

# The Evolving Role of the CAM

Continuing Education for IPED Channel Masters

# Research Overview

## Objectives

- Identify the core role, focus, metrics for today's CAM
- Explore future-state plans for evolution of this role
- Compare current & future support expectations from this role from the vendors vs. solution providers
- Identify migration plans to future-state role and impact on partner mgmt. function



## Methodology

Combination of quantitative and qualitative research:

### Partner Community

- Online survey fielded against The Channel Company general community, CRN Elite lists and research panel
  - N=339 survey responses
- 12 in-depth interviews to explore responses

### IT Supplier/Vendor Community:

- Series of 23 in-depth vendor interviews to understand staffing models, plans and challenges; across volume and complex technologies

# Different Perspectives from 23 IT Suppliers

## High Volume Products and Services



## Low Volume Products and Services



“

## Channel Account Managers

Partner Business Manager  
Channel Account Executive  
Partner Development Manager  
Partner Account Manager  
Channel Account Manager  
Channel Development Manager

VS.

## Alliance Managers

Global System Integrators  
Global Service Providers  
OEMs  
Strategic ISVs  
Technology Partners

”



# Executive Summary and IPED Point of View

CAMs can make/break the program or relationship for a partner

Partners value the CAM role most in quarterbacking other vendor resources

CAMs now uniquely responsible for an overall growth and partner development plan

Key role is changing, but is not yet broadly driving partner Business Model Transformation (BMT)

Partners have limited expectations of CAM, based on legacy role definitions; vendors have high aspirations



# Executive Summary and IPED Point of View



CAMs manage fewer partners to have true business development impact; strategic MSPs must have coverage





Future state CAM requires business planning skills; forces an overall staffing model review

CAM role in co-selling is debatable; consider separate role or use as a stepping-stone to partner BMT

Biggest CAM-partner relationship transition will be around XaaS business maturity; focus less on topline revenue and more on customer adoption and install base growth/success

Per Vendors, 20-30% of current CAMs won't make transition to evolved role. Will require internal & external growing pains

# Evolution of CAM Role: Trends

| Program Administrator   | Deal Facilitator  | Sales Developer  | Business Manager   |
|---|---|--|--|
|    |   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partner recruitment</li> <li>○ Explain program</li> <li>○ Facilitate onboarding</li> <li>○ Get contracts signed</li> <li>○ Get volume commits</li> <li>○ Facilitate some deal level activity</li> <li>○ Trouble-shoot program participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitate co-selling with vendor direct teams and specialized staff</li> <li>○ Account planning</li> <li>○ Visibility for partner in local sales events and activities</li> <li>○ Enhance partners' sales methodologies with vendor content and tools</li> <li>○ Build rep-level mindshare</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Special pricing</li> <li>○ Bid activity</li> <li>○ Approving deal registrations (or facilitating)</li> <li>○ Transactional logistics</li> <li>○ Coordination with distributors</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build and maintain senior level relationships</li> <li>○ Build and manage a strategic business plan</li> <li>○ Drive partner investment in skills and depth of practice</li> <li>○ Help build repeatable solutions and services</li> <li>○ Connect to other resources – internal, P2P, alliances</li> <li>○ Encourage and support business model evolution</li> </ul> |



Both value and volume vendors focus CAM role in management/development first, then enablement; partners value sales/co-selling support most from CAMs

| VENDOR PERCEPTIONS  |   | Least Strategic   | Most Strategic  |   | Most Valued by Partners   | Most Strategic  |   |             |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
|                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |             |
|                     | ➔ Recruit   | ➔ Onboard   | ➔ Enable  | ➔ Market  | ➔ Sell  | ➔ Manage & Develop  | ➔ Sunset/Transition   |             |
| PARTNER PERCEPTIONS |   | Not a focus   | Agreement   | Agreement   | Not a focus   | Agreement   | Not valued??  | Not a focus |

“Being “strategic” for a CAM is overrated. 70% of the job is to make things happen for me within their organization.”  
 (\$25m MSP/VAR)

Q: Looking at this list of core partner-support functions above, which functions does the primary Channel Account Manager from your strategic IT suppliers perform? (n=339)



