



Partner Enablement PlayBook

Five Elements To Help
Your Partners Grow



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PART 1.

Partner Enablement: A Crucial Part of Your Channel Strategy

The World of Partners That Extend Your Enterprise

In this ebook, we focus on the third-party vendors across your sales channels that serve as intermediaries between you, your customers and end users. This could include distribution and implementation partners for your complex B2B products, service partners, resellers, dealers or franchises.



Partner Enablement: A Crucial Part of Your Channel Strategy

63.5%

of companies say channel partners contributed to their annual revenue.

(Source: CSO Insights)

46%

Channel enablement technology is only present among 46% of companies.

(Source: Sales Management Association)

1+ year

Channel partners typically take over a year to be fully productive, according to 24% of companies.

(Source: CSO Insights)

only 35%

of companies have effective coaching and development for channel salespeople.

(Source: Sales Management Association)

Helping Your Partners Succeed & Grow

You Need Your Partners To Succeed For Two Simple Reasons:

- Your bottom line depends on your partners' success.
- Your competitors are fighting not only for your clients, but also for your partners.

Revenue of B2B companies is often directly tied to their partners' ability to design, sell, implement and support product-based solutions. With increased competition and availability of B2B solutions in the market, now value-added partners are those who choose with whom to build their business. It is your responsibility to provide resources and motivation for partners to work with your products and services and to keep them happy and loyal.

Partner loyalty can be achieved by providing better service, partner enablement and overall experience.

What Is Partner Enablement?

An ongoing process of providing partners with the knowledge, resources and support to maximize the product or service value

Regardless of the product type (physical or digital), B2B vendors traditionally implement partner portals, knowledge bases and support systems for partner enablement. These portals are aimed at contributing to partner business growth, stickiness and ongoing engagement with the products or services.



Most Common Systems in Play



Knowledge Management Systems

organize documentation, “how-to” content, FAQs and other information in a variety of formats available usually on-demand.



Corporate Learning Management Systems (LMS)

organize, track and manage partner training programs that are mandatory and/or provided on-demand.



Digital Adoption Platforms (DAP) / Performance Support Tools

help users quickly learn the digital product functionality by providing hints, walk-throughs and tutorials served just-in-time through an additional layer on top of the software application.



Support Centers

connect partners to support specialists for issue resolution.



Partner Relationship Management Platforms (PRM)

track partner’s compliance, activities and deals; help to distribute market development funds (MDF) and opportunities; provide sales and marketing content; and manage incentives and loyalty programs.

An Ineffective, Siloed Partner Experience

Whether companies implement an “all-in-one” solution or integrate several specialized best-of-breed platforms to meet partner needs, the experience is often far from ideal.

The variety of content and systems in place often leads to multiple locations of similar, yet slightly different materials, the absence of cross-references, siloed search and lack of personalization. When partners jump between systems trying to find information they need, they are often frustrated, miss important materials, gain limited knowledge and are unable to resolve issues quickly.

The costs of this ineffective partner experience are:

- A brand value that is not properly communicated
- Low end-user engagement and productivity
- Miscommunication and possible partner conflicts
- Drop in sales, thus affected bottom-line
- A potential loss of the partner

So Much Content, So Many Platforms – What’s The Problem?

In many cases, the problem is not with the
selected platform(s) but with:

CONTENT STRATEGY

SILOS BETWEEN SYSTEMS
SERVING THE CONTENT

To enable a seamless partner journey, you need to look at the solution holistically and improve your platform integration through a unified content governance and standardized information architecture, data exchange and analytics, and content optimization and enrichment.



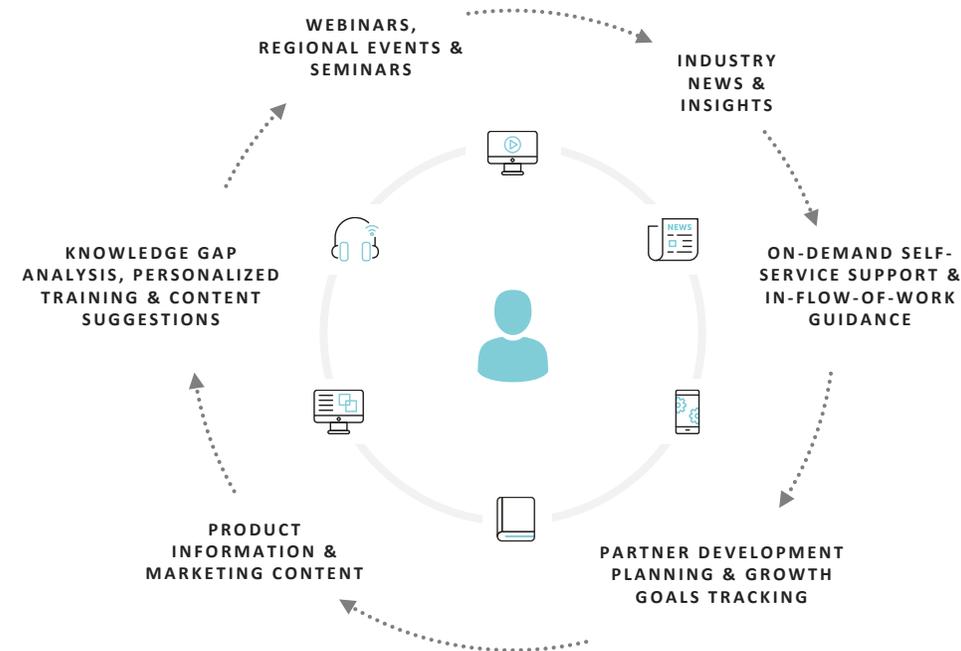
PART 2.

