White Paper


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Executive Summary

It’s no surprise that change is the one constant in the IT world. Enterprise IT, and the way companies purchase and consume technology continues to transform and evolve. Diverse and complex virtualized and hybrid cloud infrastructures that support line-of-business users in real time must also need to be seen as straight-forward to purchase, implement and scale.

As part of this transformation, the responsibility for implementing and supporting complex infrastructure and systems has shifted from the customer to the vendor and increasingly to the partners who live at the ‘point of attack’. Channel resellers (VARs, SIs, and MSPs) are now relied upon to provide a full range of technical services to install, integrate, and operate the new, hybrid computing platforms and systems.

Progressive, effective Partnering strategies are needed to capture this opportunity, and forward-looking tech vendors recognize that partners have a set of new priorities and challenges in maintaining profitability in the transformed world of IT, so they are taking steps to deliver more value from their partner programs.

This paper is designed for IT Partner business leaders and outlines how the new Dell EMC Partner Program meets this need.

The New ONE Partner Program: Partner-first Elements and Execution that Drive Change

The new ways in which IT is consumed by end-customers is reshaping the economics of the IT sector, and the primary vehicle for supporting partners in this new economic world is a comprehensive partner program. Leading IT vendors now need to modify their partner programs to proactively help their partners evolve their businesses to meet these challenges and become stronger both operationally and financially.

To address these needs, Dell EMC brought two world-class programs together, creating what is truly a best-of-breed partner program. The program unifies the entire Dell EMC partner ecosystem, inclusive of Solution Providers, Cloud Service Providers, Global Alliances, OEM Solutions partners, Distribution and Federal Partners. The new, and comprehensive Partner Program started to show its formation in October with both companies coming together months earlier and identifying which elements would make the program ultimately be ONE.

The new Dell EMC Partner Program - will bring together the two partner programs under the binding premise of “Simple. Predictable. & Profitable.” Based on EMC’s and Dell’s leading independent programs, and the new combined future IT marketplace, Dell EMC solicited input from leading partners in order to craft a set of new program elements that work seamlessly together in key areas that affect partners operations in order to drive growth, profitability, and deeper ongoing customer relationships.

To achieve these goals, the new Dell EMC Partner Program has been guided by the following objectives:

- ONE Unified Partner Program that is competitive and incorporates best-practices in the IT market.
- Bring transparency and predictability to partner engagement.
- Provide all partner tracks with a simplified, common structure and tiers.
- Be flexible and adaptive to rapidly evolving business models and partner needs.
- Create fully-invested partners through a set of incentives and rewards that drive profitability.

These guiding principles have been incorporated into a number of key partner benefits, as outlined in Table 1, below:
**Table 1. Key Benefits of the New Dell EMC Partner Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power of One</strong></td>
<td>With its centralized model, the Dell EMC Partner Program offers partners the best of prior programs and much more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved Processes</strong></td>
<td>One partner portal with single sign-on, one deal registration and ISG &amp; CSG Line of Business Incumbency process, enhanced rebate calculator</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simplified Training &amp; Compliance</strong></td>
<td>Same high-quality, focused training as direct sales teams receive</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>Annual program strategy setting with mid-year compliance review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Predictable and Market-Aligned Thresholds and Targets</strong></td>
<td>Partners received new tier status and targets in December 2016 to prepare for 2017 success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profitable</strong></td>
<td>Rewards are focused on driving growth, new business and services, and incent partners actively selling the full Dell EMC portfolio</td>
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In brief: The new Dell EMC Partner Program - is truly a best-in-class partner program that is a result of two leading, global technology vendors, coming together to support and strengthen individual partner businesses and unify the overall partner ecosystem. The effort was massive, and while it combines the best of two programs, it was approached as building from the ground up. Incorporating directional input from partners World-wide, it was fast-tracked from day one of the acquisition in September 2016 to the launch in February 2017.

Following is an evaluation of key components of the Dell EMC Partner Program and why they are important for Partner teams moving forward under the new IT consumption model.