CAMs from volume vendors struggle with onboarding and co-selling scale; value vendors with long-term planning, enablement and internal mindshare

### VOLUME VENDORS

1. **Onboarding** activity. Time consuming and doesn't produce immediate revenue
2. Co-selling help for **too many "dependent" partners**
3. Staying current on **evolving business models** (especially MSPs) and how to appeal to them



1. **Bandwidth** in general – pulled in too many directions, across too many partners; choosing the top 3-4 things to drive results
2. Maintaining **senior level relationships** at the partner – not just “another sales guy”
3. Navigating **communication and program complexity** for partner
4. Operational and administrative process burden; clear, accessible **data and reporting**

### VALUE VENDORS

1. Balancing **short-term revenue objectives** with long-term partner development objectives
2. **Internal mindshare** at vendor – getting visibility & support for indirect channels
3. **Custom enablement** with the partners; one size does not fit all

# “Most Effective CAM”: Partners value responsiveness and rallying resources internally most

*Best Practice Qualities or Activities - # of mentions*

Responsiveness / accessibility  
 Rallying Resources  
 Collaboration  
 Sales skills  
 Knowledgeable  
 Enablement  
 Evangelism  
 Business Model Insights

79

48

33

16

16

10

8

2

Rallying resources & evangelism are related issues & top partner needs; internal navigation within vendor & visibility

Sales skills and enablement ranked lower; often handled by other roles

“He **works in our office** several days per week. He is the epitome of the liaison between vendor and VAR.”  
 (Cisco)

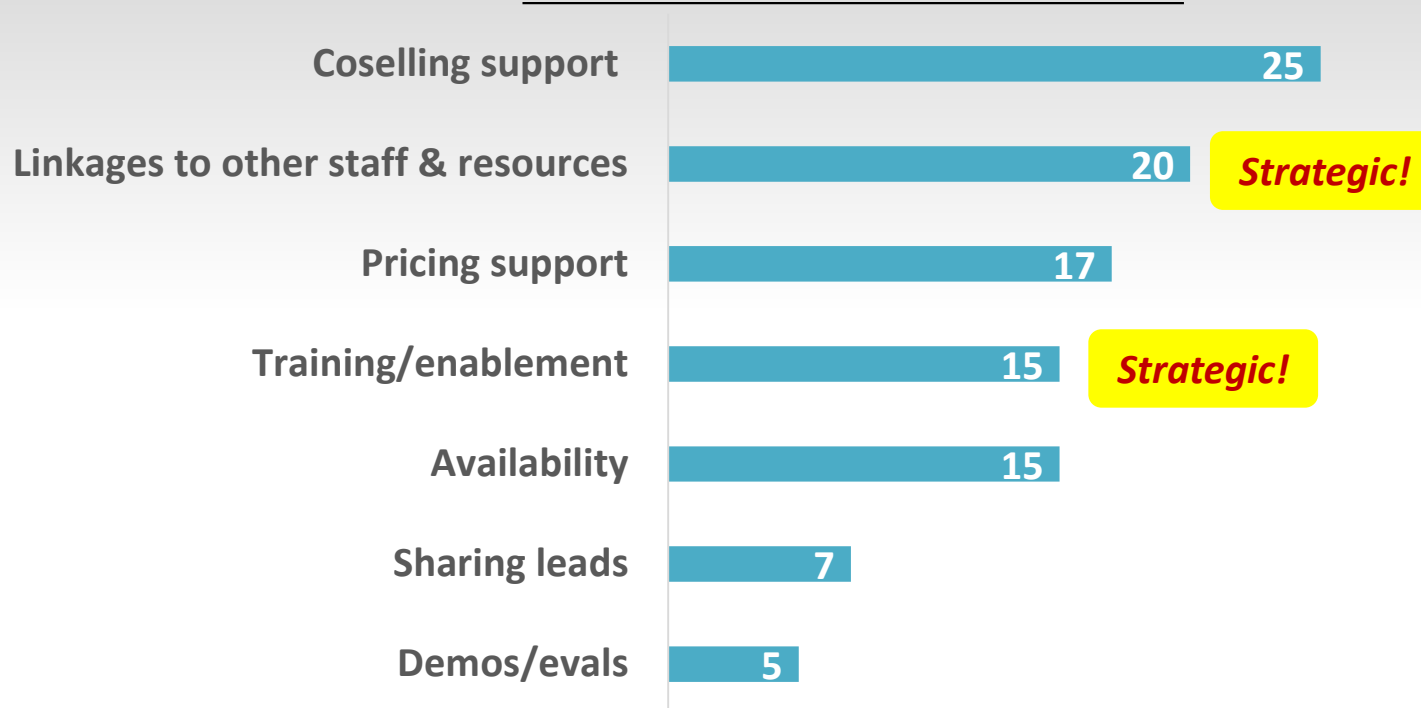
“They invest the most time and effort in delivering excellence across the board. They take every request and question seriously **as if it were their business** they were helping thrive.”  
 (Microsoft)