Five Considerations for Partner Enablement

A Next-Generation Partner-Centered Solution

We perceive the partner journey as a continuous learning process that addresses your partner's goals.

The Experience & Information Your Partner is Looking for



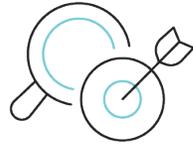
To Provide Such Partner-centric Experience You Need An Ecosystem That Enables:

- Business-oriented continuous learning model that addresses your partner's goals
- Integrated, multi-product experience for engagement, retention and highest lifetime value
- Omni-channel information delivery model
- Solution-wide content and training recommendations

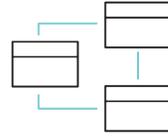
Implementing a Next-Generation Partner-Centered Solution: Five Considerations



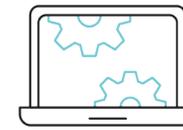
EXPERIENCE



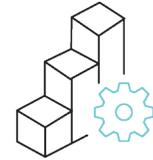
STRATEGY



CONTENT



TECHNOLOGY



DATA



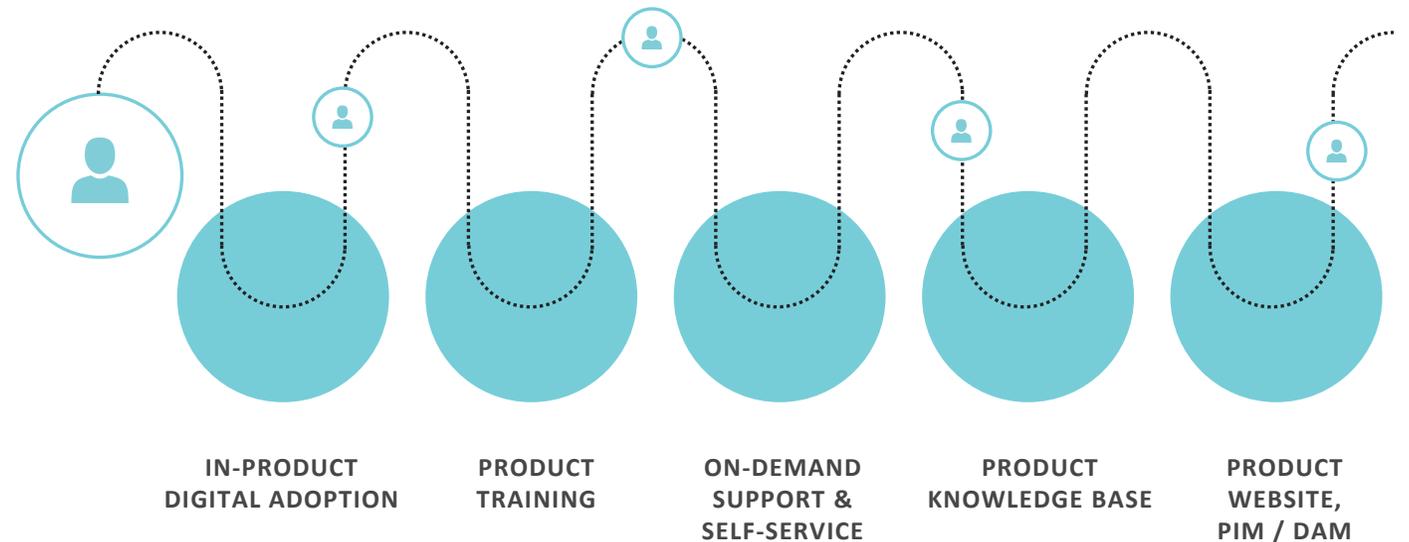
Experience

It's in your best interest to align your processes around partner's needs by putting the partner in the center of omni-channel communication.

Partners expect a seamless experience in onboarding and product training, issue resolution, just-in-time support, marketing and sales, order processing, performance management and self-service. By embracing a holistic approach, you should perceive omni-channel communication not as separate processes that require siloed content or a unique solution, but as a journey throughout all these moments.

And it all has to do with information (content) that you provide to the partner, as well as when and how you provide it.

OMNICHANNEL JOURNEY



Strategy

To integrate all the processes into a seamless journey, you need to develop a unified content strategy.

This is an approach that determines the root causes of your content and process challenges; establishes actionable strategies and tactical solutions for adhering to content best practices and guidelines; and provides authoring solutions for enabling cross-platform content delivery.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO ESTABLISH A UNIFIED CONTENT STRATEGY:

- 01 | Analyze your content lifecycle (including management technology and authoring processes) from a quality, accessibility, taxonomy and operations perspective, as well as consistency when the content is reused.
- 02 | Define conventions and taxonomies for information architecture; create a roadmap for evaluation and migration of existing content according to the new tagging and classification standards.
- 03 | Establish new processes and standards; identify roles and responsibilities for content development, management and curation.
- 04 | Implement a single-source authoring solution, an efficient and consistent method of creating content.

