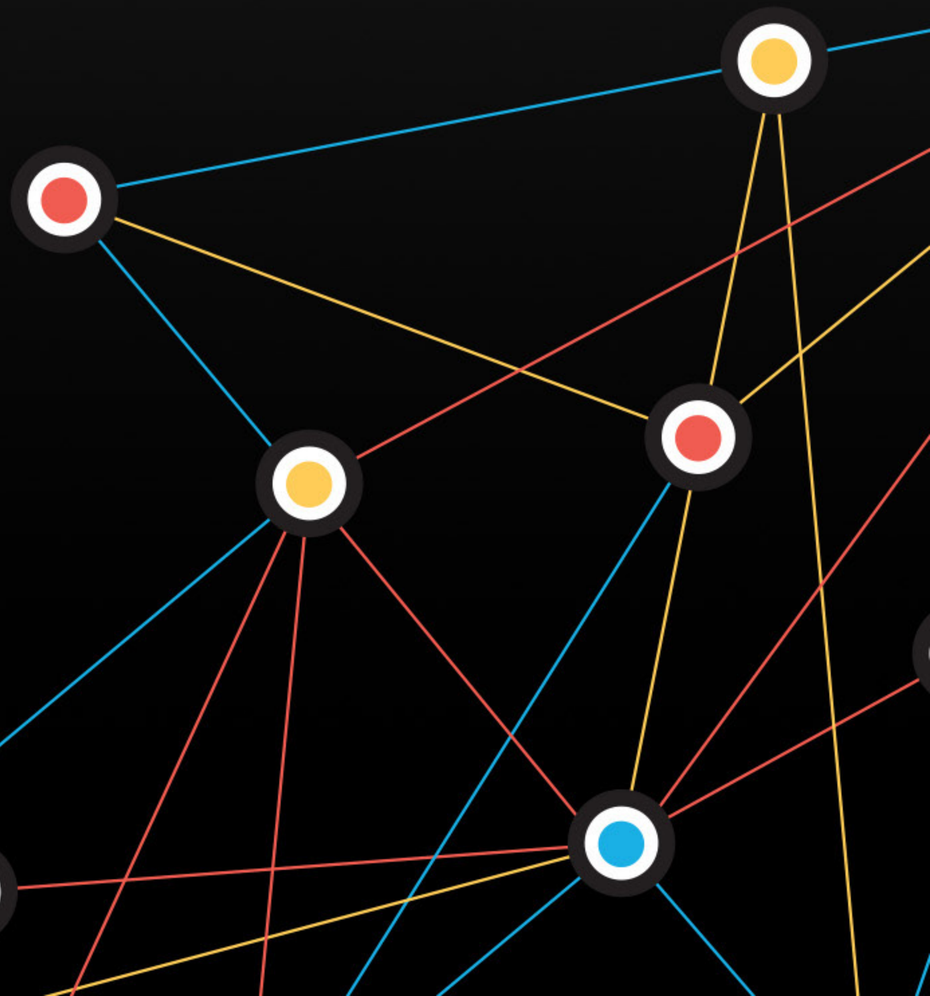
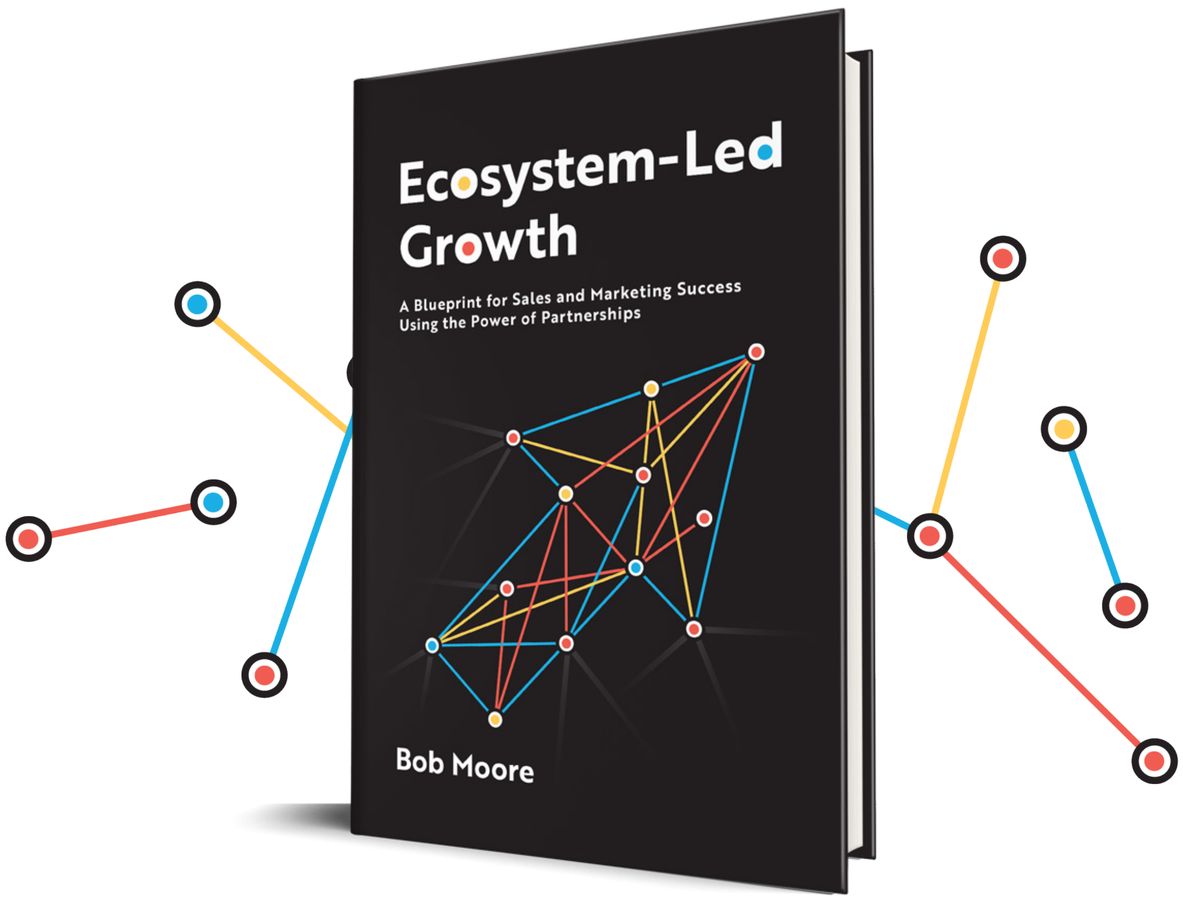
Ecosystem-Led Growth