“They have a more interactive and effective approach. They know their programs well **and invest the time to learn ours.**”  
 (Dell)

| Vendor         | Mentions |
|----------------|----------|
| Microsoft      | 34       |
| Dell & EMC     | 33       |
| HP / HPE / HPI | 32       |
| Cisco/Meraki   | 31       |
| Lenovo         | 14       |
| Intel          | 7        |
| Oracle         | 6        |
| SonicWALL      | 6        |
| Fortinet       | 5        |

# Selling Support: Partners still value co-selling support most, followed by CAMs coordinating linkages to other sales resources

Best Practice Activities - # of mentions



| Vendor        | Mentions |
|---------------|----------|
| HP (HPE, HPI) | 33       |
| Dell/EMC      | 31       |
| Microsoft     | 28       |
| Cisco         | 18       |
| Lenovo        | 10       |
| Fortinet      | 7        |
| Oracle        | 7        |
| IBM           | 6        |
| SonicWALL     | 6        |
| Amazon (AWS)  | 5        |
| Apple         | 4        |
| Intel         | 4        |
| Palo Alto     | 4        |
| VMware        | 4        |

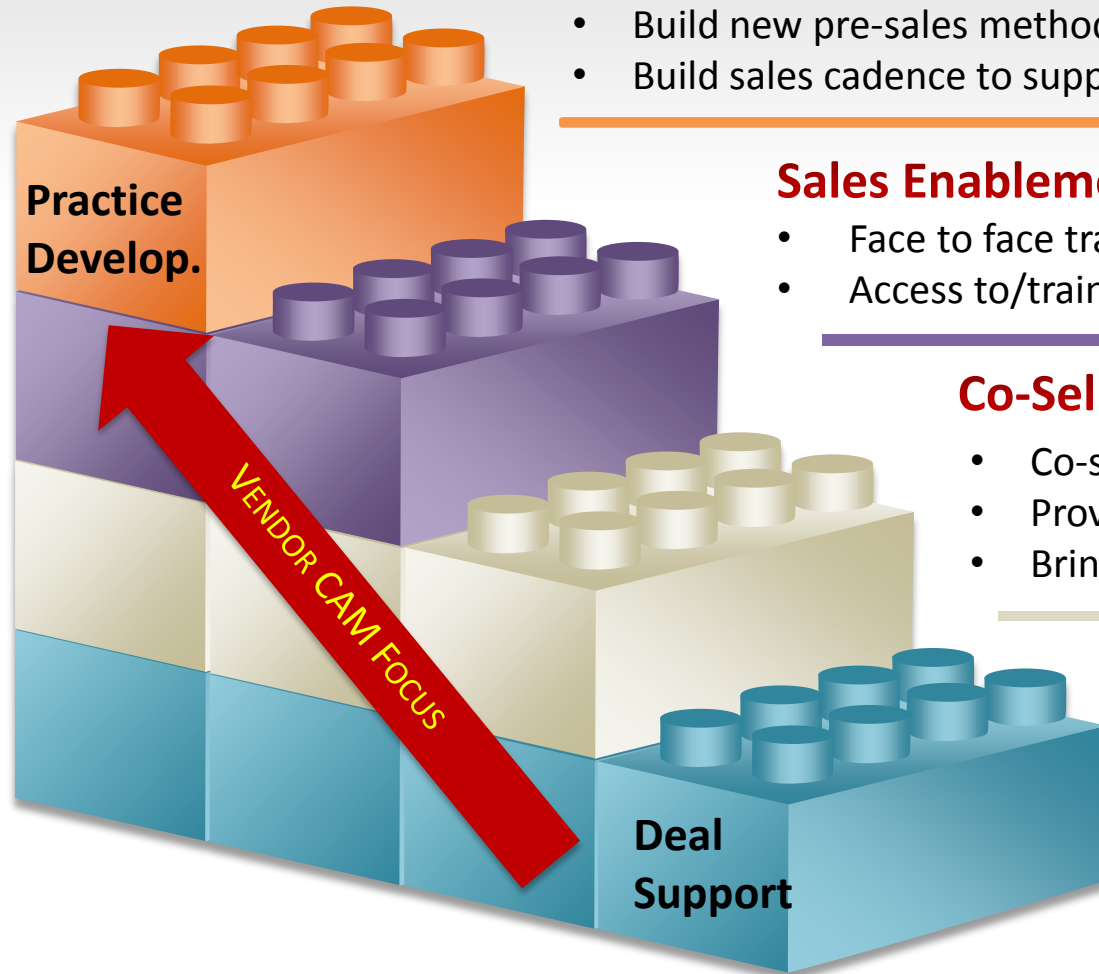
Q: As it relates to sales support from your leading vendors, which vendor provides the best selling support through their Channel Account Managers (CAMs)? What did the Channel Account Manager from that vendor do that was so unique?