Strategy

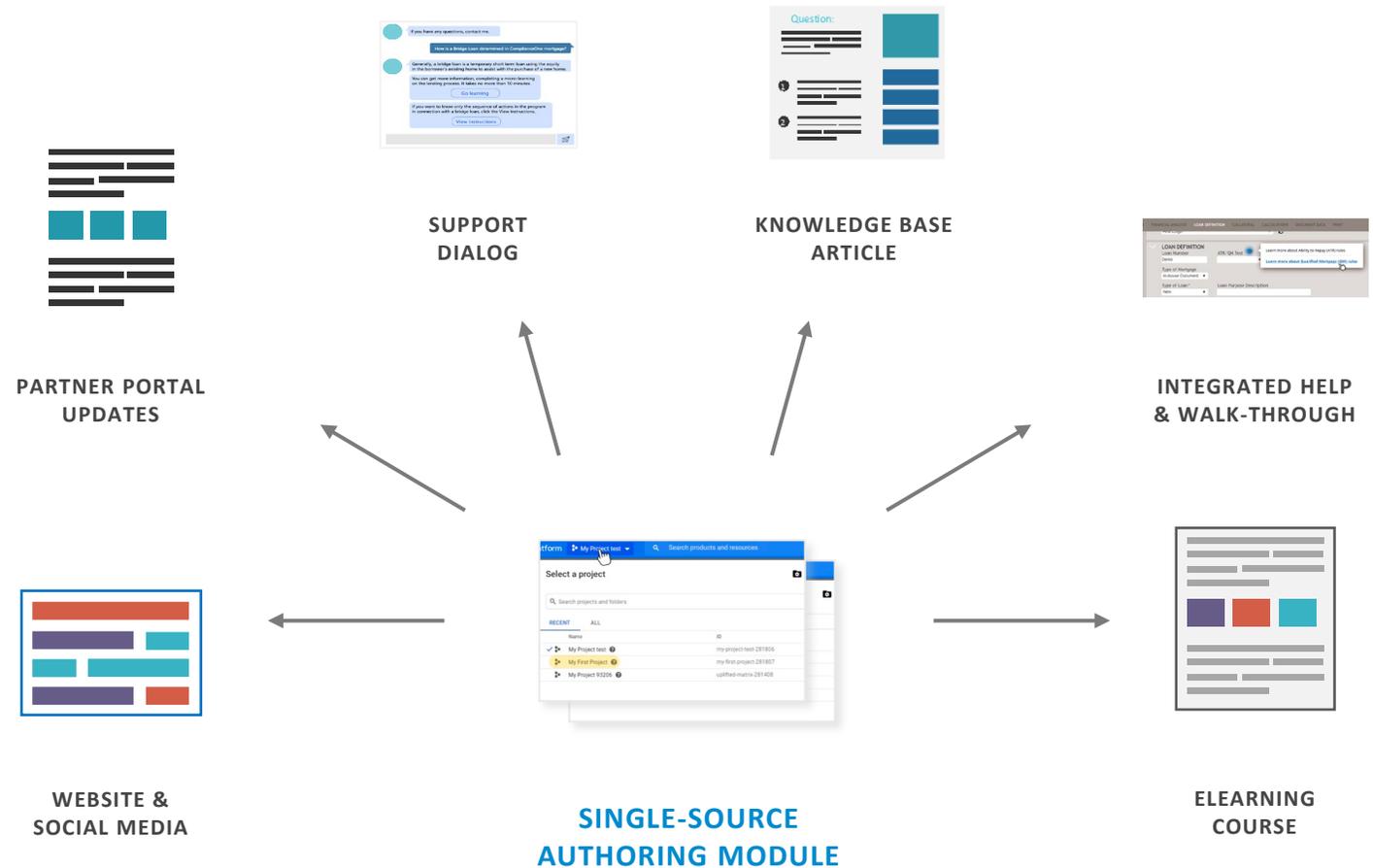
As a result, you should have a unified approach that orchestrates

- people and processes,
- content development, management and curation,
- information architecture and delivery

into **multi-channel publishing & content embedding strategy** that:

- enables seamless omnichannel communication and experience,
- improves consistency of content and messaging,
- saves time, costs and resources for content development and versioning.

