Revenue Generating Partnerships: How to Get Pipeline from Your Agreements

What does it actually take to turn a signed partner agreement into predictable pipeline? Learn from **Lela Koopal**, CEO and Co-Founder at **PRTNRd**, who spent over a decade building partner ecosystems at **Salesforce** and **Accenture** before helping companies turn partner relationships into repeatable revenue motions.

What's inside this guide

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

This guide explores how partnership leaders can move beyond signing agreements and build a motion that actually converts partnerships into pipeline.

- Why partner-sourced revenue is a lagging indicator, and which leading indicators to track instead: seller activation, qualified conversations, account mapping, and opportunity creation and conversion
- What separates a partner with real go-to-market strength from one that has only signed an agreement: customer overlap, complementary capabilities, and shared economics
- How to calibrate onboarding requirements, including certification and contract complexity, without filtering out the partners who could actually contribute
- How to build a repeatable revenue motion, even as a services partner, by focusing on one ICP, one problem, and a quantified outcome
- The tradeoffs between referral, resale, and true co-sell motions, and when each one actually works
- How defensive and pipeline-driving partnerships fit into one overall strategy

These insights will help you evaluate, structure, and scale partnerships that are built to generate revenue, not just relationships.

MEET YOUR EXPERT GUIDE

Lela Koopal

CEO and Co-Founder at PRTNRd

With more than a decade of experience building partner ecosystems at Salesforce and Accenture, Lela Koopal has spent her career answering one question: what actually separates a partnership that generates revenue from one that just sits in the PRM.

> ***"Revenue is a lagging indicator."***

At Salesforce, Lela managed partnerships across Salesforce, SAP, ServiceNow, and Adobe within some of the largest ecosystems in the industry. Today, as CEO and Co-Founder of PRTNRd, she works with smaller, leaner partner ecosystems (typically under 1,000 partners), helping them apply the same rigor around commercial viability, repeatability, and leading indicators that the largest ecosystems use to separate their top contributors from the rest.

Leading Indicator Strategist

Helping teams look past partner-sourced revenue to the earlier signals, like seller activation and qualified conversations, that actually predict whether a partnership will pay off.

Commercial Viability Expert

Identifying whether a partner has a real go-to-market of their own, based on customer overlap, complementary capabilities, and shared economics, not just a signed agreement.

Ecosystem Operator

A decade managing partnerships inside massive ecosystems at Salesforce, SAP, ServiceNow, and Adobe, now applying that same discipline to help growing companies build commercially viable partner programs at any scale.

Lela recently joined us for a live Q&A on identifying commercially viable partners, building repeatable revenue motions, and tracking the leading indicators that predict pipeline before revenue ever closes.

WATCH THE COMPLETE SESSION

Q&A: Revenue Generating Partnerships: How to Get Pipeline from Your Agreements

Lela Koopal · CEO and Co-Founder at PRTNRd

10 September · Live session

Why revenue is a lagging indicator

The instinct is to judge a partnership by the revenue it brings in. But by the time revenue shows up, it is already too late to course correct. Partner-sourced revenue is the goal, but it is the wrong signal to use when deciding whether a new partnership has potential, especially in its first year. The more useful question is whether the earlier signals are there at all.

Leading Indicators to Track

Seller activation, qualified conversations, account mapping, and opportunity creation and conversion are the real signals of whether a partnership is progressing, well before revenue ever closes. If a partner is generating opportunities but nothing is converting, that points to a sales motion problem, not a lead problem, and it needs a different fix.

The First Six Months Matter

Momentum with a new partner tends to build or fall off within the first six months. That window, not the full first year, is typically when you can tell whether a partnership has real potential or is quietly stalling.

Tracking these signals consistently, and having a system like a PRM to support that process, is what makes it possible to intervene early instead of finding out a year later that a partnership never had a chance.

What makes a partner commercially viable

Signing a partnership agreement does not mean a partner has a real go-to-market of their own. Many smaller partners, particularly companies under $50 million in revenue, are still founder-led and figuring things out. Determining whether a partner is commercially viable comes down to a few concrete factors, not a gut feeling.

Customer Overlap

This does not necessarily mean the same customers today. It can mean pursuing the same target accounts, or solving different angles of the same problem for a shared customer base.

Complementary Capabilities

The goal is not to avoid all overlap, it is to avoid competing head to head. The combined solution should solve the customer's problem better together than either company does independently.

Shared Economics

How each side incentivizes their own teams and tracks opportunities together. This is often where a promising partnership quietly falls apart, once it actually reaches the sales cycle.

Go-to-market strength tends to be visible from the start. You do not need to wait 60 or 90 days to find out whether a partner has one, which makes this one of the fastest ways to prioritize where to invest early.