“They bend over backwards for us to **close deals.**”  
(Fortinet)

“The same thought that went into **their pitch to us as a channel partner** they put into the sales support efforts for us.”  
(Microsoft)

“Knows our sales organization well and assists in **all stages of the opportunity.**”  
(Palo Alto)

# Selling Support: Vendors vary widely on CAM focus for sales support activities, from deal level execution to practice development



## Sales Transformation ✓

- Build new pre-sales methodologies that support consultative, solution selling
- Build sales cadence to support XaaS offerings - customer adoption, utilization, success

## Sales Enablement ✓

- Face to face training of sales reps
- Access to/training on vendor sales tools and content (guides, scripts, use cases)

## Co-Selling

- Co-selling in specific accounts with partner (CAM)
- Providing linkage with direct sales teams for co-selling activity
- Bringing in product or services specialists to assist partner in strategic deals

## Deal Facilitation

- Pricing escalations
- Getting demo gear
- Deal Reg. facilitation/approvals
- Sharing sales leads



# Example: Best Practice for Enterprise Product Support



**Partner Business Mgr. (PBM)**  
1:5-8 coverage



- Partner Recruiters**
- Regionally aligned
  - Part of dedicated team
  - Onboarding is part of core function



- Solution Engineers**
- Maps to each part of the portfolio
  - 50% enablement, 50% pipeline build & deal support



- Field Marketing**
- Dedicated resource in all geos
  - Execution of key campaigns
  - Supported by Marketing Service Bureau/agencies



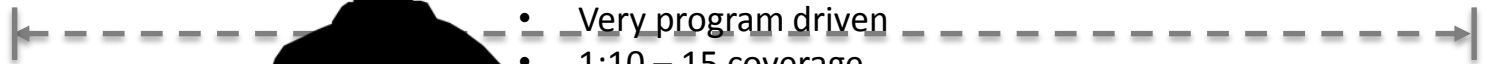
- Channel Developers**
- Helps partners develop overall sales & marketing strategy
  - Partner value prop refinement
  - Account-based marketing



- Territory Sales Mgr.**
- Indirect focused, in SMB segment
  - Sells through and with partner
  - 5:1 ratio of TSM to PBM



- iPBM (inside )**
- Manages "long tail" partners; lower investment partners
  - Very program driven
  - 1:10 – 15 coverage



