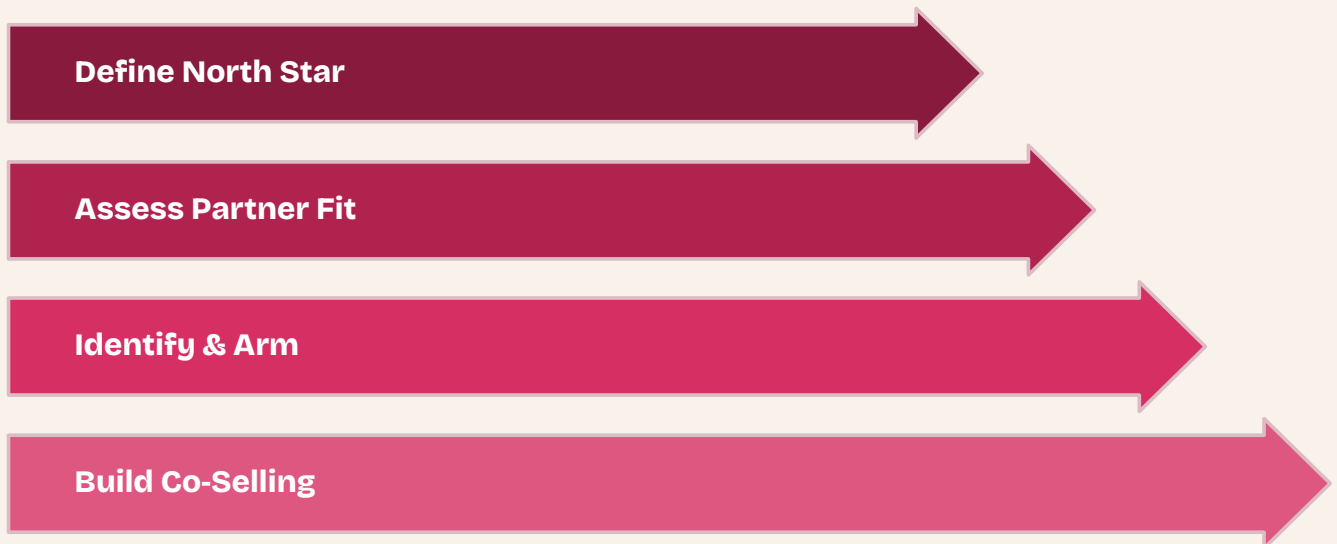
### Q&A: Building the Operating System for Partner-Led Gro...

In this live Q&A, Christina Ferrari breaks down how to build the systems, strategies, and structures that separate companies...

# Designing the Partner Operating System Before You Scale

Before any partner program can scale, the operational foundation must be in place. Christina calls this **"the work to do the work"** – the fundamentals that determine whether a partner motion succeeds or stalls. It starts with a single, clarifying question: *What is the business actually trying to achieve?* Are you launching a new product and need momentum? Opening a new customer segment? The answer shapes everything: how you find partners, how you onboard them, and how you measure success.

Once the business North Star is clear, the next question is whether partners are even the right channel to pursue that goal. This due diligence step is often skipped in the rush to launch, but it's critical. If partners are the right path, the work then shifts to identifying which partners are prepared to move quickly, arming them with the right materials and collateral, and ensuring the internal mechanisms, incentives, data tracking, sales alignment, are in place to support them.



At Amazon, this process meant analyzing 3,000+ partners to identify which agencies had the capability to pitch full-funnel and upper-funnel solutions for Prime Video. It meant building enablement programs, mapping technical capability gaps, and ultimately constructing a co-selling program where AEs and partners worked the same client accounts together with aligned incentives on both sides. The result was a program that scaled globally because it was built on mutual wins from the ground up.

# Signs You Have Partners, But Not a Partner-Led Growth Motion

What are the signs that a company has partners but does not yet have a true partner-led growth motion? Christina's answer: **Can you track partner-influenced or partner-sourced revenue?** If that data infrastructure doesn't exist, the partner motion cannot be evaluated and therefore cannot be improved.

