New Research Examines Why Most B2B Companies Cannot Trace Revenue from Channel Programs

Data from 200+ channel programs supports channel intelligence as a solution to the B2B attribution crisis.

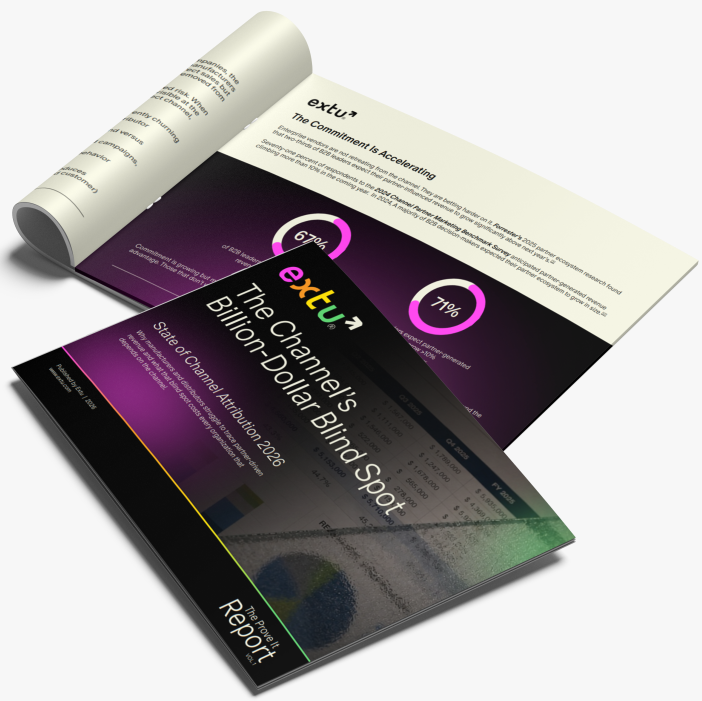

Image of new report by Extu - The Channel's Billion Dollar Blind Spot

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, June 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Many business-to-business (B2B) companies cannot trace which channel partners are driving their revenue, according to a new report from channel software provider Extu. This revenue attribution crisis is costing manufacturers and distributors millions of dollars in wasted sales and marketing investment. Extu’s report, The Channel's Billion-Dollar Blind Spot: The State of Channel Attribution in 2026, draws on data from Extu’s 200+ channel partner programs and published research from Forrester, Omdia, McKinsey & Company, and the Incentive Federation, to examine the causes and costs of the attribution crisis, as well as a recommended solution: channel intelligence, or the ability to connect partner behavior signals to revenue outcomes.

About the Report

There are 261+ companies in the channel software market, which is projected to reach $13.48 billion by 2028. Despite this, 57% of channel marketers still struggle to clearly track how partners are performing and 59% lose data when switching between solutions. The report identifies five major causes for this: B2B companies relying on attribution models and software built for business-to-consumer (B2C) environments; partner data fragmented across disconnected tech stacks; incentive spend deployed without a closed-loop connection to revenue; partner marketing activity that is invisible to manufacturers before transactions; and attribution models built on pre-privacy-regulation assumptions, now strained by restricted data collection and new partner types further complicating sales cycles.

> Until the industry stops applying a linear model to a non-linear problem, the attribution crisis isn't going anywhere.”
> *Nichole Gunn, CEO of Extu*

"Most B2B companies use attribution tools that were built for a linear, B2C marketing set-up. The channel doesn't work that way because B2B companies don’t own all their sales and marketing data by default. Until the industry stops applying a linear model to a non-linear problem, the attribution crisis isn't going anywhere."
— Nichole Gunn, CEO, Extu

The report establishes the solution to the B2B attribution crisis as channel intelligence: the ability to connect partner behavior signals to revenue outcomes by integrating partner data that is typically siloed across disparate sales and marketing systems. Channel intelligence also acts as the connected data foundation that allows effective AI to function, something that most organizations don’t yet have even as AI investment accelerates across B2B industries.

Key Findings

Partner activation is the first signal to predict revenue outcomes. Across Extu’s top accounts, programs with 90%+ activated partners (meaning partners actively participating in the program) generate five times more leads than programs with activation rates below 75%. The behavioral signal precedes the revenue outcome and predicts it consistently enough to be actionable.

Extu’s partner-executed campaigns outperform industry benchmarks by a wide margin. Extu platform data shows partner-executed email campaigns generate an average click-through rate of 30.4%, compared to the 1–3% average. Most companies running channel programs never see this data because their tools don't connect partner marketing activity to measurable outcomes.

When incentive and marketing data exist in the same platform, ROI is significant. Among Extu-managed programs where incentive spend and downstream sales data share a common operating environment, documented sales ROI ranges from 5:1 to 69:1.

The report provides diagnostic questions companies can use to determine their position on a four-level attribution maturity spectrum, with suggestions on creating a unified data environment that makes channel intelligence possible.

"We have programs on our platform earning 69:1 in documented sales ROI. The organizations seeing those returns aren't spending more than their peers. They're measuring partner performance differently because the marketing and sales data they need is all in one place and they can make investments accordingly."
— William Shida, President & COO, Extu

The full report is now available for download on Extu’s website.

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