



## **A Successful Channel Ecosystem is Driven by Partnership**

*By: Kobi Elbaz, SVP & General Manager, Global Channel, Sales Innovation & Operations, HP*

Over the last three years, the IT industry has experienced a profound transformation, shaped by rapid advancements in technology and evolving buying behaviors. In an increasingly complex landscape, customers have shifted how they research and buy technology. [More than 30 percent of consumers](#) look into products using social media and more than half rely on search engines for product details. Additionally, businesses are purchasing products and services through a wider variety of channels.

These changes in buying behaviors have made a significant impact on the way partners do business. As the landscape continues to shift, so should our approach to sales enablement across the ecosystem. To address emerging trends, industry leaders must take an agile approach that will inform the next phase of services, solutions, and go-to-market strategy. Those who embrace a culture of partnership will find even greater opportunity for growth in today's landscape.

In the past few months, we have witnessed three things fueling the next phase toward the future of the channel—all of them centering on how we work together to deliver a more satisfying customer experience, and therefore, greater lifetime value.

### **Enabling a culture of partnership**

In a changing ecosystem, partnership remains a guiding light. Vendors must continue to effectively arm partners with the tools they need to get ahead. Today, [94 percent of technology executives](#) consider innovation partnerships a necessary strategy and the channel is no different. It all begins with placing customers at the center of everything we do.

Between rising omnichannel demand, evolving hybrid trends and continued market volatility, channel leaders have a responsibility to become aggregators of solutions—not simply product and service providers. With just [31 percent of B2B companies](#) saying their go-to-market model is “much more” effective at reaching and serving customers today than it was before 2020, this is more important than ever before. With the right tools and resources, partners are empowered to deliver an enhanced customer experience overall because when we make business decisions with partnership in mind, the entire ecosystem wins.

### **Ushering in a new era of engagement**

Leading with results through every interaction is critical for driving growth; partners who do this can move beyond transactional sales and instead provide a deeper level of engagement. When you consider the fact that [74 percent of B2B decision-makers](#) say customers overwhelmingly prefer a personalized, comprehensive sales experience, it's clear we are more impactful when we engage the channel with the understanding that our partners do not fit in the same box. The ability to recognize this and act based on partners' unique needs is dependent upon our ability to gather and analyze data to drive solutions in real time with the customer in mind.

Based on feedback from our channel ecosystem, we know partners want simple, agile tools and processes so they can better serve their customer base. Leaders must prioritize a more coordinated approach to streamline the online customer experience and drive engagement globally. Take HP Amplify Data Insights for instance. More than 20 billion data points are updated in the platform weekly to provide real-time customer-level insights that integrate directly with partner sales systems. The result is customer-ready, targeted opportunities for partners to immediately act upon. Embracing a relentless focus on operational excellence makes it easier to do business across the channel and we can build an environment where creating life-long customer value—rather than transactional engagement—sits at the center.

Agility and simplicity have also been the driver for HP's adoption of artificial intelligence (AI). We've been leveraging AI technology behind the firewall for several years in order to identify pain points, and better serve our customers and partners. Recently, we expanded those AI innovations to our customers, with [AI-enabled services](#) that allow people to better collaborate, manage and protect their devices.

### **Leveraging a continual feedback loop**

Innovative solutions that help end users are the foundation for a feedback loop of success. Partners sit on the frontlines with customers day in and day out and open feedback enables vendors to innovate in a way that further arms them with the tools they need to get closer to their customers. Customer service continues to remain a cornerstone in our business with [94 percent of customers globally](#) reporting a likelihood to purchase again in the future if they have a positive experience with a vendor or service provider. The more we continue to collaborate across the ecosystem, the better our insights—and therefore, end-to-end engagement—become. One example of this is [HP Curiosity](#), which launched last November as a direct result of partner feedback. It acts as a one-stop product training, recognition and community engagement platform. We have built a community across 18 countries who now work in tighter collaboration with HP to provide greater value to their customers through HP Curiosity.

A resilient and future-ready channel ecosystem requires a culture of trust and active exchange among customers, partners, and vendors. If we're able to not only uphold but champion a culture of partnership in the year ahead, we'll be able to better anticipate pain points and address needs with innovative solutions, ultimately playing a more foundational role in our customers' lives and businesses—a value-add that is sure to outlive any evolving market condition across the landscape.