Setting the right bar for partner onboarding

There is a common instinct to gate partners behind heavier requirements: technical certification, minimum prospect counts, lengthy contracts. These are worth separating into two different questions, because they solve different problems.

Certification Is About Delivery, Not Revenue

Technical certification matters when a partner is delivering or representing your product directly, since consistency there is table stakes. But it is a separate issue from whether that partner has proven they can bring in revenue.

Don't Wait for Proof, Look for Signals

Waiting for partners to generate revenue before investing in them works when you are managing hundreds of partners and need a filter. For smaller, leaner teams, spotting the early signals of a promising partner and actively helping them succeed tends to leave less revenue on the table.

An Onboarding Period, Not a Locked Door

A defined onboarding window, generally the first six months, is a useful way to find out how much effort a partner is willing to put in: whether they have a strong go-to-market or are willing to build one, and whether they can learn to co-sell rather than simply asking for leads. Heavier requirements, like long contracts or steep prospect minimums, can work if you are a brand partners will jump through hoops for regardless. For most companies, that bar just narrows the pool of partners willing to engage.

Building a repeatable revenue motion

A single massive deal or one anchor customer does not make a partnership commercially viable. What does is finding something repeatable, and that applies even to services partnerships, which often get treated as too custom to standardize.

Start With Your Best Story

Pull out your most compelling, already closed story, whether you are a services company or a product company, and lead with the business problem it solved, not the technical build.

Quantify the Outcome

Buyers respond to numbers: a 30 percent uplift in productivity, a 15 percent increase in sales. That is what actually gets a business case through finance, far more than a description of the integration itself.

Package It, Don't Rebuild It

Take one repeatable piece, a single dashboard or a single workflow, for example, and replicate it across similar customers instead of re-scoping every engagement from zero. If you have done something once, you have likely done a version of it two or three times, which means it can probably be done again.

The pattern to look for, whether you are building your own motion or evaluating a partner's, is one ICP, one problem, one solution, with a quantified outcome behind it.

Choosing the right partnership motion

Referral and resale motions are the easiest to stand up, but they come with real limits, particularly for products that are already fairly abstract to the average buyer, like SaaS and AI.

When Referral or Resale Works

This motion tends to work well with simple technology or legacy hardware, where the customer does not need to understand how each individual piece fits together.

When You Need True Co-Sell

For complex, multi-part solutions, customers want one outcome, not a stack of separate invoices from separate vendors they have to reconcile themselves. A seamless, joint go-to-market motion, where both sides are working the same deal together, tends to be the better fit here.

This same logic extends to how partnerships are framed overall. Partnerships are not only about new pipeline: retention matters too, but it tends to work best as a byproduct of a partner's ongoing involvement, rather than the core reason for the relationship. The strongest partnerships combine both: one side identifies the accounts a partner can access, and the partner owns the long-term relationship, usage, and expansion from there.

Key takeaways for revenue generating partnerships

Across every topic, one theme repeated: partnerships do not generate revenue simply because they exist. They generate revenue because of a repeatable, well-scoped motion, tracked against the right signals, with the right partners, structured around a shared outcome.

From Signed to Sold

Track leading indicators, seller activation, qualified conversations, account mapping, and opportunity creation, instead of waiting on revenue, so you know within six months whether a partnership has real potential.

Go-to-Market Is the Real Filter

Customer overlap, complementary capabilities, and shared economics tell you more about commercial viability than a signed agreement ever will.

Repeatability Over One-Off Wins

Whether you are a services partner or a product partner, one ICP, one problem, one quantified outcome is what turns a single deal into a scalable motion.

Match the Motion to the Complexity

Simple products can run on referral or resale. Complex, multi-part solutions need true co-sell, where the customer experiences one outcome instead of a patchwork of vendors.

Getting from a signed agreement to real pipeline is not about adding more partners. It is about being deliberate with the ones you already have.

Make your partner program a revenue engine with Kiflo

You have seen what separates partnerships that get signed from partnerships that actually generate pipeline. Kiflo is the Partner Revenue Platform that connects your partner ecosystem to revenue: partner management, account mapping, co-selling, revenue tracking, and commissions, all in one connected motion.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE IN OUR DEMO

Build Your Partner Ecosystem

Manage partners, agreements, and onboarding in one place, without losing sight of which ones are actually go-to-market ready.

Connect It to Target Accounts

Surface partner overlap on the accounts your reps are already trying to win.

Turn Overlap into Co-Sell and Revenue

Bring partners into the deal, track partner-sourced and partner-influenced revenue, and automate commissions when deals close.

Trusted by 450+ partnership teams. Rated 4.9/5 on G2 for ease of use and support.

Ready to build stronger partnerships?

Bring your target accounts. See which partners can help you win them.

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