

PLM Success—Sales Channel and Alliance Partner Consulting Services

CIMdata’s PLM Success for the Channel

CIMdata’s support and consulting methodology for PLM solution and service providers, *PLM Success*, is based on more than 30 years of providing market research, education, and strategic advice and counsel to hundreds of clients worldwide. PLM Success is comprised of a comprehensive set of services that serve six main functions: Strategic Support, Product Development, Solution Management, Marketing Programs, Competitive Analysis, and Sales Channel Support. The sales channel and alliance partner consulting services element of the methodology focuses on assessing, educating, improving, and empowering the global sales and support channels of PLM solution and service providers.

State of the PLM Channel

Many PLM solution providers—old and new, large and small—struggle with crafting effective sales channel strategies and sustaining resilient partnerships that deliver new revenue with consistent levels of profitability and customer satisfaction. PLM solution provider sales executives, along with their channel partner sales managers and representatives, frequently express frustration with misaligned expectations and volatile relationships. Indirect sales revenues rarely grow at the rate of the overall market segments they target. There is often excessive uncertainty and conflict in channel sales operations as practiced in the field. Additionally, for those channels that perform well, it is difficult to sustain momentum and continuity given the turbulent changes in both external markets and often their own internal organizations.

Challenges in the PLM Channel

In working with PLM solution providers and their industrial customers CIMdata has witnessed that they, their partners, and alliance ecologies often suffer from the following frequently cited channel challenges:

- Missed revenue and contributing margin goals of channel partners or entire channel programs
- Excessive turnover and churning of partners, their representatives, channel managers, business targets, and channel go-to market plans
- Partners failing to act with a sense of ownership, alignment, empowerment, autonomy, or motivation
- Expertise, experience, expectations, and enthusiasm of partners and those who support them varies wildly
- Low customer satisfaction with partners’ account service, technical support, and relationship continuity

- Solution providers don’t understand what partners need most out of channel programs to be successful
- Excessive conflict, handholding, drama, or lack of trust in day-to-day operational relationships
- Channel partners are overly opportunistic, often pursuing the easiest, least-effort prospects
- Direct sales forces often compete with instead of support channel generated deals
- Successful partners and programs are hard to maintain, replicate, or scale once established
- Incomplete or flawed data, analysis, filtering, and rationalization of obstacles and contributing factors

The business consequences when these performance impediments go untreated can be devastating and include: wasted market investments resulting in little or no measurable ROI, unmet revenue growth targets, disenfranchised partners, channel conflict fatigue, key employee turnover, disgruntled customers, erosion of market reputation, creating your own competition, lost opportunity costs, and ultimately failed business plans or entire channel businesses. Unfortunately, competitive pressures in a maturing PLM market, combined with uncertain economic growth, no longer allow PLM solution providers the financial margin of safety to compensate for or hide deficiencies in their channel sales partners and programs.

Improving PLM Channel Performance

Responding to the needs of the PLM community, CIMdata delivers a flexible portfolio of channel research, education, trends impact analysis, strategy consulting, and thought leadership development services to PLM solution providers, systems integrators, alliance partners, and value added resellers. These services help our clients to better select channel friendly market segments, evaluate channel strategy options, validate channel performance compared to peers, identify growth impediments and dissect contributing factors, and assess improvements for long term partner alignment and program sustainability. The services and deliverables can be right-sized for providers of large enterprise PLM solutions as well as those specialty market segment solution providers (e.g. simulation, PDM, CAM). These services include:

- Channel strategy formulation and validation for new technologies, products, markets, and global regions
- Independent review of channel business models and corresponding tactical go-to market business plans
- PLM channel check-up performance workshops and effectiveness audits

- 360-degree partner program surveys and performance benchmarks
- Channel readiness and friendliness assessments of provider organizations and their products
- Enterprise alliance ecology development, competitive positioning and branding
- Global partner identification, evaluation, selection, and enticement
- Channel competitive intelligence and peer ranking
- PLM channel coaching and cultural change initiatives
- PLM Leadership Certificate training boot-camps for channel sales and support organizations
- PLM market business development tools for the channel, such as PLM Benefits and ROI Models
- Recognizing and rewarding channel success stories with case studies, whitepapers, commentaries, webcast speaker support, and other campaign initiatives

Why and Where to Start

What do your competitors, partners, or customers know about your channel that they may not want you to discover? What is the real cost in lost revenue, new market opportunities, management distraction, shareholder equity, or investor funding from a non-optimally performing channel? Start answering those questions now by contacting CIMdata to arrange for an independent 360-degree survey and preliminary assessment of your channel partner and program performance.

For existing members of CIMdata's PLM Community, this process begins with a one-day PLM Channel Check-up Workshop to identify and explore key channel performance topics nominated by your channel management team. For new or prospective members of our PLM Community, work begins with a one-day executive briefing session so that CIMdata consultants have foundational knowledge about your product offerings, markets, customers, sales history, and business priorities to serve as context for a Channel Performance Check-up Workshop to follow.

PLM Community Membership

The CIMdata PLM Community program provides a valuable, unique portfolio of professional services to the world's leading PLM solution and service providers. The annual membership enables participating organizations to consistently make more informed, objective, and timely business decisions that protect and leverage their multi-million dollar investments in PLM products, markets, and channels.

Through this membership program, CIMdata provides industry-leading education, research, and management consulting on the PLM market as a whole, as well as each solution market segment (i.e., PDM, CAD, ECM, CAM, CAE, PPM, EDA, visualization, digital manufacturing, etc.) in which our community members operate. Annual membership in this program facilitates a close, ongoing working relationship with CIMdata that reinforces and amplifies the effectiveness of the community members' in-house resources and constrained budgets.

About CIMdata

CIMdata, an independent worldwide firm, provides strategic management consulting to maximize an enterprise's ability to design and deliver innovative products and services through the application of Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) solutions. Since its founding nearly thirty years ago, CIMdata has delivered world-class knowledge, expertise, and best-practice methods on PLM solutions. These solutions incorporate both business processes and a wide-ranging set of PLM-enabling technologies.

CIMdata works with both industrial organizations and solution providers of technologies and services seeking competitive advantage in the global economy. CIMdata helps industrial organizations establish effective PLM strategies, assists in the identification of requirements and selection of PLM technologies, helps organizations optimize their operational structure and processes to implement solutions, and assists in the deployment of these solutions.

For PLM solution providers, CIMdata helps define business and market strategies, delivers worldwide market information and analyses, provides education and support for internal sales and marketing teams, as well as overall support at all stages of business and product programs to make them optimally effective in their markets.

In addition to consulting, CIMdata conducts research, provides PLM-focused subscription services, and produces several commercial publications. The company also provides industry education through PLM certificate programs, seminars, and conferences worldwide. CIMdata serves clients around the world from offices in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.

To learn more about CIMdata's services, visit our website at www.CIMdata.com or contact CIMdata at: 3909 Research Park Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, USA. Tel: +1 (734) 668-9922. Fax: +1 (734) 668-1957; or at Oogststraat 20, 6004 CV Weert, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 (0) 495.533.666