

# Leveraging Client Partners in Your Go-to-Market Strategy

Elaine Beitler



LONG RIDGE  
EQUITY PARTNERS

# My story: client partnerships in the supply chain safety space



## **FOR DISCUSSION**

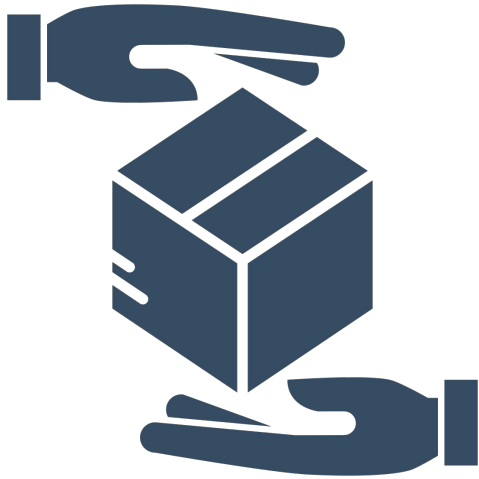
**How many of you believe that you've developed partnerships with any of your key clients?**

**How many of you would be comfortable having a prospect contact any of your existing clients of their choice for a reference?**

**How many of you have had a client introduce you to a prospect?**

**COME OFF MUTE OR COMMENT IN THE CHAT**

# What's the difference between being a vendor and a partner to your clients?



**A vendor relationship  
is transactional**

**vs.**



**A partner relationship  
is an alliance**

# Why is it valuable to invest in becoming a partner?



**Partners can help spread the word about you**



**Client partners can help you look like a safe choice for other buyers**



**Learn about your customer's industry**



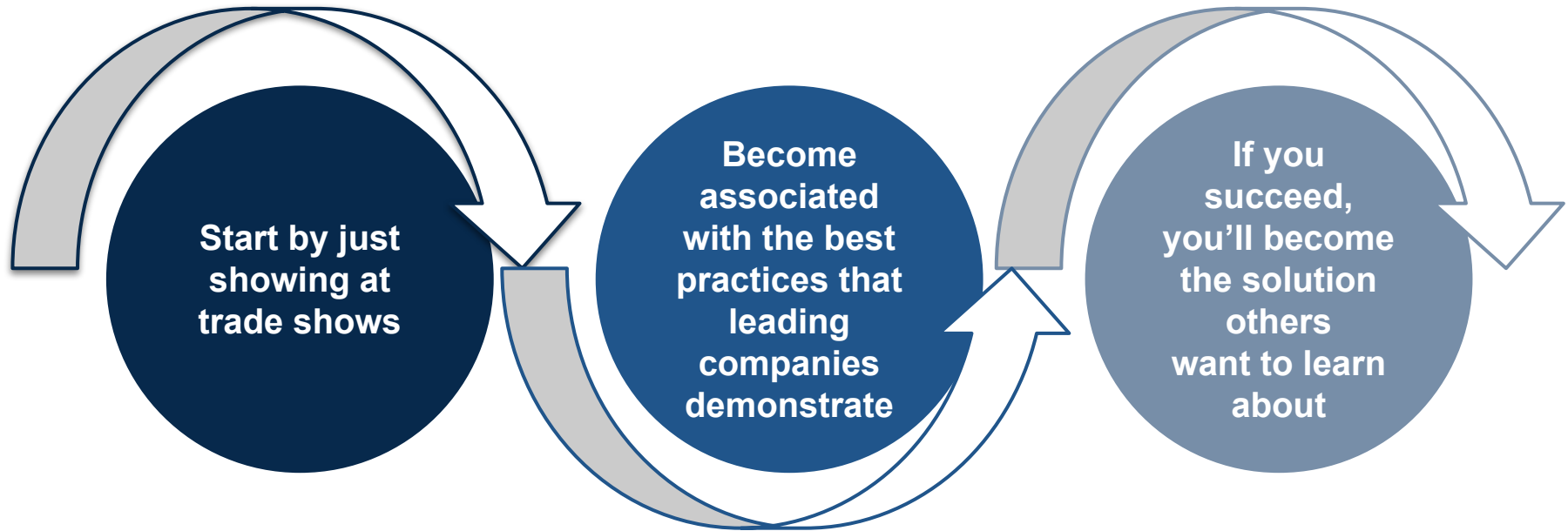
**Get honest feedback about how your company is perceived**