**New Partnering Strategies for the New IT World**

Enterprise IT and the way companies purchase and consume technology continues to transform and evolve. Diverse and complex virtualized and hybrid cloud infrastructures that support line-of-business users in real time also need to be seen as straight-forward to purchase, implement and scale.

To meet this need, leading Enterprise IT vendors are not only offering innovative products to help modernize legacy, corporate infrastructure, and ESG research has found end user IT organizations are now looking to modernize everything about their Data Centers. (See Figure 1). To do this, end users look to offerings from the top IT vendors, plus increasingly rely on their relationships with and IT Channel partners for guidance in building total business solutions that include a combination of proven products, new delivery options and innovative offerings. Channel partners are now at the point of attack for designing, delivering and supporting these solutions.
Growing demand for storage and data management

Exploding sources of data and the use of advanced analytics in decision making is driving the need for expanded and efficient use of storage, and putting established storage vendors at the forefront of the data center modernization trend.

In 2016, prior to the merger of the two companies, ESG conducted targeted IT decision maker research to understand the preferences for current customers of both Dell and EMC with regards to their storage strategy.

Figure 2, below demonstrates the strong position the new Dell EMC will have in their ongoing strategy, and puts an exclamation point on the opportunity for partners to grow their business through expanding their commitment and investment with Dell EMC.
Effective Partnering Strategies needed to capture the opportunity

Forward-looking tech vendors recognize that partners have a set of new priorities and challenges in maintaining profitability in the transformed world of IT, and industry leaders are looking to adapt and improve their partner programs to proactively help partners become more productive, and strengthen their operations and financial footing.

The all-new Dell EMC Partner Program represents a forward-looking and comprehensive investment from one of the top global vendors to evolve its partnering strategy and strengthen the company’s overall partner ecosystem.

Overview of the New Dell EMC Partner Program


Partner success today requires expertise in both technology and business transformation, with Solution Providers acting as key strategic advisors to both IT and line-of-business customers in order to help them navigate IT complexity together. As a result, Solution Providers must focus first on solving their customer’s business problem, and be prepared to propose a range of options and economic choices. This puts incredible pressure on Solution Providers to change and adapt their team’s skills and capabilities, and requires new selling and service motions along the way.

Vendors need to support this new approach, maintain a close connection between themselves and their Solution Providers, and deliver programs and support that allows their Solution Providers to succeed by adapting rapidly in a changing marketplace. This includes providing access to a range of bundled offerings, support with reselling services and developing their own services offerings, a serious commitment to training and education, and the tools and resources to accelerate marketing and sales cycles—all delivered at the right time, available on an as-needed basis and supported by innovative incentives and rebates that provide Solution Providers with the ability to plan and invest for growth.
Goals and Strategy for the Dell EMC Partner Program

The newly combined program is designed to be a world-class program that supports the partners on a journey that is Simple, Predictable and Profitable and fosters the notion that Solution Providers will have one vendor that they can rely on with a complete range of products: infrastructure, software, cloud and services. The Dell EMC Partner Program specifically rewards those Solution Providers who invest in multiple competencies with competitive rebates and MDF. The program’s foundation is simplicity focusing on clearly defined tiers and tracks and value-based training. Developed in collaboration with partners, the new program aims to provide support and rewards that are above and beyond other industry programs, while ensuring business continuity. They are looking to match Solution Providers to the new tiers swiftly, while encouraging the expansion of distribution to support new Solution Providers who enter the program.

The resulting Dell EMC Partner Program features three defining elements, all relevant for a broad spectrum of partner types:

- First, to continue to Support the Partner Journey in terms of both expanding their relationship with Dell EMC and also with how they add to their skills and ability to help their customers transform their businesses.
- Second, to ensure that the value proposition for partners remains aligned to Dell EMC’s overall value proposition.
- Third, to remain true to EMC’s partnering motto: making it “Simple, Predictable, and Profitable” to invest to grow as a Dell EMC Partner.

