

# DOs & DON'Ts FOR YOUR FIRST PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

## DOs ✓

- Research what FIs have done partnerships before & check references
- If you're pre-product – create a visual prototype for selling purposes
- Be strategic in assembling your advisory board / BOD to leverage for partnership process

- WHY do we need a regulated partner and vice versa?
- WHAT is our long-term strategy?
- HOW do we want the partnership to operate?

## DON'Ts ✗

- Expect anything other than a long, expensive and cumbersome process
- Forget about asking other fintechs for advice along the process
- Bet everything on 1-3 bank leads – mitigate your risk and exposure

## PREPARATION

- WHO is our ideal customer?
- WHAT is our selling & value propositions for the users, buyers and influencers of our solution?
- HOW do we find the right person to talk to?

- WHY are they really interested in engaging with us?
- HOW could the partnership model look like?
- WHAT are our and their risks?

- WHAT are the potential risks for strategic, cultural, technical, product-market and legal fit?
- WHAT happens when there're delays?
- HOW does success look like and then what?

## DOs ✓

- Have a pre-POC workshop with everyone in project team and do mutual onboarding
- Agree on a time-boxed project plan, with milestones, responsibilities and resource allocation defined
- Leverage your ambassador to take internal battles for shortcutting bureaucracy where possible

## DON'Ts ✗

- Forget to ask for feedback constantly – instead surprise them with your agility and speed of delivery
- Down in due diligence – in addition to the required audit, focus on toughest questions first
- Get paid for product development (creates IP conflicts)

## DOs ✓

- Identify who is the buyer (has mandate/budget) and anchor you engagement there throughout process
- Start with Mr. Right Now (not Mr. Right) & prioritize learning over revenue
- Stay mindful of balancing your time regarding relationship building and wasted innovation theatre

## FINDING THE PARTNER

## DON'Ts ✗

- Engage with FIs that have third-party infrastructure provider without a validated bypassing/integration plan
- Always try bypass innovation units and accelerators – use them strategically and leverage exposure/credibility
- Sell to the people that your solution 'replaces'

## JOINT EXPLORATION

- WHAT is our minimum-viable-process & product?
- HOW do we deal with legal and compliance?
- WHO is our pilot customers, users & buyers?

## DOs ✓

- Prepare for a cumbersome and expensive due diligence process, explore sharing of cost/risk with FI to align incentives
- Agree on the KPIs upfront that defines success and gets you the commitment needed
- Have clear plan for how to deal with the 10x of stakeholders and feedback

## DON'Ts ✗

- Do any unpaid pilots – it should be paid and charge for additional consultancy hours
- Scope your pilots too short – you often need 3-6 months to get credible KPIs

## PILOT

## DOs ✓

- Understand their buying process (don't push your selling process) and remember B2B is still person-to-person
- Map their value drivers for your solution and how to tap into existing KPIs & strategies
- Ensure everyone is on-boarded/aligned on the nature of startup partnership (vs. negotiating with IT supplier) & don't neglect importance of culture

## DON'Ts ✗

- Assume they have the answers – do come with a process for how to find them
- Have isolated engagements with innovation dep. without fair compensation
- Give any prices upfront – always co-create them as part of joint business case

- HOW to ensure continuing engagement and scaling?
- WHAT does the evolution of our product and business mean for the partnership & business model?

## DOs ✓

- Establish clear KPIs and track throughout launch process
- Have a support setup where the FI (IT/power users) can be first-line of support and additional support requests are bundled to you through 1 point of contact
- Use your hype to initiate more partnerships across the org and with new FIs

## DON'Ts ✗

- Expect all attention to be on your launch – there're always multiple internal transformations ongoing
- Do a launch without a scaling plan in place

## LAUNCH & SCALE