Featured Framework
+ Success Stories







Partner ecosystems will be the most prolific and efficient growth lever businesses can build in the modern era. We're already seeing the winners of this era start to emerge, as shown in the following case studies and stories. This strategy would become known as ecosystem-led growth (ELG), a go-to-market motion that focuses on the partner ecosystem as the primary way to attract, convert, and grow customer relationships.

These studies and stories adapted from *Ecosystem-Led Growth* show how ELG turns your partner ecosystem into your company's most efficient and scalable source of revenue growth. The customer relationships it generates have higher contract values, close faster, see higher win rates, and expand more meaningfully over time. The companies embracing it—as seen with Gainsight, Braze, Fivetran, Rollworks, and Gong—are out-executing their competition at a blistering pace.

Visit RobertJMoore.com and Crossbeam.com to learn more.

IS ELG RIGHT FOR ME?

Ecosystem-led growth is here, but is this the right moment for your company to adopt it? Let's take a look at a simple framework for assessing your readiness for ELG. There are two key dimensions that dictate a company's readiness for an ELG strategy: value proposition and company scale.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Generally speaking, a value proposition is the way in which your company delivers value to its customers. We're going to think about your value proposition on a spectrum from "stand-alone" to "ecosystem." Companies with stand-alone value propositions are extremely independent and deliver value in and of themselves. Some examples are:

- Your local dine-in pizza place. Go in, eat pizza, head out. There are very few ways that other businesses could be incorporated into the product experience in order to alter or enhance the value proposition to its customers.