The Program strives to address these elements through a series of “big-picture” changes to provide:

- Linking to the Dell EMC strategy by encouraging and rewarding partners to sell the full portfolio.
- A foundation to allow for the development of a solutions-based approach to sales.
- Align and simplify program requirements to business objectives.
- More active support for partner-led marketing and lead generation activities.
- A common structure and tiers across all Dell EMC core partner programs that support rapidly evolving partner businesses at the same time partners execute on multiple business models where the lines between distinct partner types is now blurred. What’s in it for Partners

The new Dell EMC Partner Program will put all of the partner ecosystem under one umbrella. As part of this comprehensive, unifying strategy, included is the “Powered by Dell EMC” brand program for those businesses that embed Dell EMC technologies into the solutions they deliver. As Partners increasingly go to market with “hybrid business models,” the Dell EMC Partner Program will provide clear linkages between strategic partners in Dell EMC’s ecosystem, allowing partners to collaborate more easily with other partners, and deliver to customers whatever they need from the Dell EMC range of offerings. All in all, Dell EMC partners can deliver a trusted foundation for their customers to transform IT, and leverage hybrid cloud solutions and cloud-native applications.
Key Elements of the Partner Program: Structure, Requirements, and Features Explained

Program Tiers, Tracks, Paths, Competencies

The program tiers, developed to elevate Dell EMC Partners over competitors and establish a clear path to level-up, include Titanium, Platinum and Gold, as well as a new, exclusive status level within the Titanium tier called Titanium Black. Tier levels align with key business models of partners, enabling flexibility as needed to meet customer needs.

Benefits to channel partners will include generous, above industry average rebates rewarding profitable behaviors such as driving new business, attaching services (inclusive of product, professional and managed services), training participation, and selling the full portfolio. Tier changes will take place on an annual basis, giving partners time to plan and qualify.

Tiers

1. **Titanium** designates partners that have capabilities and resources with expert-level certifications, making them industry experts in their designated competency; Titanium partners also have the option of embracing and supporting comprehensive solutions in the competencies of products, services and solutions. These partners can deliver complete end-to-end solutions, inclusive of services.

2. **Platinum** designates partners with advanced capabilities enabling them to architect and sell a range of data center solutions based in one or more competency, inclusive of services.

3. **Gold** designates partners who have the foundational knowledge to market and sell Dell EMC products within one portfolio competency, inclusive of services.
Tracks

There are 5 partner-type tracks in the program, and each of them has been simplified to match the three-tier structure. Embedded is the Distribution track, which is supportive of the 6 partner-type tracks and is designed to simplify reseller coverage and support relationships established by the distributors. The 5 partner-type tracks are:

1. Solution Provider
2. OEM
3. SI (Alliances)
4. MSP/CSP
5. RSA

Paths – Two Options for Solution Providers to Pursue Based on Their Business Model and Strategy

1. Depth – Deep knowledge base of a portfolio competency
2. Breadth (ISG and Cross Dell) – Multiple Portfolio Competencies or a Mix of Portfolio and Solution Competencies

Competencies - Three Levels for Solution Providers to Specialize

1. Portfolio Competencies - Foundational multi-product focused, across defined lines of business in the areas of Storage, Data Protection, Converged Infrastructure, Server, Networking, Core Client, Client Data Security, Workstation, Cloud Client-Computing
2. Service Competencies - Across lines of business focused, to enable IT & Digital Transformation
3. Solution Competencies - Recognition of a partner’s capability and authorization to deliver post-sales services on specific Dell and Dell EMC products in the areas of Storage Services, Data Protection Services, Converged Infrastructure Services, Hybrid Cloud Platform Services

What's in it for Partners?

The new tiers, track structure and competencies are consistent with the trending in recent years that has seen leading vendors moving to “build your own” programs, where partners can progress to higher levels by demonstrating their commitment and investment. This structure also recognizes that the lines between partner types have blurred and are now effectively gone, reflecting the fact that many partners operate not one, but several business models at the same time. The new structure creates a level playing field among partners based upon their ability to deliver complex solutions, and it also rewards those who invest to reach Platinum and Titanium tiers.