MULTI-CHANNEL PUBLISHING & CONTENT EMBEDDING



Content

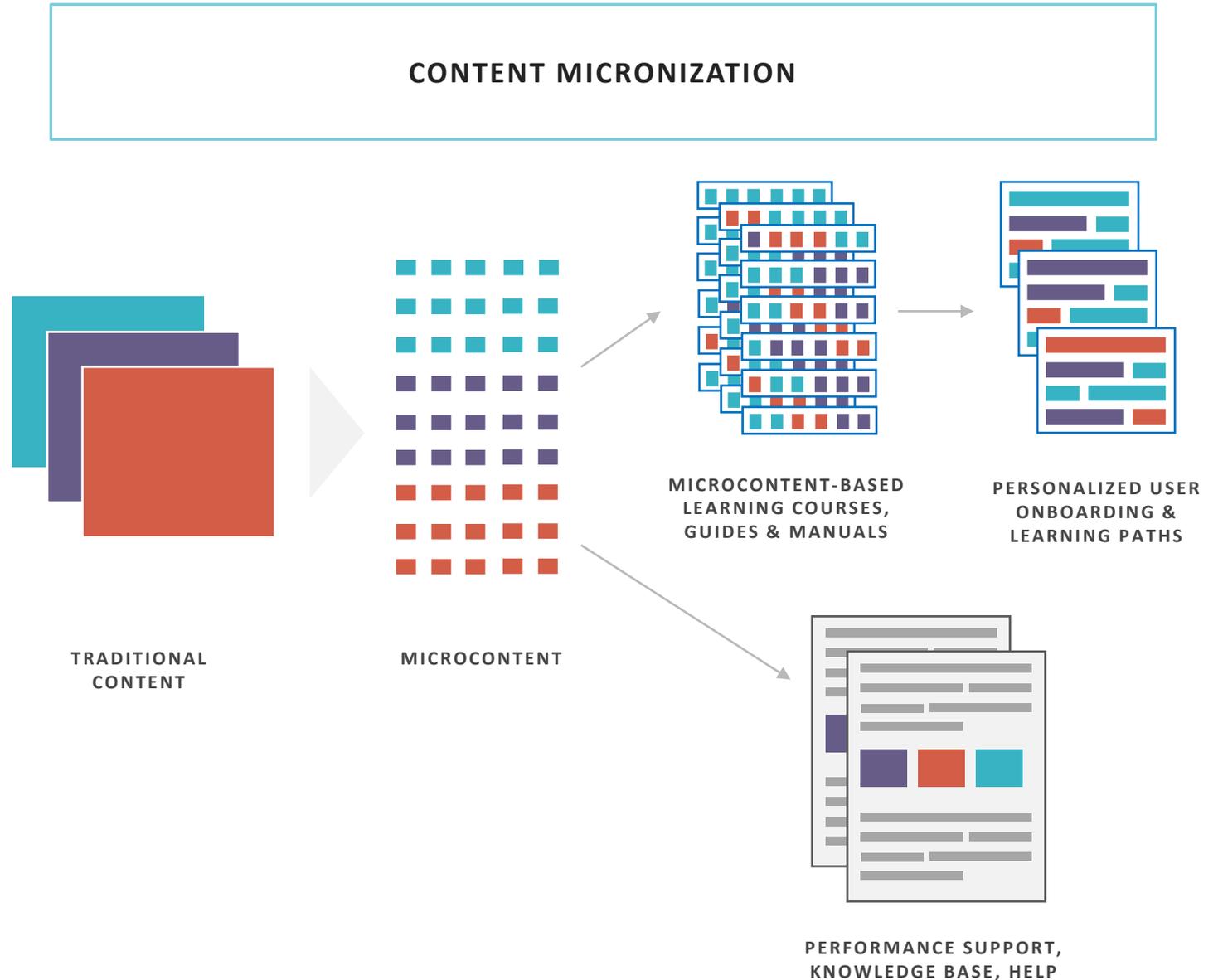
The single-source authoring approach described above works with any type of content; however, when content is micronized, you'll receive the best value.

Content Micronization

is the process by which content is broken down into small chunks of information and then reassembled in various combinations to be used in different channels. These micro-pieces are packaged in an engaging way for interacting with users across all integrated systems.

Micronization helps future-proof content

because it enables updating for only small snippets of information to streamline versioning, curation and recommendations.



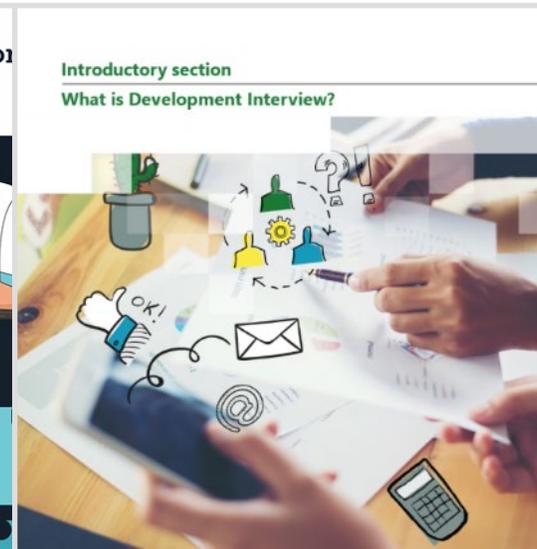
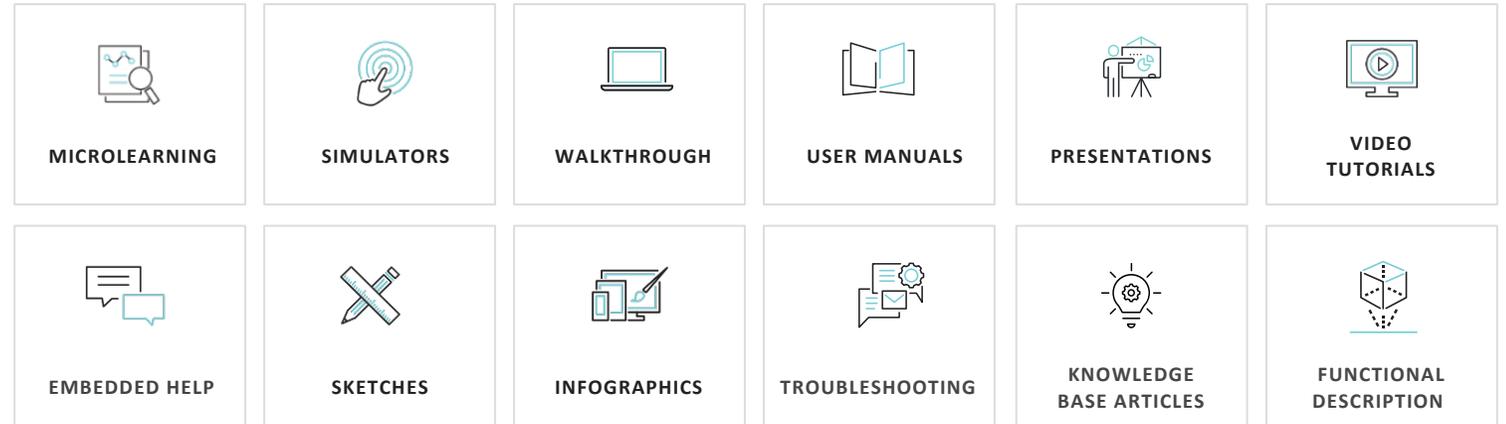
Content