# “If We Could Make ONE Change to the CAM Role .....”



## PARTNER NEEDS

Number of mentions

Accessibility

33

*Face to face, local access; more CAMs with local presence*

More focus

25

*Less partners to cover, deeper relationship and engagement*

Better communication

21

*Reduce communication complexity; prioritize what to act on*

Sales support

20

*Relationships & alignment with partner sales teams across the sales cycle*

Better industry knowledge

9

*Understanding of SP business models and some vertical experience*

**Strategic**

Strategic Planning

6

*Understand their business, align visions & work toward the same goals*

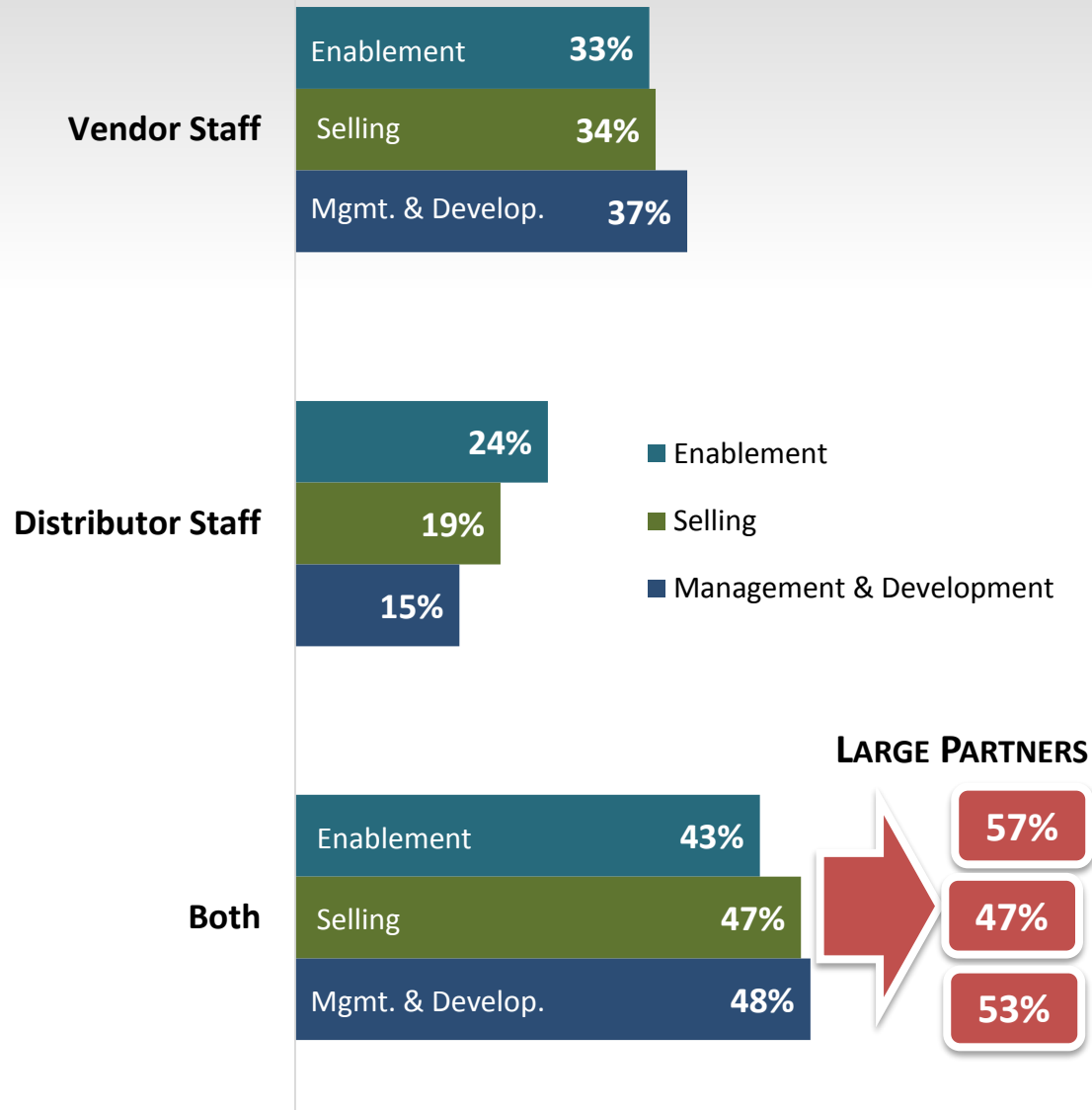
**Table-stakes**

Less turnover

6

*High turnover is a barrier to trust, relationship and growth*

# CAM Support: Working with Vendors and Distributors



- Almost 50% of respondents in each category say they work with both the vendor and the distributors' staff
- Partners work the most with the vendor directly on recruitment; aligns with need for high-touch and selective recruitment
- Partners work the most with the distributor on enablement; aligns with distribution boot camps and onboarding activities
- Points to vendor need for reevaluation of disti funded heads and rebate requirements



