Ideal Partner Profile (IPP) Framework: Service Provider / Referral Partners

Our Goal: To identify partners who can consistently refer high-quality business opportunities that align with your company in driving new business and scaling through strategic partnerships.

GROW Framework*: an acronym to align your IPP with a specific partner.

G – Go-to-Market Fit

Ensure the partner aligns with your Ideal Partner Profile (IPP), Ideal Customer Profile (ICP), sales motion, and solution offering.

For referral partners, this means their existing client base or network naturally includes companies that are prime candidates for your program.

- **ICP Alignment:**
    - Do their clients or network contacts include companies that fit your ICP?
    - Do they interact with decision-makers such as VPs, CxOs, or Heads of Business Functions within these organizations?
    - Are their clients typically in the market segment you are targeting?
- **Problem/Solution Synergy:**
    - Do their clients frequently express challenges related to the problem your solution solves?
    - Is there a natural adjacency where their services could be a valuable complement or a critical missing piece for their clients?
- **Sales Motion Understanding:**
    - Does the partner understand the consultative nature of partnering / co-selling and the typical sales cycle involved in your engagements?
    - Can they articulate the core value proposition of your offering to their network effectively enough to qualify a lead?

R – Resources

Verify the partner has the sales, marketing, technical, and financial capabilities to support growth.

For service provider partners, "resources" primarily refers to their billable / delivery team, their ability to identify opportunities, scope/sell services, and their ability to staff the projects.

- **Billable / Delivery Team:**
  - Does the partner possess a robust team of staff, with some availability, leadership and similar past performance?
  - Do they have the processes in place to recruit, onboard, and train staff as the partnership grows?
- **Opportunity Identification:**
  - Does the partner have individuals (e.g., account managers, consultants, leadership) who are trained or capable of identifying pain points or strategic initiatives within their network that align with your product?
  - Are they able to provide sufficient context and background on a referred opportunity to aid in qualification?
- **Internal Process:**
  - Do they have a clear internal process or a designated point person for identifying, qualifying (at a high level), and submitting referrals?
  - Are they willing to dedicate minimal time to understanding our referral process and any necessary lead submission tools?
- **Financial Stability:**
  - Is the partner a stable and reputable business entity, ensuring a reliable and long-term relationship?

O – Outreach

Assess the partner's market coverage, including geography, industry focus, and customer relationships.

This section focuses on the breadth and depth of the partner's existing market presence and their ability to reach potential clients.

- **Market Coverage:**
  - Does the partner operate in geographies where you seek to expand or deepen its presence?
  - Do they have a strong presence or specialization in industries that are highly relevant to you (e.g., SaaS, Cloud, Cybersecurity, Fintech, MarTech, etc.)?
- **Customer Relationships & Trust:**
  - Do they hold a trusted advisor status with their clients and network, making their referrals highly credible?
  - What is the typical engagement model with their clients? Do they have ongoing relationships that provide opportunities for identifying new needs?

- **Lead Flow Potential:**
    - Does the partner have a consistent flow of interactions or engagements with companies that could potentially benefit from your product?
    - Can they demonstrate a track record of successful introductions or collaborations within their network?

W – Willingness

Gauge the partner's commitment to investing in training, joint selling, and long-term collaboration.

For service partners, "investment" is primarily in understanding your value, your product, and building a practice or delivery competency in it.

- **Commitment to Understanding:**
    - Is the partner willing to invest a small amount of time to thoroughly understand your value proposition, Ideal Customer Profile, and the specific types of opportunities you seek? (e.g., participating in an introductory call, reviewing key materials).
    - Are they ready to train and enable technical staff when needed to staff and delivery joint wins?
- **Collaboration & Introduction:**
    - Are they enthusiastic about making warm introductions to their network contacts?
    - Are they willing to potentially participate in initial introductory calls to participate in co-selling?
    - Do they see the mutual benefit in a partnership (e.g., enhancing their own client offerings, reciprocal referrals, financial incentives)?
- **Long-Term Vision:**
    - Does the partner view this as a strategic, long-term relationship rather than a one-off transaction?
    - Is there a cultural alignment between our organizations, fostering trust and open communication?
    - Are they open to providing feedback on the quality of leads and the overall referral process to ensure continuous improvement?

By applying this GROW framework, you can systematically evaluate potential partners and build a robust ecosystem that fuels growth.

**GROW Framework developed by and used with permission of Rick Flores, Partner GTM Institute.*