To ensure effective knowledge transfer and retention, the microcontent should be packaged in a digestible and engaging way. That's where instructional design and eLearning best practices come in play.

eLearning tactics help to enrich the content with different types and formats of interactivity. The choice of tactics depends on the partner journey, systems and processes, content strategy and business goals. Usually, the eLearning approach involves a mix of media-rich, uplifted formats.

Applying eLearning standards for content delivery and packaging allows collecting additional user behavior and content data for optimization, improvements and targeted recommendations.

THE VARIETY OF CONTENT FORMATS

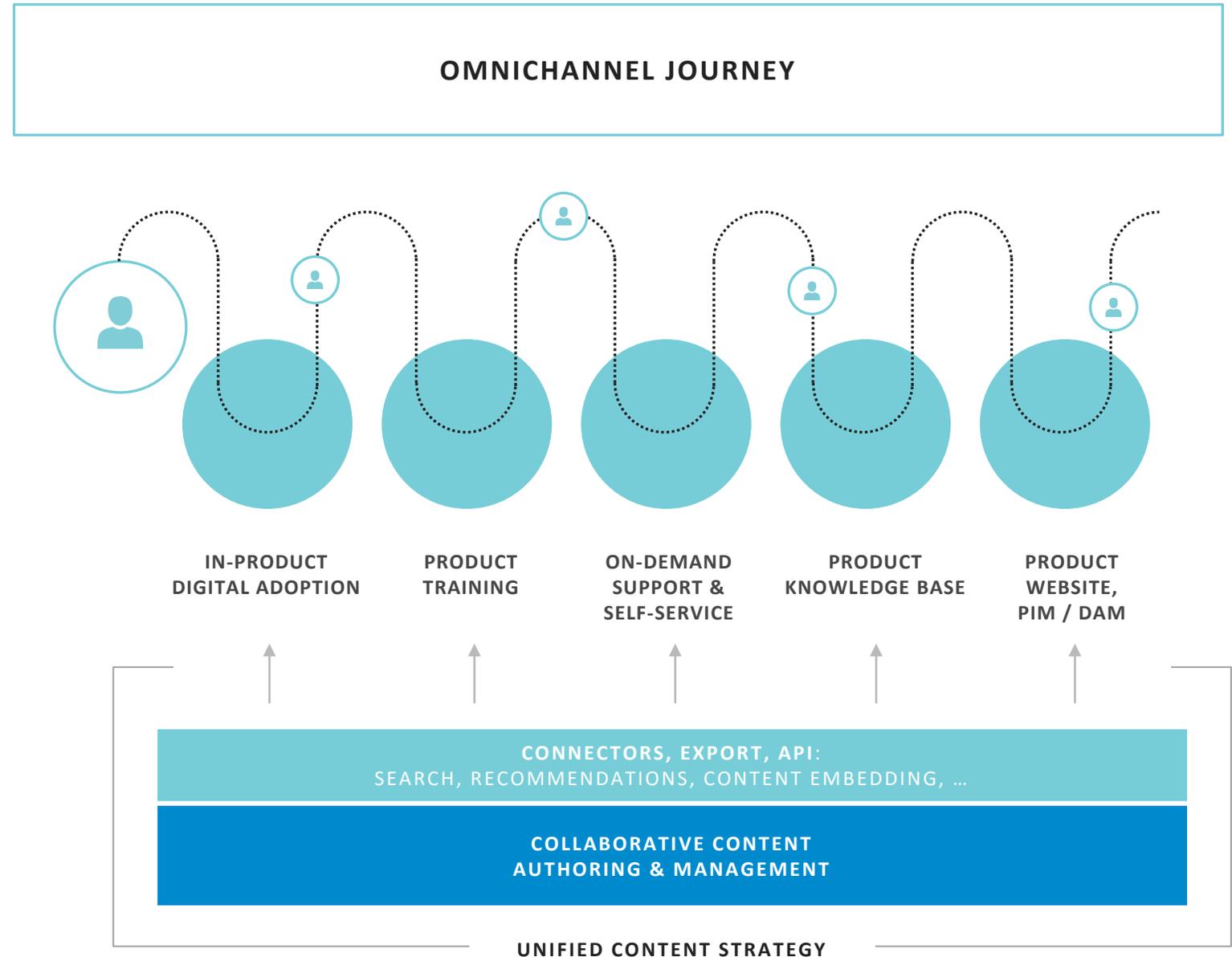


Technology

After the initial analysis, you may conclude that some systems need to be upgraded or replaced. However, **the strategy and content approach described above is generally platform-agnostic.**

The collaborative content authoring and management platform should reside as a layer below partner-facing technology and integrate with any system through connectors and APIs.