## No Revenue Attribution

You cannot distinguish between revenue generated with partner involvement versus revenue generated in isolation. Without this, you can't prove, or disprove, that partners are adding value.

## No Touchpoint Tracking

At Amazon, every conversation an AE had with a partner present was logged, along with outcomes. If your CRM has no record of partner touchpoints, you're flying blind on attribution.

## Sales Teams Don't Know Which Partners Touch Their Accounts

One of Christina's key discoveries at Amazon was that sales leadership had zero visibility into which third-party partners were already working with their customers. This invisible overlap is a massive missed opportunity.

## Partners Are a Distraction, Not a Driver

Without metrics, it's impossible to assess whether the partner motion is effective or simply consuming resources that could be better deployed elsewhere. Data is the only way to answer this honestly.

The infrastructure to capture partner data is what enables the leap from "we have partners" to "partners are driving our growth." Until that foundation exists, scaling is premature.

# Bridging Business Development and Partner Success

One of the most common structural failures in partner organizations is the gap between the people who close partner deals and the people responsible for making those partnerships succeed post-launch. Christina's advice for bridging this gap is direct: **if you're on the partner success side, get yourself further upstream in the journey.** Understand the deal flow process. Know when it's appropriate to begin thinking about enablement and onboarding – is it at the term sheet phase? At pipeline generation? You don't need to play everywhere, but being informed about how negotiations are progressing reveals critical insight into what needs to be true once the partner is signed.

Conversely, if you're on the business development side closing deals, it is not enough to stand up a partnership and then say "good luck." A feedback loop between BD and partner success is essential; it makes the next negotiation easier, surfaces what's working and what isn't, and leads to sustainable, long-term partnerships rather than one-time agreements that quietly fade.

## For Partner Success Teams

- Get upstream: understand the deal flow and pipeline generation process
- Align with BD on when enablement and onboarding should begin
- Use deal negotiation insights to anticipate post-launch needs
- Build a feedback loop that informs future partner negotiations

## For Business Development Teams

- Don't close and disappear; sustainable deals require ongoing support
- Share learnings from deal negotiations with the partner success team
- Treat post-launch performance as a reflection of deal quality
- Build structures that make the handoff smooth and informed

# From Partner Management to Partner Growth

Managing partner relationships well is a strong foundation, but it's not the same as driving partner-led growth. Making the shift from reactive to proactive requires intentional design. Christina identifies two or three core moves that enable this transition.

The first is ensuring partners have genuine incentive to unlock what you're asking of them. This doesn't have to mean a revenue share, though that's one option. It could be visibility into your product roadmap, thought leadership opportunities, invitations to beta programs, or co-marketing that elevates their brand alongside yours. The goal is to make the partner feel genuinely invested in the relationship, not just transactionally engaged. Once that trust and investment is established, you can bring growth opportunities to the table and have a real strategic conversation, including asking what the partner is seeing in the market, even from working with your competitors.



## Understand Partner Priorities

Before asking partners to unlock growth, know what matters to them. Their goals, roadmap, and market position should inform how you frame every growth opportunity.



## Create Non-Revenue Incentives

Rev share is one lever. But thought leadership, beta access, brand co-marketing, and market visibility can be equally powerful motivators, especially for partners building their own brand.



## Build Trust Before Asking for Growth

The partners most likely to co-invest in growth are the ones who already feel in a genuine relationship with you. Relationship depth is the prerequisite for growth conversations.

Technology is evolving too quickly for companies to build and innovate in isolation. Christina's conviction is that more and more of tech will be partner-driven, making the shift from partner management to partner growth not just a nice-to-have, but a competitive necessity.

# Aligning Internal Teams Around Partner-Led Growth

Getting internal colleagues aligned around partnerships is one of the hardest, and most important, challenges in building a partner program. Your colleagues already have a thousand priorities. Asking them to incorporate a third party with a completely different business strategy and leadership team into their day-to-day work is a significant ask. Christina's starting point: **lead with empathy**. Internal teams are not naturally thinking about partners as an extension of their goals. Your job is to be the translator.