# Future Role of the Channel Account Manager

*"I can go to their website and get most of the stuff the CAM gives me."*

- \$1.4m MSP

**PAST**



**FUTURE**



1. General relationship management
2. Program administration
3. Onboarding
4. Deal facilitation and/or co-selling



# Future Role of the Channel Account Manager

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*"Being truly strategic means being agnostic and helping me navigate a successful path for my business."*  
-\$90m VAR/MSP

**1. Developing Expanded MRR/ XaaS Capabilities**  
*Encourage business model transformation that focuses resources on recurring revenue business models, subscriptions and services-led delivery models*

Microsoft Cisco datto

**PAST**

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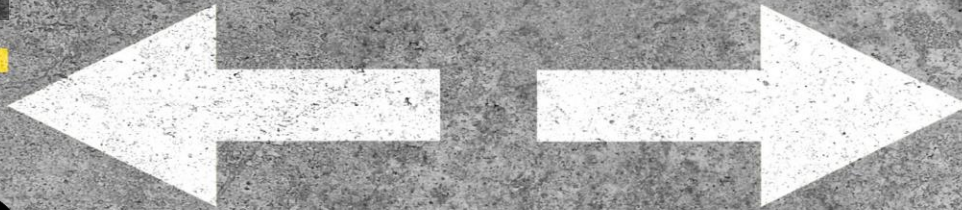
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Microsoft   CISCO   datto

**PAST**



**FUTURE**

- 1. General relationship management
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- 3. Onboarding
- 4. Deal facilitation and/or co-selling

**2. Developing Solutions Across the Portfolio**  
*Develop sales and marketing enablement activities to stimulate the create of multi-product + service solutions that drag a bigger % of the portfolio and leverage other parts of vendor ecosystem*

DELL EMC   SAP   redhat.



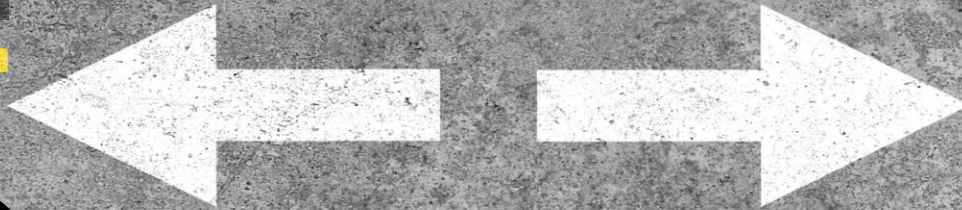


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## PAST



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*Develop sales and marketing enablement activities to stimulate the create of multi-product + service solutions that drag a bigger % of the portfolio and leverage other parts of vendor ecosystem*



