

Channel Chief View

For APC by Schneider Electric, Good Partnership Means Knowing How And When To Evolve

Q. What kind of evolution are you witnessing in the channel and what moves are you making at APC to keep pace?

A. We see channel professionals becoming more specialized, whether that is by industry vertical, or by technology focus, or by managed services. Technology has become largely commoditized and the real differentiator is how partners solve their customers' business problems.

Our challenge is figuring out how to best equip APC partners to compete at a higher level. We need to help them eliminate barriers to success and arm them with tools that will get them more engaged with their customers. One of the ways we're doing this is through more segment-based marketing. This helps partners express to their customers how they can solve very specific issues. APC partners not only have access to a broad array of marketing and sales tools, we also make rich, gated content available for syndication. This takes a heavy load off partners who do not have the time or staff to develop essential marketing and lead generation materials. The content lends more weight to their thought leadership, helps establish credibility, and also feeds the funnel for non-touch revenue via their ecommerce engines.

Q. What are some of the vertical sweet spots that partners should be considering? How does APC help in those areas?

A. That's what makes 'Partnership, evolved' work. It's a joint collaboration between partners and us to see which segments are showing real potential and building programs, incentives and support around those. The growth of managed services led us to develop a certification program and specialized benefits for partners who want to take advantage of this major trend.

In 2016, we piloted a K-12 initiative. We know that K-12 customers are faced with short buying seasons and limited funding. We simplified E-Rate opportunity approvals and created instant, stackable discounts for partners. In addition, we created materials to help partners identify the opportunities and recommend specific APC solutions, which accelerates time to revenue. This initiative was so successful that we're continuing it into 2017 and creating case studies that partners can leverage for their own marketing and sales efforts.

There's also lots of opportunity emerging around converged and edge IT. We created the Edge IT program to financially incentivize partners who design and sell integrated solutions into the converged IT, edge networking or edge compute spaces. The Edge IT program allows simplified infrastructure deployment to be granted registration-based discounts. APC Select and Premier partners can take advantage of this right now.

Life Is On



CHANNEL CHIEFS Most Influential



Shannon Sbar

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