It should also be integrated with your internal systems for additional data inputs.

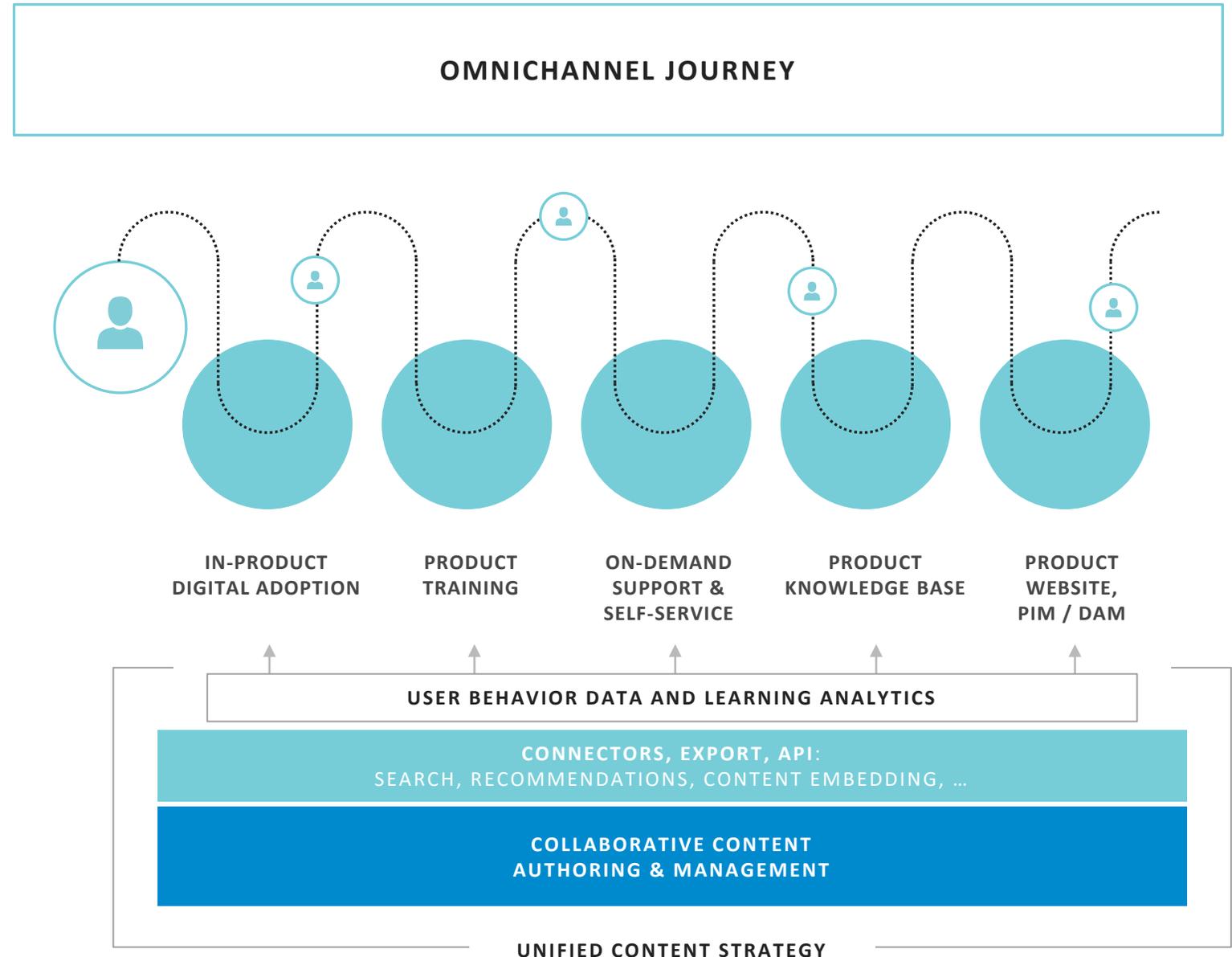


Data

When we talk about integration, we are referring not only to content exchange but the **exchange of data.**

An analytics engine is required to collect and analyze user and behavior data, such as who the users are, where they are in the system contextually, what support tickets they had and what training they took.

These details inform the main purpose of the partner enablement solution—a dynamic delivery of the right information at the right time through the right channel.