### 3. Strategic Partner Recruitment

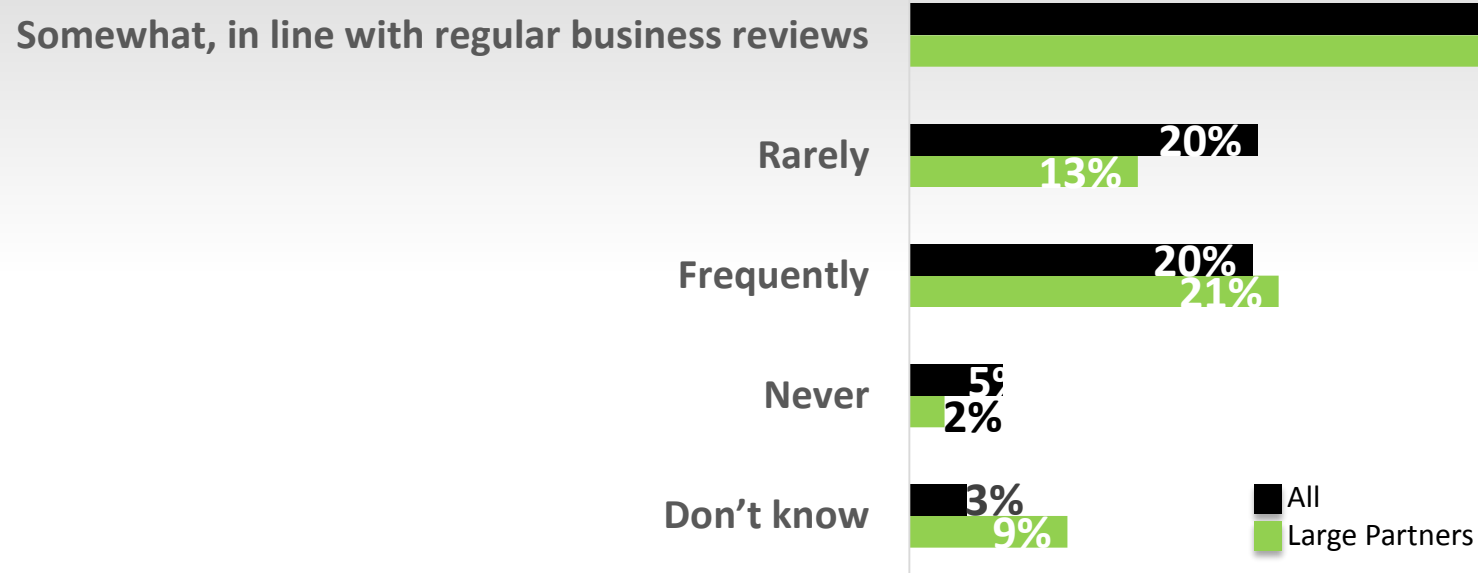
*Selectively target and recruit built-on-the-cloud partners, MSPs, partners with advanced vertical expertise and app development and service delivery skills*



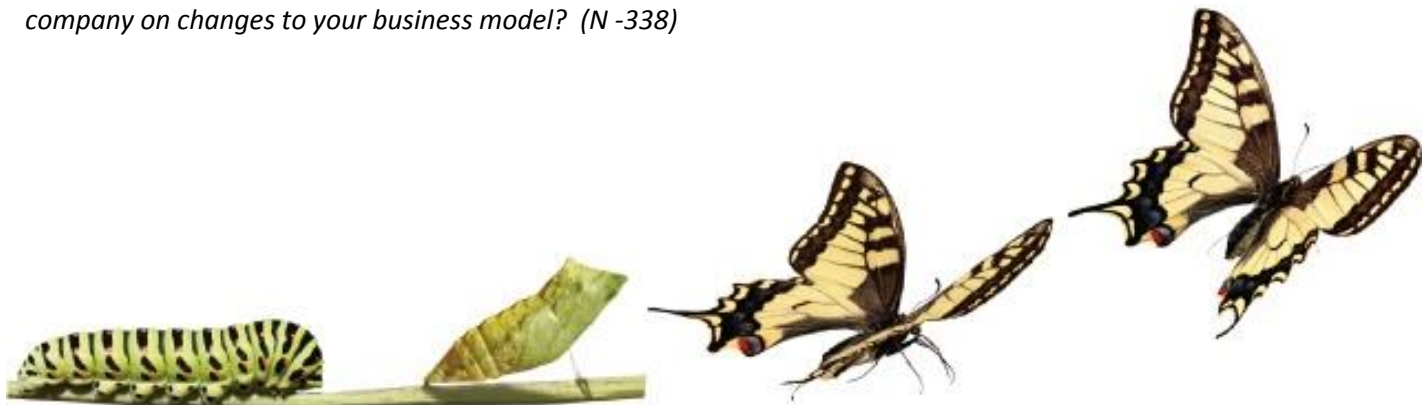


# More than 70% partners say CAMs are involved in business model transformation (BMT); still skeptical about the value of this part of CAM role

## Partner Input - CAM Role in Partner BMT



Q: To what degree have the Channel Account Managers from your strategic IT vendors attempted to guide your company on changes to your business model? (N -338)



## Partner & Vendor Interviews

*“We’ve had vendors do transformation workshops, but they are thinly-veiled efforts to sell more product; they don’t add real value.”*  
(\$90m VAR/MSP)