- A software development agency that builds new software products for their customers from scratch. They work directly with their customers and build a full deliverable from a blank page with nothing but their own labor.

On the other extreme of the spectrum are "ecosystem" companies, which would be literally incapable of delivering value if not for other companies that exist in their partner ecosystem. Some examples of ecosystem value propositions are:

- DoorDash, which contains partners galore. From restaurant partners to mobile app store marketplaces to embedded mapping and driver software, it takes a village (rather, an ecosystem) to bring the value proposition of this incredible business to life.

- System integrators, whose entire value proposition is predicated on the sale, implementation, and maintenance of another company's products. No partners, no business.

A company's value proposition will land on a spectrum. Take Salesforce, the leading provider of CRM software. While their product may seem somewhat stand-alone, few of their customers realize a complete value proposition without implementation help from system integrator partners and installing multiple tech partner integrations from Salesforce's AppExchange marketplace. Therefore Salesforce can move along the spectrum.

COMPANY SCALE

When companies get big, partner ecosystems become inevitable. Even for companies with strong stand-alone product value propositions, there comes a point where different categories of partners start to become no-brainers.

Scale can also attract technology partner ecosystems even when they've been avoided by design. When you build a large user base there will always be a potential tech partner ecosystem lying in wait, ready to build analytics, workflows, plugins, and other enhancements that augment the value story for your customers—whether you think they need it or not.

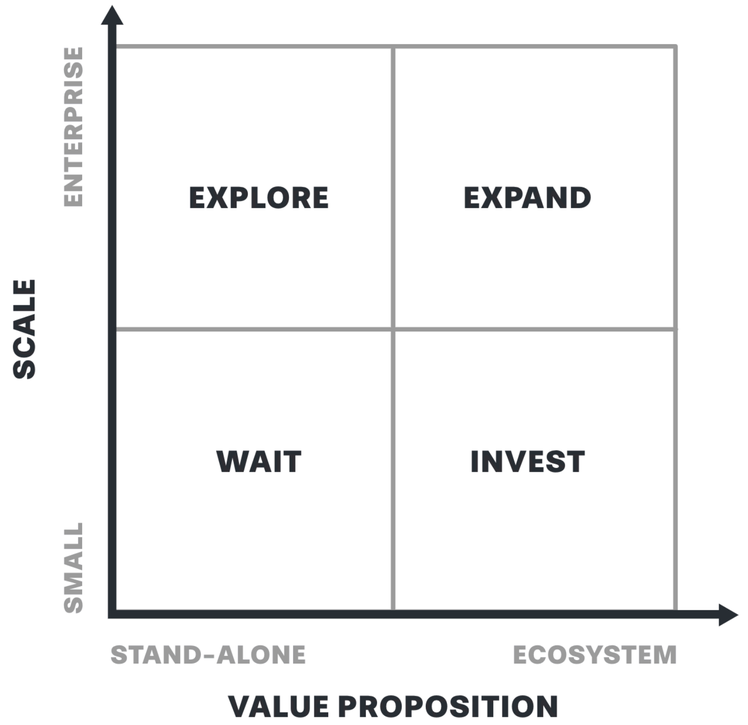
THE ELG READINESS MATRIX

The question of is this the right time for my company to adopt an ecosystem-led growth system can be answered by looking at the combination of your scale and the extent to which your value proposition is dependent on your partner ecosystem.

Placing yourself on this spectrum will likely drop you into one of four distinct quadrants:

- Small scale, stand-alone value proposition: WAIT. ELG is probably not for you.
- Small scale, ecosystem value proposition: INVEST. Companies like these are well suited to invest heavily in ELG, and it may prove to be the most powerful lever they can use to move up the scale dimension of this graph.
- Enterprise scale, stand-alone value proposition: EXPLORE. Companies like these should be doing work to explore ELG and what it could mean for them.
- Enterprise scale, ecosystem value proposition: EXPAND. While these companies have most likely embraced and invested in their ecosystem already, there is opportunity to roll out ELG playbooks at scale.