**Partners help you get involved with relevant trade association**

***Note: Formal and informal involvement both have benefits***

# How does this shape your strategy for industry trade shows and conferences?



***Don't be afraid to apply  
for elite trade groups***

# How do you set the foundation for client partnerships?

## Communicate a bold goal

Set a goal that a prospect could call any customer for a reference

## Pay special attention to key clients

Your top 20 accounts

Customers in new industries or using new products

At-risk customers

## Present issues in a positive way

Understand why a customer is having issues and know what you are doing to address those issues

# How do you identify clients that have the potential to become especially strong partners (super-recommenders)?

**A leader in the industry is always best**



**Your first client in one industry can be a reference for a first client in another**



**Customers who love to teach and talk**





# What steps can you take to cultivate a super-recommender relationship with key clients?



**Spend time with them**



**Ask for exposure to their company and operations (e.g. a tour)**



**Invite them to an educational experience together**



**Invite them to professional development opportunities**



**Include your employees  
(even employees who aren't typically customer-facing)**

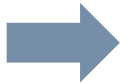
# How can you use key client relationships to become visible as a thought leader in your industry?

**Ask your partner to do a webinar with you**



Other clients can get a first-hand look at the relationship and trust you have developed with your partner clients

**Bring your partner to educational/industry outings**



It will give your partner an opportunity to introduce you to more people in their network

**Accept invitations from partners to be on boards or join associations**



Build a relationship with your partner beyond your product

# What type of content marketing complements this strategy?



**Publish white papers with your clients**



**Host learning sessions at industry events**



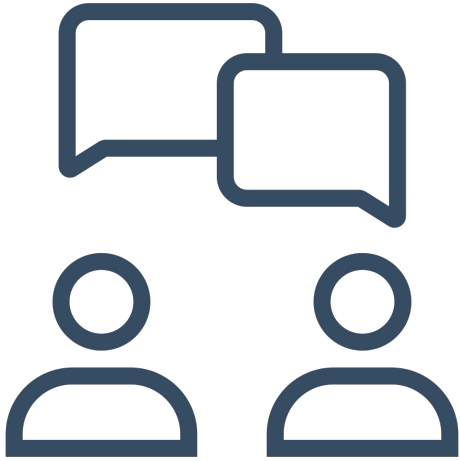
**Sponsor research (e.g. through a non-profit)**



**Think about what information prospects need**

***Note: Lead with a business challenge, not your product***

# What roles do other functional leaders play?



**Sales and customer service combine to give you perspective on your clients**



**Marketing needs to bring information from the market**



**Different executive team members should sponsor key accounts**

# What are the most important pieces to get right?

**Be interested,  
not interesting**



**Listen more than you talk**

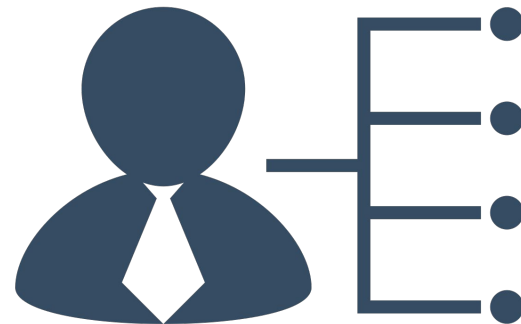
People love to teach, and if you're interested and open to listening, they will tell you a lot about their business

# What are the common pitfalls?

**Don't be an  
arrogant expert**



**Don't delegate  
too much away**



# Questions