*“The typical CAM is so played out. Very few companies do anything outside the box that creates a strategic partnership.”*  
(\$1.4m MSP)

*“Turning a small PC VAR into a datacenter SP is very heavy lifting for anyone. We’re focusing on iterative steps to the Cloud Broker model.”*  
(Large hardware vendor N. American Channel Chief)



# Example: Best Practice for XaaS Delivery Models

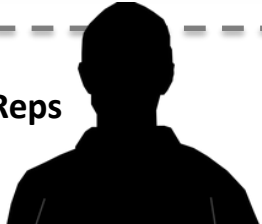


\*\* 70% of all SFDC implementations are done by partners  
(Partners resell only in emerging regions)

Partner Account Mgr.



**Business Development Reps**  
(specific products and vertical mkts.)



- Build certified consultants and certified technical staff
- Drive practice capacity

- Build Customer adoption & success resources – license utilization & customer satisfaction



**Partner Sales Rep (PSR)**

- Sell with partner
- Mapped to regions
- Focused on deal support & coordination

# Which Core Competencies Does the Future-State CAM Require?

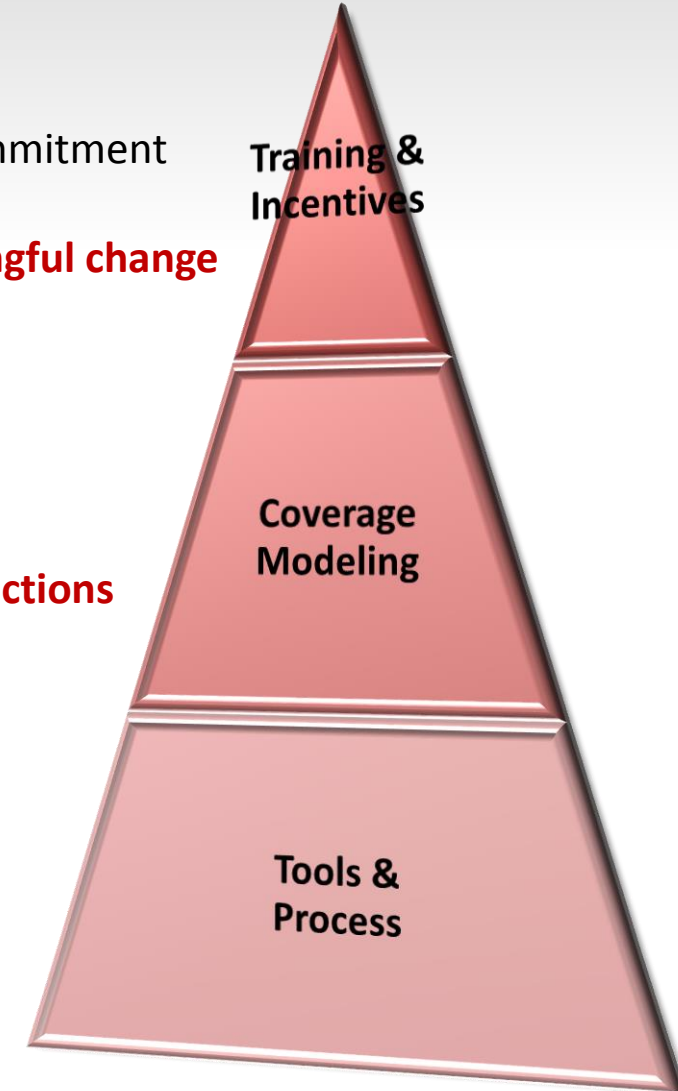




# Getting to Future State Role: Vendor Imperatives



- ✓ Internal mentoring & management commitment
  - ✓ **CAM-specific training content**
  - ✓ **Compensation plan that drives meaningful change**
- 
- ✓ Update capacity & coverage map
  - ✓ **Consider reducing CAM coverage ratios**
  - ✓ **Reevaluate recruitment & co-selling functions**
- 
- ✓ Onboarding & program automation
  - ✓ **Internal reporting access**
  - ✓ Business planning process & tools
  - ✓ Clearly defined roles



# Thank You



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