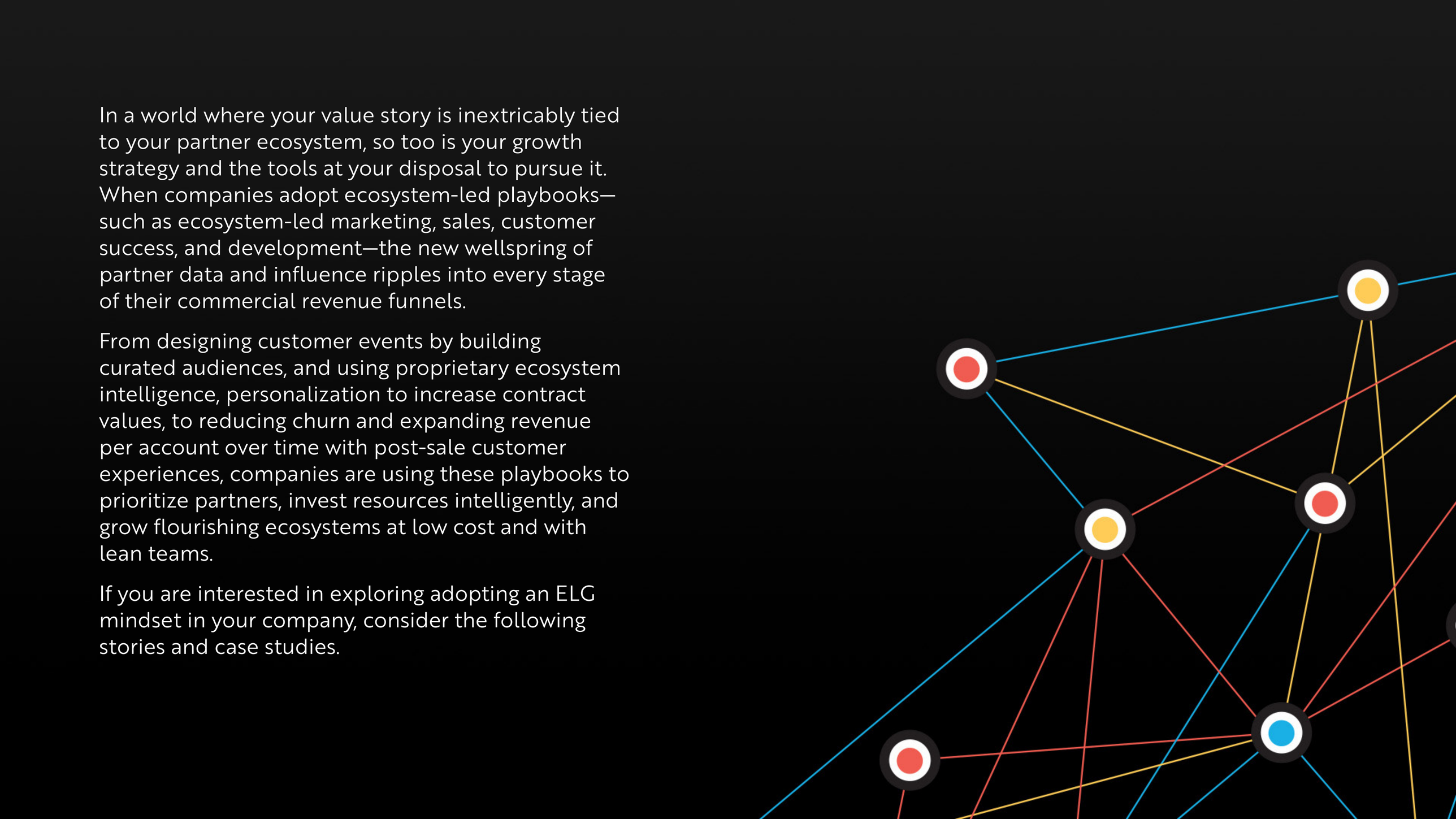
If you feel that you're in an awkward middle zone in the graph, you can also consider the rate at which you are moving along these two dimensions to make a call. Use your directional velocity within this matrix to see where the puck is going, and make the right call on how to proceed.