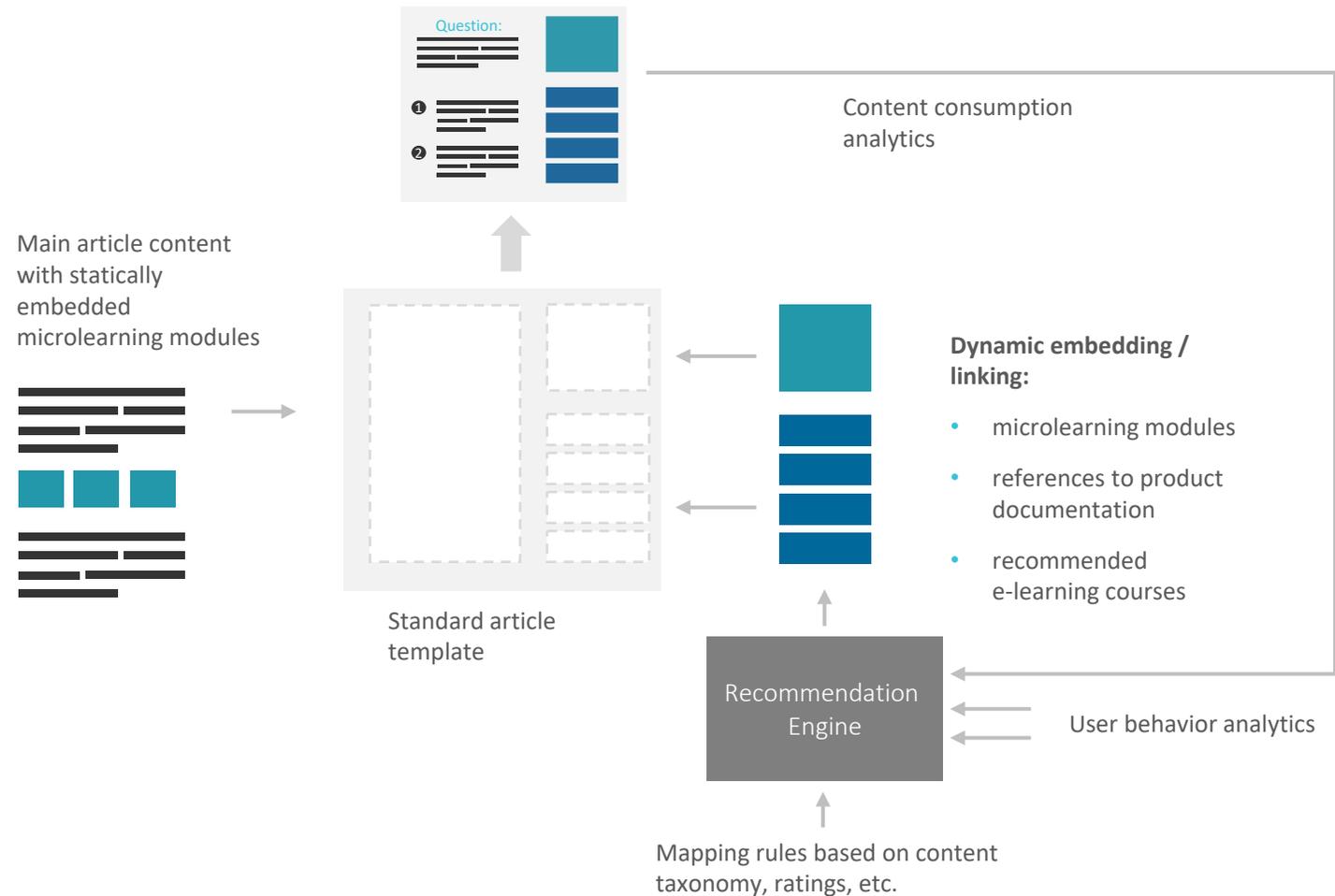


Data

A dynamic delivery approach serves content across the platforms just-in-time, on-demand and in advance of the moment of need by providing data-driven, context-appropriate recommendations.

Therefore, it provides content that is not only more engaging and effective due to its microlearning format, but content that is **more relevant** to the user at this particular moment of time at this particular stage of the journey.

