

8th Annual Channel Management Summit

Executive Communications, Thought Leadership, Internal Communications, Social

(Originally Published on Partner View, IT Blog, Polycom Social Media Channels, Employee Newsletter)

08-20-2015 12:01 PM

The 8th Annual Channel Management Summit is set to take place Aug. 24-26 in Los Angeles, California. This event brings key industry leaders together to discuss challenges and opportunities within the IT channel. Presenters share best practices, innovative channel strategies, partner management and recruitment tips. Barb Huelskamp, Polycom's vice president of America's channel sales, joins the roster of presenters at this year's event. We recently caught up with Barb to get her take on IT channel trends and her upcoming presentation.

Q: There has been a lot of discussion around the workplace of the future and the role the channel will play, what advice do you have for channel players?

Barb: Partners must evolve their sales strategy. The future is about workflow, work process and user experience. Many partners have relationships with decision makers and they need ask the right questions in order to showcase how technology can be leveraged to solve business problems. One of my favorite sayings is, "You don't know, what you don't know." There are so many opportunities that are the result of asking questions.



Q: We are more than half way through 2015, what have you seen thus far? Is it fair to characterize 2015 as a year of fundamental change in the IT channel?

Barb: Fundamental change, probably not. However, partners need to be connected to their customers now more than ever. Market drivers have caused some to make investments for the future, while others have been hesitant to change. Thus far, service oriented solutions and sales are increasing at a steady pace due to video as a service (VaaS) and new hybrid consumption models. Overall, I expect this will continue to drive change within the channel.

Q: Several players in the IT channel are investigating new media and social selling to extend their marketing efforts. What are partners telling you?

Barb: More and more companies in the IT channel are leveraging social media for lead generation, prospecting, event marketing, customer service and more. I read a report published by the Aberdeen Group, and "79 percent of salespeople who incorporate social media into their sales process make quota compared to the industry average of 43 percent."

Getting started is the toughest challenge for many organizations. It is hard for some companies to get executive buy in or balance priorities in light of reduced market development funds while trying to fend off increased competition.

Q: Interesting. So what's your advice to your colleagues in the IT channel about social media?

Barb: My presentation at the 8th Annual Channel Management Summit covers this a bit, but in summary, every organization needs to make the investment in social media tools. I advise them to keep it simple and start by reviewing their business objectives and better understand their buyer's journey. Polycom developed a program to help our partners get started in social media because we recognize the value of the medium and because we're always looking for ways to help partners.

For more information:

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