In a world where your value story is inextricably tied to your partner ecosystem, so too is your growth strategy and the tools at your disposal to pursue it. When companies adopt ecosystem-led playbooks—such as ecosystem-led marketing, sales, customer success, and development—the new wellspring of partner data and influence ripples into every stage of their commercial revenue funnels.

From designing customer events by building curated audiences, and using proprietary ecosystem intelligence, personalization to increase contract values, to reducing churn and expanding revenue per account over time with post-sale customer experiences, companies are using these playbooks to prioritize partners, invest resources intelligently, and grow flourishing ecosystems at low cost and with lean teams.

If you are interested in exploring adopting an ELG mindset in your company, consider the following stories and case studies.



Gainsight

Iconic technology brands such as Gainsight—the world's leading SaaS customer success platform—are shaping what world-class event strategy looks like in the modern era.

"Our Pulse conference is one the best and most important things we ever built," says Gainsight CEO Nick Mehta. "It's our annual opportunity to live out our company values with an incredible ecosystem of our customers, partners, and team."

Pulse, presented by Gainsight, has become a juggernaut. Over the last 10 years, Pulse has been home to more than 5,500 in-person attendees and more than 20 thousand virtual attendees spanning six continents and attracting professionals from all industries and levels—from recent college graduates to executives of Fortune 500 companies.

With ecosystem-led growth playbooks, Gainsight ensures that its ecosystem of stakeholders gets the most value possible from Pulse without violating community trust. "The trust of our attendees is paramount," says Mike Barnes, Gainsight's head of ISV (independent software vendor) and tech partnerships. "But yes, we also want to make sure that our partners and sponsors can connect with interested attendees to make sure both sides get the information they need from the event."

Using Crossbeam, Gainsight is able to match up the list of attending companies at Pulse with the target prospects, opportunities, and customers of all its partners and sponsors. Thus creating a curated list of attendees that would represent extremely high value introductions for its partners and sponsors—no mass list sharing needed. Gainsight can then efficiently reach out to those attendees to ensure their opt-in to an intro (or collect a more general opt-in at registration) and make the most valuable connections happen with extremely tight controls on data privacy and trust.

"It's a goldmine for everyone—attendees especially," says Barnes. "Think mass personalization of the event experience right down to the Gainsight partners they care about meeting on site. This is a much more specific, targeted, opt-in-oriented way to connect sponsors in our ecosystem to attendees."

Braze is a leading customer engagement platform that powers interactions between consumers and brands they love. They went public in November 2021 and have offices across North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. “Consistent revenue growth requires accelerants, and your partner ecosystem adds fuel to the sales fire,” says Myles Kleeger, president and chief commercial officer of Braze.

Kleeger and the team at Braze have figured out how to apply sales thinking to partnerships, and their partner ecosystem has since had transformative effects on the shape and efficacy of their sales motions. “If you look under the hood at some of our most effective playbooks, you’ll find that ecosystem-led growth is at the core,” says Kleeger.

When Dave Goldstein, vice president of Global Solutionals Alliances, talks about bringing ELG to life inside of Braze, he pulls inspiration from his side job as a volunteer firefighter. “In firefighting, we talk about the fire tetrahedron,” he explains. “For a fire to start, you need fuel, a source of heat, and oxygen—plus a chemical chain reaction that keeps it burning. Without all four, you’ve got no fire.”



CEO George Fraser, who cofounded Fivetran in 2012, isn't shy about their partner-centric mindset. "We are a partnership-driven company and always have been," he says. "Our second customer was a partner referral, and our partner ecosystem is just intrinsic to what we do. None of these tools do anything without data in them, and that's what Fivetran does—it feeds the data."

So how does this translate into playbooks and how does a co-selling powerhouse like Fivetran empower their sales reps to use ELG data? For that answer we can turn to Michael Bull, their director of strategic alliances, whose job is to translate Fivetran's strategic position in its ecosystem into value for their customers and growth plays for their sellers.