EXAMPLE OF A DYNAMIC MICROLEARNING-ENHANCED KB/FAQ ARTICLE



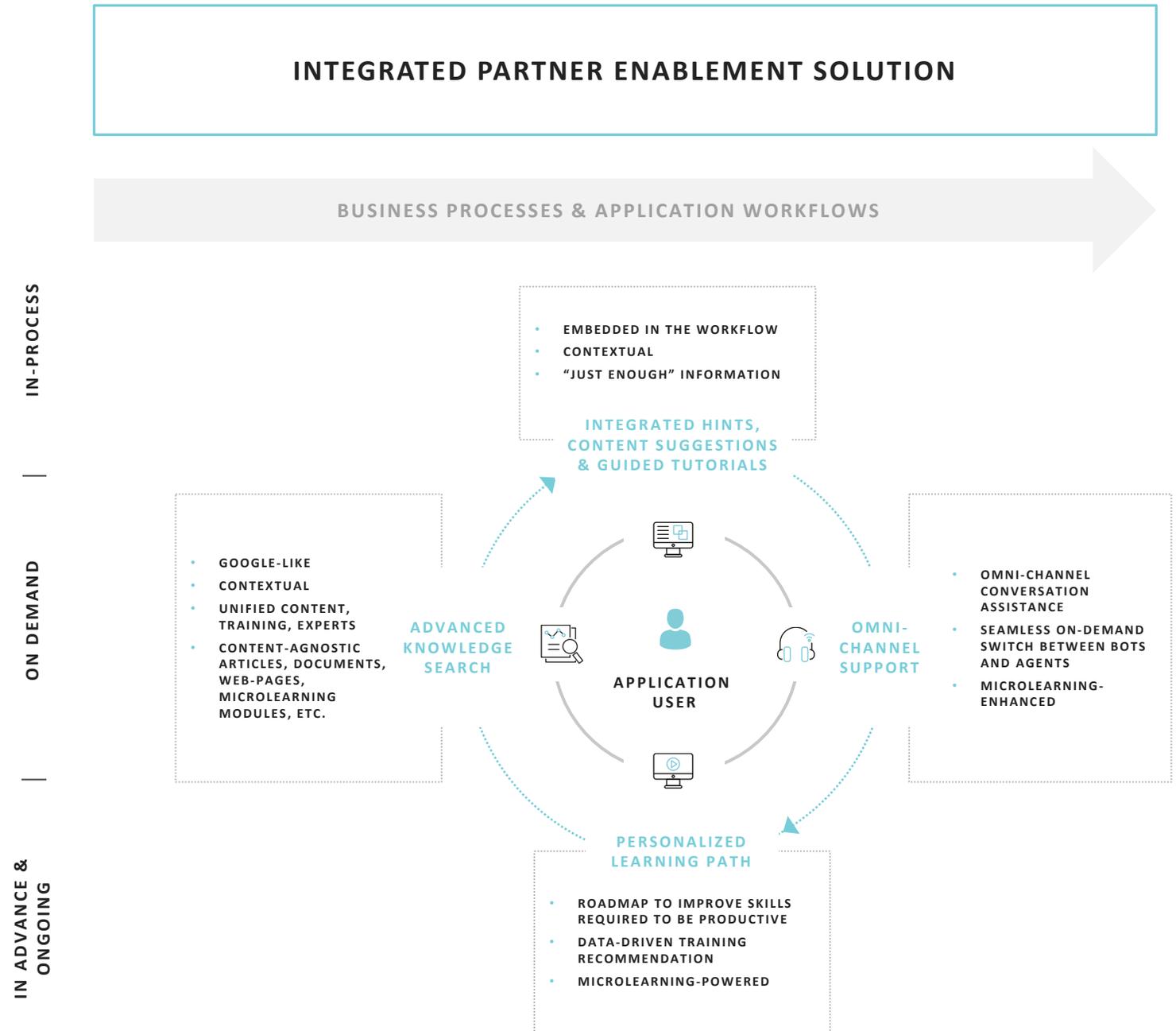
Result

The result is an integrated solution that enables:

- Data exchange to keep the context of the user journey across the systems
- A single source of content that is created according to strategy developed for such solution
- A unified delivery system that is integrated into each channel to serve the content dynamically through your user-facing platforms and apps

This solution is partner-centered and provides:

- In-app support with context-based hints, “push” content recommendations and interactive
- On-demand access to knowledge and helpdesk experts
- A role-based and context-driven personalized roadmap to improve skills



PART 3.

Getting Buy-in on Your Partner Enablement Initiatives

Getting Buy-in on Your Partner Enablement Initiatives

We suggest presenting partner enablement as a strategic long-term commitment to developing your partner relationships and driving value through the growth and success of your partner network.

1

Develop a common vision

When talking about partner enablement initiatives, you should focus your conversation on both integration of multiple platforms and systems in place and breaking down silos between different teams across the organization that are directly or indirectly involved in partner communication. Everyone across these teams needs to agree on the solution you want to create.

Executive ownership is important for success to help bring all the right people are at the table and align. To execute an enterprise-wide initiative, external specialists can also play a key role in working collaboratively with the executive team to facilitate and guide the project from start to finish. Active participation and interest by the executive team sends the right message about importance and commitment to the project.

2

Introduce partner enablement initiatives as a part of your sales and channel strategy

The next step is to ensure partner enablement is aligned with the sales and channel strategy. You need to communicate clearly that the initiative will contribute to achieving the strategy goals: Improve partner experience and extend partner lifetime value

- Improving partner experience and extending partner lifetime value
- Turning partners into advocates in the marketplace
- Differentiating the company and generating demand

If you feel you need help communicating the value of this approach to your stakeholders, please let us know and we'll help you make the case.

Getting Buy-in on Your Partner Enablement Initiatives

We suggest presenting partner enablement as a strategic long-term commitment to developing your partner relationships and driving value through the growth and success of your partner network.

3

Communicate tangible results of the approach

Although sometimes it's hard to identify results, you will need to provide the metrics that can quantify the direct or indirect impact of your partner enablement initiative on the overall strategy. These metrics could include:

- New products adoptions
- Onboarding time
- Usage stats
- Net promoter score (NPS)
- Support costs
- Customer lifetime value (CLV)

4

Present the case with calculated ROI

Practice shows that it usually takes more than a year for partner enablement initiatives to demonstrate ROI. Take this timeline into account and set proper expectations.

You can start by identifying a “quick win” opportunity within a chosen roadmap and developing it as a proof of concept first to show the ROI faster.

If you feel you need help communicating the value of this approach to your stakeholders, please let us know and we'll help you make the case.

PART 4.

About EPAM

How EPAM can help you with Partner Enablement



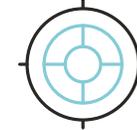
Hybrid expertise

Engineering excellence, combined with extensive experience in CMS and LMS, instructional design and content development, enrichment and curation, configuring search, data processing and analytics



Integrated consulting

Fusion of consulting and implementation teams that allows us to not only strategize with you but also make it real



Unique vision and approach

Platform and technology-agnostic, based on proven blueprints and powered by EPAM accelerators

Interested in discussing your partner enablement initiatives? Please contact us

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