Geography and Regional Variances

There will be two country zones per region, each having unique revenue thresholds, and all regions will be eligible to participate in the rebate program.

- Zone 1: includes USA with the North American region, France, UK, Germany within the EMEA region; Japan, Australia, New Zealand within the APJ region & Brazil within the LATAM region.
- Zone 2: includes Canada in the North American region, and all other countries not cited in the Zone 1 regions of EMEA, APJ and LATAM.
Requirements and Benefits Summary

Dell EMC Partner Program requirements are intended to include a combination of Revenue and Competency achievements that set fully-committed partners apart, and partner benefits and rewards are designed to be progressive, increasing as the partners move up the tiers. Each tier has its own set revenue and training requirements, and is designed to help the partners develop greater expertise within their selected competencies. Correspondingly, total benefits are designed to increase as the Partners excel within the tiers. Benefits are available to all partners regardless of procurement method – direct with Dell EMC or through a distributor.

Requirements for the three tiers:

1. **Titanium**:
   a. Revenue thresholds (based on regional zones) for product and services,
   b. portfolio & solutions competency training,
   c. certifications for technology architects or data center architects and experts, and
   d. marketing accreditation.

2. **Platinum**:
   a. Revenue thresholds (based on regional zones) for product and services,
   b. portfolio & solutions competency training,
   c. certifications for technology architects or data center architects, technology architect experts, specialist certification, and
   d. marketing accreditation.

3. **Gold**:
   a. Revenue thresholds (based on regional zones) for product and services,
   b. portfolio competency training, certifications for technology architects or data center architects.

Benefits for the three tiers:

![Benefits - AT A GLANCE](image)
Financial Rewards and Benefits

Fiscal Year Alignment
As part of aligning with the company’s new fiscal year, the new Q1 will be February to April 2017. Under the new program, January 2017 will be counted as a bonus month, with legacy EMC partners continuing to accrue MDF for the month of January under the current policy and rates of the 2016 legacy EMC Partner Program. This benefits current partners by giving them the opportunity to accrue more funds for 2017 investment.

Deal Registration Benefit
Dell EMC is committed to rewarding partners for identifying new sales opportunities through its deal registration program. Partners who obtain approved opportunities will receive additional benefits. The Deal Registration Program is intended to reward partners who actively promote Dell EMC products and solutions to their customers, and comes with a global code of conduct.

Rebates Summary
The new rebate structure was designed to support the Partners expertise and efforts in multiple areas and are looked at as important cornerstone to the “profitable” pillar. Rebates are paid on Storage, Server, Networking and Client product lines and apply to all regions. The rebates are broken down into four categories (base + growth + service + new business), that can be stacked to increase the Partner’s payout.

- **Base** rebates are paid back to dollar one
- **Growth** rebates reward partners who successfully grow their respective Dell EMC lines of business over time
- **Services** attached to expand into new lines of business can earn additional rebates on top of the base and growth rebates.
- **New business** for both net new customers or new lines of business to an existing customer

What’s in it for Partners?
Deal Registration and rebates are valuable and critical components of overall partner profitability, and drive commitment and loyalty from IT Partner business owners. The combination of ‘Dollar-One’ base rebates, plus specific and additional rebates that reward achievement in growth targets, services resale and net-new client acquisition are rich and competitive to the top programs in the industry. With these in place, Dell EMC partners know that they will profit from their investments in adding new clients, and expanding existing ones.
Partner Engagement: Tools, Collaboration and ‘Sell With’ Activities That Accelerate Results

Line of Business Incumbency

One of the primary inputs from partners was the need for increased predictability from Dell EMC as they build and plan for their businesses. To help them plan their growth, Dell EMC is instituting a Line of Business Incumbency program across storage, servers and networking in its commercial segment. This program recognizes the relationships partners have established with customers and enables channel partners to protect their investments with their customer base as well as expand to serve new customers interested in the full Dell EMC portfolio.

