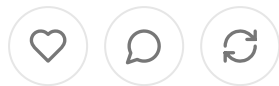


Strategic Partnership Guide for Healthcare Startups: Navigating Epic, HealthEdge, and Cognizant Collaborations

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Introduction

Strategic partnerships can be a catalyst for startup growth. This guide provides tactical advice for healthcare startups aiming to partner with industry giants: Epic on the provider side, and HealthEdge and Cognizant on the payer side. We'll explore

partnership strategies with a particular focus on leveraging shared customers to native integrations.

I. Pre-Partnership Preparation

1. Define Your Value Proposition

- Conduct a thorough SWOT analysis of your startup
- Identify unique technological advantages or innovative solutions
- Align your offerings with the specific needs of Epic, HealthEdge, or Cognizant
- Highlight potential benefits of native integration for end-users

2. Market Research and Positioning

- Analyze the current integration ecosystem for each potential partner
- Identify gaps in their offerings that your solution can fill
- Prepare market sizing and potential impact studies
- Map out shared customers or prospects who could benefit from integration

3. Technical Readiness

- Ensure your solution is scalable and interoperable
- Develop robust APIs and follow industry standards (e.g., FHIR for Epic)
- Prepare detailed technical documentation and integration guides
- Design your system with future native integrations in mind

II. Building a Groundswell of Shared Customers

1. Identify Strategic Targets

- Map out customers or prospects who use both your solution and the core vendor platform
- Prioritize customers based on their influence with the core vendor and potential impact

2. Develop a Compelling Integration narrative

- Create detailed use cases showcasing the benefits of native integration
- Quantify potential ROI for customers, including time savings and improved outcomes
- Prepare case studies of successful integrations with other systems

3. Incentivize Customer Advocacy

- Design a program to offset integration costs for pioneering customers
- Offer discounts on your services in exchange for their advocacy with core vendor
- Provide additional support or features to early adopters of integrated solution

4. Facilitate Customer-Vendor Discussions

- Help arrange meetings between your shared customers and core vendor representatives
- Provide customers with talking points and data to support the integration case
- Offer to participate in discussions to address technical questions

III. Leveraging Late-Stage Pipeline Opportunities for Integration

1. Analyze Your Pipeline

- Review your late-stage sales pipeline, identifying prospects using target core systems (Epic, HealthEdge, Cognizant)

- Prioritize opportunities based on deal size, likelihood to close, and potential long-term partnership
- Create a matrix mapping pipeline opportunities to core systems for a clear overview

2. Develop Integration-Focused Value Propositions

- Tailor your value proposition to highlight the benefits of potential integration with their core system
- Quantify the additional value the prospect would gain from a native integration
- Prepare ROI models that include both immediate benefits and long-term advantages of an integrated solution

3. Engage Prospects in Integration Discussion

- Introduce the concept of joint integration initiatives during late-stage sales conversations
- Highlight how their participation could give them a competitive advantage in their market
- Offer exclusive benefits or priority feature development in exchange for their partnership in the integration effort

4. Structure Joint Approach to Core Vendors

- Propose a collaborative approach where your startup and the prospect jointly engage the core vendor
- Draft a joint value proposition that emphasizes benefits for all parties involved
- Prepare a detailed integration request, including technical requirements and potential use cases

5. Develop a Co-Funding Model

- Create a transparent cost-sharing model for the integration project
- Offer to subsidize a portion of the integration costs through discounts on your solution or services
- Consider a tiered pricing model where the prospect receives increasing benefits based on their level of investment in the integration

6. Mitigate Prospect Risks

- Develop contingency plans to address potential integration challenges or delays
- Offer guarantees or performance-based contracts tied to successful integration
- Provide case studies or references from similar integration projects to build confidence

7. Leverage the Integration for Closing the Deal

- Position the integration initiative as a value-added component of your overall offering
- Use the prospect's involvement in shaping the integration as a differentiator from competitors
- Emphasize the long-term partnership aspect, going beyond a simple vendor-customer relationship

8. Plan for Post-Sale Integration Execution

- Establish a joint project team with clear roles and responsibilities
- Develop a detailed timeline for the integration process, aligned with the prospect's implementation of your solution
- Create a communication plan to keep all stakeholders informed throughout the integration process

9. Utilize Success for Future Opportunities

- Document the entire process, from initial discussions to successful integration
- Create case studies and success stories highlighting the benefits realized through the integration
- Use this success as a template for approaching other pipeline opportunities with core vendors

By strategically leveraging your late-stage pipeline opportunities, you can create powerful synergy between your sales process and integration initiatives. This approach not only increases the likelihood of closing deals but also accelerates your path to establishing critical partnerships with core system vendors. It positions your startup as a forward-thinking, customer-centric organization committed to delivering integrated, high-value solutions to the healthcare market.