At Udemy, Christina has been aligning on **success metrics for each piece of the partner relationship** by function. With marketing, it might be using MDF to test a new channel. With sales, it's showing which partners are already touching their accounts and what those partners can do. With product, it's framing partners as a source of market intelligence and experimentation. The goal is to help each function see partners not as overhead, but as a source of insight and acceleration.

1

## Translate Partner Value by Function

Show each team, marketing, sales, product, specifically what the partnership unlocks for *their* goals, not just the company's.

2

## Bring Colleagues Into Partner Rooms

When internal teams build direct relationships with partners, they naturally develop ownership over pieces of the partnership, reducing the burden on the partner team alone.

3

## Build Internal Champions

A few AEs who deeply understand the partner ecosystem, trained by partners, invited into partner sessions, become a force multiplier across the entire sales organization.

4

## Formalize Governance Structures

Create a RACI, add a partnerships section to executive reviews, and establish clear rules of engagement across functions so partners add richness, not friction, to the business.

"If you are managing partners or you are in a partner organization, it is on you to design the communication strategy so folks at the top, aside, and below are all aware of what's happening with partners. Start calling out the wins, the areas of friction, the next steps – it legitimizes that line of business."

# Key Takeaways for Partner-Led Growth

Christina's wrap-up is simple: building a real partner-led growth motion takes more than good intentions. It takes empathy, steady internal alignment, and a lot of thoughtful design. Her take is that when you treat partnerships like a true operating system, not just a side program, they become a much more reliable engine for growth.

## From Management to Growth

Christina recommends moving beyond just "managing" partners. Her advice is to design for growth on purpose: learn what matters to partners, think beyond revenue share, and build trust first so the relationship has room to grow naturally.

## Seamless Handoffs & Feedback

One of Christina's big reminders is to make the handoff from business development to partner success feel effortless. She recommends sharing context clearly, keeping feedback flowing, and making sure every deal is set up for long-term health, not just a quick close.

## Internal Alignment & Empathy

Christina's advice here is to translate partner value in a way each team can actually feel. Whether it's marketing, sales, or product, she suggests helping colleagues see partners as a real accelerator for their goals, not as extra work.

## Proactive System Design

Her takeaway is that strong partner-led growth doesn't happen by accident. Christina recommends building the operating system on purpose, with clear governance, open communication, and a willingness to keep refining the program as the business evolves.

Christina's overall reflection is that partnerships become powerful when they're treated as a shared capability across the company. When the ecosystem is designed well, it stops feeling like a side initiative and starts becoming a real advantage for innovation, momentum, and growth.



# Make Your Partner Program an Operating System with Kiflo

You've discovered all the tips & tricks how to build a strong engine for partner-led growth .

Now, see how Kiflo helps partner teams **measure, scale, and optimize** that impact across every motion: from onboarding to revenue.

## What You'll See in our Demo



### Track and Measure Revenue

Gain full visibility into partner-sourced and influenced deals to understand your ecosystem's true impact.



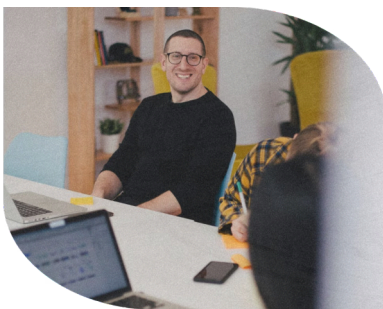
### Empower and Engage Partners

Collaborate seamlessly through partner portals, deal registration, and real-time performance dashboards.



### Automate and Integrate Everything

Sync partner data with your CRM and streamline enablement, payouts, and reporting, all from one platform.



## Ready to build stronger partnerships?

Experience how Kiflo can scale your partner program.

[Book Your Demo →](#)