ISG & CSG Line of Business Incumbency

Dell EMC’s vision is for partners to extend their reach into new and existing markets as a true extension of the Dell EMC salesforce. Incumbency ensures partners have a more predictable sales engagement model by setting aside qualified commercial accounts as partner-led based on previous investments and on net-new business creation. In doing so, it ensures the Dell EMC sales teams are working in tandem with their partners across all three ISG lines of business – server, storage and networking while enabling them to aggressively grow their business across the entire Dell EMC Portfolio.

Rules of Engagement

Dell EMC has a core set of Rules of Engagement that permeate the behavior of the entire organization. There are guiding principles for these rules of engagement, namely the integral role that partners play in Dell EMC’s overall success to delivering an excellent customer experience. Dell EMC’s leadership team has a zero tolerance policy for any dishonoring of these rules, ensuring trust and commitment to all Dell EMC partners.

Ease of Doing Business

Partner portals have traditionally not received a lot of respect, with wide variation in quality of design, ease of use, and ability for partner sale and tech teams to actually get their jobs done in a timely manner. Our latest research into selling integrated solutions revealed, however, that partners need and want top-flight portals to be able to deal with today’s wide range of technologies and products across multiple vendors. In fact, respondents to the ESG research chose having an intuitive, easy to use portal as a desired partner program feature equal in importance to detailed technical training and marketing for brand development.

Dell EMC recognizes the need to have operational efficiency for its partners and is moving toward streamlined systems and processes and a single point of system entry. With the new program comes a new partner portal for all partners and distributors, including a new training portal. There will also be a new Distributor-specific view to help distributors with deal registration, program resources and quoting tools that will support the management of their partners.
What’s in it for Partners?

It’s all about the concept of ‘transactional speed’— simpler selling motions and doing more deals in less time:

- The new Dell EMC Partner Portal will be the ONE place all partners will go to manage their Dell EMC business. Moving from multiple web properties and logins to a single sign-on, global portal that provides all partners with access to the right tools at the right time across sales, marketing, and services allows each member of the partner team to manage her part of the business quickly and efficiently.

- Having fair and consistent rules of engagement in place reduces uncertainty and ensures that the effort partners devote to developing and pursuing new customers and business opportunities is rewarded.

Training: The Dell EMC Partner Academy

The new Dell EMC training and compliance program for partners features a three step process that allows a Partner to customize their investment with Dell EMC. The three step process ties to the foundation of the program and partner Tier, Path and Competency. The tier and competency will dictate who within the partner’s organization requires training. Roles include; Sales, System Engineers, Technical Architect, Implementation Engineer, and a new role, Marketing (the Marketing Academy will launch in May FY’18).

Key aspects of the new training requirements for both Sales and Technical professionals are supported by:

- One-stop training for partners via the new Partner Portal.
- An integrated learning management system (LMS).
- Cross-core training available for all partner types.

What’s in it for Partners?

Dell EMC’s new training portal provides quick access to all of these key aspects through an easy to navigate home page, a shared interface leading to core training and certification offerings that are available across multiple partner tracks and across the competencies. The portal also provides partner staff access to training courses where and when they need them. All of this will save partner personnel time and money.

This last point is critical in today’s world of changing needs and just-in-time consumption of information. By completing competencies and training programs, partner sales, marketing and technical teams can gain the tools and technology needed to stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing industry, as well as having the opportunity to progress to higher tiers, thus having access to greater incentives.

Marketing:

MDF

The new Dell EMC Partner Program offers two kinds of Marketing Development Funds (MDF):

1. **Earned MDF**: Accrued marketing dollars based on a partner’s qualified revenue. *(Only available to Titanium and Platinum Partners).*

2. **Proposal-Based MDF**: Discretionary funds that may be allocated to partners who submit a marketing proposal that is aligned to Dell EMC’s spend guidance in the area of demand generation.
In the new portal, partners will be transitioned over to a new MDF tool, powered by Vistex. The new tool allows partners to request, track and claim their MDF in one consistent interface.

**Marketing Tools and Resources**
All Partners will have access to the Partner Marketing Platform that provides access to co-brandable materials, web content syndication, customizable campaigns that support email and social media initiatives and Dell EMC product and solution images.