IV. Approaching Epic (Provider Side)

1. Navigate the App Orchard with Customer Support

- Leverage customer relationships to strengthen your App Orchard application
- Encourage customers to communicate their need for your solution to their Epic representatives
- Use customer testimonials to bolster your value proposition

2. Build Epic-Specific Expertise

- Hire or train staff with Epic certification and implementation experience
- Understand Epic's development frameworks and integration points
- Develop a proof of concept that demonstrates seamless integration with Epic workflow

3. Leverage Epic's Network and Customer Base

- Attend Epic's user group meetings and conferences alongside your customer

- Identify and connect with key Epic customers who could benefit from your solution
- Encourage satisfied customers to share their experiences at Epic events

V. Approaching HealthEdge (Payer Side)

1. Align with HealthEdge's Ecosystem through Shared Customers

- Study HealthEdge's core offerings, particularly their HealthRules platform
- Identify complementary functionalities that enhance HealthEdge's value proposition
- Work with shared customers to demonstrate how your integration streamlines their operations

2. Demonstrate ROI for Payers with Real-World Data

- Create case studies showcasing cost savings or efficiency improvements from integrated solutions
- Develop financial models that illustrate the impact of native integration on claims processing, member engagement, or risk adjustment
- Use data from pioneering customers to strengthen your case

3. Engage Through HealthEdge's Partner Program with Customer Backing

- Reach out to HealthEdge's business development team, referencing customer interest
- Prepare a compelling partnership pitch that aligns with their strategic objectives supported by customer testimonials

- Offer to facilitate discussions between HealthEdge and interested shared customers

VI. Approaching Cognizant (Payer Side)

1. Understand Cognizant's Healthcare Focus and Customer Needs

- Research Cognizant's healthcare IT consulting services and solutions
- Identify areas where your startup can enhance Cognizant's offerings to payers
- Collaborate with shared customers to develop use cases that demonstrate how your integrated solution complements Cognizant's digital transformation initiatives

2. Navigate Cognizant's Partner Ecosystem with Customer Advocacy

- Explore Cognizant's existing partnerships and integration points
- Identify key decision-makers within Cognizant's healthcare vertical
- Leverage customer relationships to gain introductions and credibility within Cognizant

3. Demonstrate Scalability and Global Relevance Through Customer Success

- Highlight your solution's potential for international markets using customer testimonials
- Showcase your ability to handle large-scale implementations with reference customers
- Develop a roadmap that aligns with Cognizant's long-term healthcare strategy informed by customer needs

VII. Fostering Native Integrations

1. Understand the Core Vendor's Integration Process

- Research each vendor's typical approach to building native integrations
- Identify key decision-makers and technical leads responsible for integration projects

2. Prepare a Comprehensive Integration Proposal

- Develop detailed technical specifications for the proposed integration
- Outline potential resource requirements and timelines
- Highlight the mutual benefits of native integration for the vendor, your startup, and shared customers

3. Leverage Customer Influence

- Coach shared customers on how to effectively request native integration from core vendors
- Provide customers with templates for formal integration requests
- Offer to co-present the integration business case to core vendor leadership

4. Co-fund Integration Development

- Design a co-funding model where your startup, the core vendor, and the customer share integration costs
- Offer to contribute development resources or expertise to expedite the integration process
- Consider creating a pool of funds from multiple customers to finance the integration project

VIII. Post-Integration Execution

1. Dedicated Partnership and Integration Management

- Assign a dedicated team to manage each core vendor relationship and integration
- Establish clear communication channels and escalation procedures
- Develop joint KPIs and regularly review integration performance with both core vendor and shared customers

2. Continuous Innovation and Improvement

- Maintain an agile development approach to quickly address partner and customer needs
- Participate in joint R&D initiatives to enhance integrations
- Stay ahead of industry trends and proactively propose integration enhancements

3. Leverage Integrated Solutions for Growth

- Develop co-marketing strategies with each core vendor, featuring customer success stories
- Utilize integrated solution references to penetrate new market segments
- Explore opportunities for expanding partnerships into new product lines or geographies based on integration success

Conclusion

By focusing on building a groundswell of shared customers and leveraging their influence to drive native integrations, healthcare startups can create powerful partnerships with industry leaders like Epic, HealthEdge, and Cognizant. This customer-centric approach not only provides a compelling case for integration but also ensures that the resulting solutions truly meet market needs. Success in the partnerships requires strategic customer engagement, meticulous preparation, a commitment to creating value for all stakeholders in the healthcare technology ecosystem.

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