

Good Money After Bad?

Your Channel Partners and Your Co-Op Dollars

By **GARY RITKES** | President of SproutLoud

We're all in pursuit of that satisfying moment when our message and our tactics come together to really improve performance. But the biggest challenge for a lot of **distributed marketing organizations** is that they can't get that same level of visibility on the [Co-Op Advertising](#) dollars they're spending with their independent partners.

In my experience, there is always a fear that the money you're investing is not creating the results you want.

No one wants to throw good money after bad. That's why brands and their partners need to know how to navigate three common challenges.

Challenge 1: Build the Right Co-Op Advertising Campaign

First things first — brands do a lot of research to ensure their message will resonate in-market for a national campaign. Brands have complete control over that message. Traditionally, if your brand sells through a network of channel partners, resellers, retailers, dealers, distributors, franchisees, agents or branches, you're giving up an element of control.

When I talk to our customers, I find that they're spending a lot of OpEx on building a channel marketing infrastructure with marketing or ad agencies to create assets, with marketing vendors who are supposed to manage the execution, and with all the departmental headcount it takes to get all this in the field.

But what we hear again and again is that big brands are really frustrated that so many partners end up going to market with advertising that's not brand compliant. That's why it's crucial to use technology that integrates

digital asset management (DAM) with ad builder technology that uses dynamic templates. Together, they allow partners to localize campaign assets within preconfigured brand guidelines..

Using [distributed marketing](#) technology in this way helps brands ensure:

- Every ad will deliver the message that you envision
- Your brand and your partners will spend a lot less money on agency fees
- Your team won't need to dedicate so much time and headcount to reviewing and approving thousands of local ads

If you're using leading-edge marketing technology solutions, you'll know that the money you're spending on channel marketing is focused on the message you want in each local market.

Challenge 2: Get More Partners Participating in Co-Op Advertising

Often, the biggest challenge in channel marketing is that partners don't participate in Co-Op Advertising. It's a nightmare scenario that's scary to any CMO. You're worried about spending a lot of money building campaigns with partners, and those campaigns don't get launched.

What we hear from the partners using our [Through Channel Marketing Automation \(TCMA\) platform](#) is that the claims and reimbursement process is the main reason they don't want to participate in brand Co-Op Advertising campaigns.

A typical scenario consists of local partners who go out-of-pocket on an ad for the brand, and then wait 6 to 8 weeks before they get reimbursed for a portion of that ad. Let's face it, the idea of local businesses fronting ad dollars for multibillion-dollar corporations is a bit insane. That's why local partners don't want to participate.

There's a much more effective way to entice partners to participate in brand-preferred campaigns. Tie the money directly to the local marketing campaign, and let the partner access that money as soon as the campaign is executed through a centralized *TCMA platform*. When you're able to tie Co-Op Advertising funds and brand-approved local marketing campaigns together with a pre-approved vendor that you know is going to deliver best-in-class performance on campaign execution, then there's no reason for an extensive claims-and-reimbursement process.

To ensure the **MDF** and **Co-Op Advertising** money you're investing is not being wasted, use a distributed marketing system that eliminates fraud but still gets partners their dollars immediately.

Challenge 3: Invest Only in What Works

Even if you've built local ads that partners can customize without oversight and you've created a mechanism for partners to receive their **Co-Op Advertising funds** instantly, it's still crucial to steer your partners' behavior toward local marketing campaigns that you know will work. We're all in this weird spot right now, because partners want to use **digital marketing tactics**, but they just don't know how. And brands also want their partners to use digital marketing tactics, but they aren't confident in their partners' ability to execute them.

So, driving partners to preferred digital marketing (such as display ads, branded landing pages and microsites, PPC or paid search ads, online listings management, social media content syndication and reputation management) is crucial if you're going to ensure that the money you're investing is going to drive leads, traffic and sales.

What really makes a difference for your channel partners is centralizing local marketing campaign execution in a single **distributed marketing platform**. With a robust [SaaS distributed marketing technology platform](#), centralized campaign execution works effectively, even for brands with thousands of indirect partners. Access to [marketing analytics](#) on a micro-level allows you to see, for example, how many leads resulted from an email campaign targeted to a specific local market within a brand's distributed network of resellers. Macro-level analytics lets you compare the performance of, for example, pay-per-click campaigns with direct mail programs for a select group of channel partners or across the entire reseller network.

With the depth and breadth of the insights now available to brands, they can adjust their **Co-Op Advertising** offers in real time to steer their channel partners to invest in marketing programs that are proven to deliver measurable results.

Today's marketing environment is probably the most competitive it's ever been. There are massive amounts of change and disruption from e-commerce, big-box retailers, and social marketplaces. So, brands need to ensure that every *Co-Op Advertising* dollar they spend delivers maximum ROI. And the right [distributed marketing software](#) — or Through Channel Marketing Automation solution — will allow them to do just that.

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