**What’s in it for Partners?**
ESG channel research indicates that vendor support for increasing partner-led marketing and lead generation has consistently been one of the top three “asks” from IT resellers, and marketing spend is where they feel they could get the most return on their investment today.

Dell EMC’s use of both Earned and Proposal-based MDF strikes a good balance between providing options to partners just entering the program, and rewarding higher-tier Partners who are eligible for earned MDF will now have visibility to funds allocated to them and can manage their efforts accordingly, while all partners retain the ability to request funds as marketing initiatives present themselves. The ongoing development of automated marketing tools will prove to be a huge business benefit to many partners who lack advanced marketing skills or who do not have the dedicated resources to execute on campaigns.

**The Partner Journey: Managing the Transition for FY’ 18**
In preparation with the announcement of the Dell EMC Partner Program, a comprehensive schedule and timeline was created to provide partners with guidance and support to navigate from the two individual programs to ONE the new program.

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**Dell EMC Timeline FY18**

- **September 2016**
  - Dell & EMC become ONE

- **December 2016**
  - Notify Partners on Tier Match

- **Now Announcing the New Dell EMC Partner Program**

- **May 2017**
  - Marketing Academy

- **December 2017**
  - Year-End Audit

- **August 2017**
  - Rebate Eligibility

- **July 2017**
  - Mid-Year Audit

- **June 2017**
  - Competencies Awarded

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**What’s in it for Partners?**

Having a predictable plan in place that includes clear guidelines, actions, and a sufficient timeline to achieve is important to partners.

Here are important milestones and noteworthy actions for the upcoming year:

- **Promotions and Demotions to Tiers will be on annual basis only:**
  - Training requirements for placement in FY19 program must be met by Dec 31, 2017 (FY18)
  - All Revenue requirements for placement in FY19 program will need to be met by Jan. 31, 2017 (period to count February 4, 2017 – February 2, 2017 FY18)

- **Competencies will be awarded semiannually; deadline is June 30, 2017 for 2H FY18 (August) rebate eligibility and December 29, 2017 for 1H FY19 (February) rebate eligibility.**

- **Competencies earned after the annual audit period will only be considered for tier status during the following annual audit.**

- **If a Titanium, Platinum or Gold partner earns additional competencies by June 30, 2017 they will earn incentives at their current tier starting Q3 FY18 (August).**

- **All legacy Dell partners will retain the PartnerDirect Competencies that were deemed compliant and active after Feb 2017 (FY18) audit.**

**The Bigger Truth**

The new ways in which IT is consumed by end-customers is reshaping the economics of the IT sector, and **Dell EMC has brought two world-class programs together**, creating what is truly a best-of-breed partner program that proactively helps Dell EMC partners to meet these challenges and become stronger both operationally and financially. Dell EMC has taken a heads-on approach in designing the structure, features, and benefits of the combined Partner Program to ensure that it supports the entire Dell EMC partner ecosystem.

As we looked in detail at the benefits partners will enjoy, ESG found many features that make the new program stand out among its competitors. The centralized model offers partners the best of the prior programs, adds simplified training and compliance, and incorporates improved processes such as One partner portal with single sign-on, one deal registration and one Line of Business Incumbency Program. Each of these will drive partner productivity, speed deal flow and ultimately drive partner profitability through a set of innovative rewards that are focused on new business and services, and selling the full portfolio.

The total benefits of the new Dell EMC Partner program go far beyond financial incentives and core training, and the enhanced program is rooted in the realities of today’s IT market with a strong focus on what is to come. The program gives Dell EMC Partners a flexible path into the future, critical levers that growth oriented partners can pull however they choose, as well as access to the tools that help build deep, long-lasting, and profitable relationships with their customers.

Bottom line: The new Dell EMC Partner Program is architected for partner growth and profitability. It goes above and beyond what we’ve seen previously in the industry in terms of partner support and recognition. No doubt this will be highly lucrative to both partners and Dell EMC, and enable further growth throughout the industry.