"We really are a true full stack consumer of ELG strategies," says Bull. "We do it all, from sales to CS and everywhere in between. But nothing happens if we don't get the data into the hands of our customer-facing teams." What Bull and his team have constructed for their go-to-market

Counterparts is nothing short of a full-blown arsenal of ecosystem intelligence: insights embedded directly into the CRM, robust sales data models that blend ecosystem data with sales pipeline data, and rich integrations to their own internal analytics.



Rollworks, a division of NextRoll, offers ambitious B2B companies an account-based platform to align their marketing and sales teams and confidently grow revenue. When it comes to ecosystem-led customer success, RollWorks experiences the benefits firsthand:

- Customers who are using at least one partner integration renew at a roughly 30% higher rate than customers who don't.
- Rollworks customers using four or more integrations have a 135% likelihood to renew compared to customers using one integration.

"If your company can provide a much better customer experience, increase time to first value, and improve renewal rates by 30%, that should be a major input to your customer success strategy," says Natalie Fitzsimmons, senior partner marketing manager at RollWorks. Fitzsimmons and her team are heavily motivated to drive the adoption rate of their tech partner integrations.

When launching new integrations, the RollWorks partner marketing team runs targeted campaigns to reach precisely the addressable audience with precisely the right messaging. The secret sauce is an advertising campaign targeting mutual customers with programmatic digital ads. These campaigns are built by plugging ELG data about customer overlap directly into RollWorks' own platform. Fitzsimmons syncs partner overlap data from Crossbeam into RollWorks, making it easier to create dynamic, high-intent account lists and run partner-specific advertising campaigns.

These ads tease the core value proposition of using RollWorks and the partner's technology together and are served throughout each contact's web journey and on social media. They drive joint customers to simple, ungated eGuides that offer quick solutions to major pain points solved by the integration.

"We rely on dynamic lists from our ELG platform Crossbeam and the RollWorks integration to ensure our campaign messaging reaches the most relevant contacts ready to engage," says Fitzsimmons. "It's a foolproof way to unlock the value of shared partner data and has allowed us to collaborate with our partners in more meaningful and effective ways." The result: in one recent launch, they reached 68% integration adoption rate—exceeding their original goal to hit 50% adoption—in just 90 days.

This playbook has become a standard for all new integration launches at RollWorks. The RollWorks team plans to run similar campaigns in the near future not just to drive integration adoption among mutual customers but also to build partner-sourced sales pipeline by targeting prospects who are customers of partners.



Gong has done an amazing job of growing from an upstart innovator in conversation intelligence to a force of nature in the fast-growing revenue intelligence category. More than 4,000 companies around the world rely on Gong to support their strategic initiatives, deal execution, forecasting, advanced coaching, and productivity to grow revenue efficiently.

Gong is a true champion of ecosystem-led growth, having built a flourishing partner ecosystem that powers a virtuous cycle of high-quality partners, value-creating integrations, and compounding customer impact.

At the helm of this rich ecosystem is Ashi Aber, the head of Technology Partnerships. Aber faces a high-class problem in his role: a constant firehose of new companies wish to integrate with Gong, pull data from its platform, or otherwise incorporate its technology into theirs.

“We get a flurry of new requests every day to build against our APIs (Application Programming Interface),” says Aber. “These come from a wide range of company types and sizes, including small start-ups working on skunkworks projects. But we also care deeply about fostering innovation in our ecosystem and don’t want to miss any diamonds in the rough.”

This is where Aber and his team are able to use modern ecosystem-led growth data to make sure they focus the right amount of energy on the right partners at the right time.

Standard partner onboarding for new Gong partners includes a baseline analysis of how much their current and target customer bases overlap, effectively providing a way to measure the total addressable market (TAM) of a given potential or existing tech integration.

Having partner overlap data is critical not just in picking partners initially but in continuously investing in those partnerships over time. Because Gong knows how many overlapping customers they have with a given tech partner, they can measure adoption of integrations by percentage of TAM rather than more simplistic absolute counts.

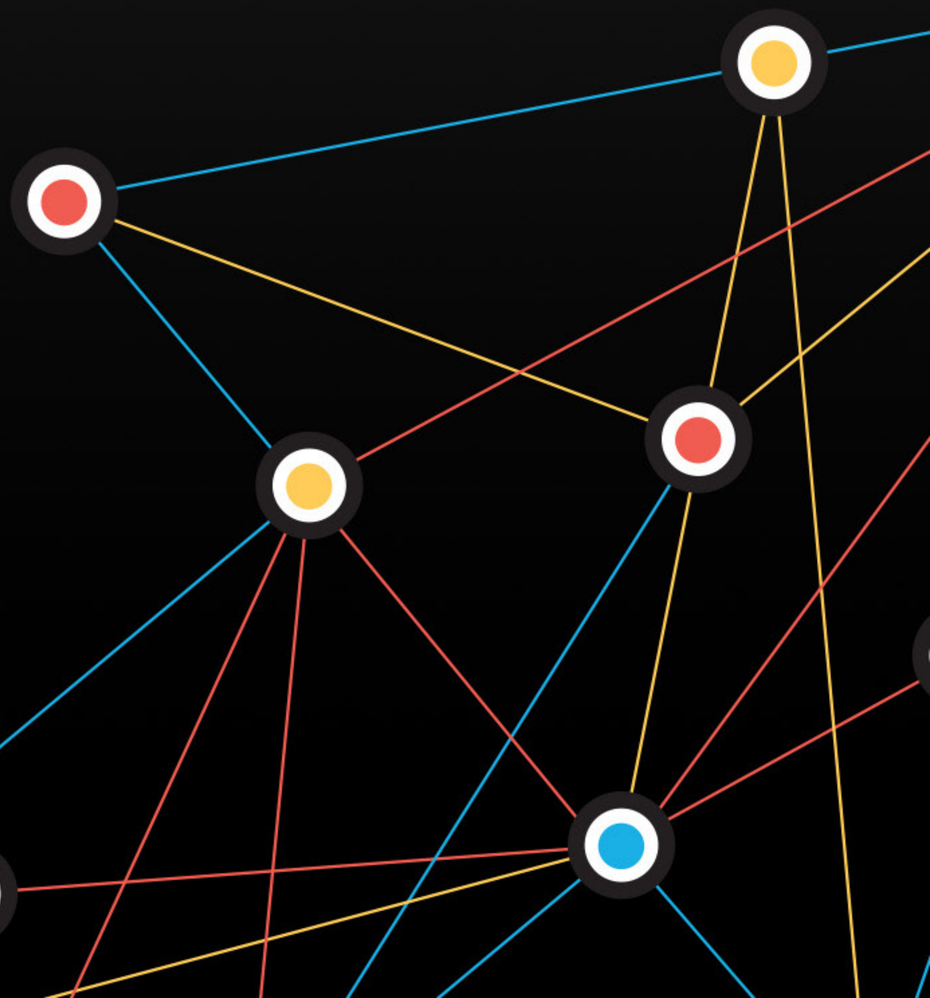
According to Aber, “For example, if we see that across our highest-potential integrations the usage/adoption averages about 50% of the TAM (Total Addressable Market), but one of them is only at 15%, that tells us something may be wrong from a value or product integration perspective. Then the product team can go in and start dissecting and analyzing what’s going on here to make things right.”

And thus we see the first mark of ELG impact, all the way at the top of your partner funnel. From the moment of partner selection, these data-driven decisions start having ripple effects on how much your partner ecosystem will ultimately move the needle for your business.

These are just a few examples of companies who have successfully integrated ecosystem-led playbooks into key aspects of their business growth. They are doing the work to implement, scale, and sustain these ecosystem-led customer and partner success strategies, building a once-in-a-generation business.

The time to bring ecosystem-led growth to life inside your organization is right now. So let's begin.

Visit RobertJMoore.com and Crossbeam.com



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