

# AGILE FIT-FOR-PURPOSE STAFFING MODEL:

Aligning Alliance  
Talent for Performance

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**While Alliance experts have come a long way in defining the requisite skills and competencies of Alliance and Collaboration talent, in practice, we still see significant gaps in achieving the planned business outcomes of our partnership investments.**

Despite the growing reliance on the alliance function for revenue growth and innovation support, it is well understood that 60-75% of alliances fail to meet their objectives. In part, this is often a byproduct of misalignment between the required skillsets and personality traits of Alliance personnel applied across distinct stages of a partnership or alliance lifecycle.

To accurately select and predict the ability of talent to succeed in Alliance and Partner Sales roles, a more nuanced staffing model is needed that focuses on aligning all three of these areas: skill-sets, personality, and the unique phases of alliance lifecycles. At ARM Partners, we call this model the **Agile Fit-for-Purpose Staffing Model**.

## THE ALL TOO FAMILIAR CASE OF HAVING MISALIGNED TALENT»

Both large and emerging technology companies routinely recruit Alliance talent from direct Sales and Channel management roles. Having validated successes selling defined solutions and managing existing accounts and partners, these representatives are routinely repositioned into Alliance or Business Development assignments without consideration of whether they also possess the other competencies demanded in collaboration-based roles. Compounding the challenge, senior leadership often assigns goals to build net-new strategic, cross-functional partnerships with top-tier OEMs and with expectations of reaching incremental revenue exceeding \$100m. As a result, not only are these individuals misaligned to the types of experiences and competencies needed to succeed, they are also driven by overly ambitious or misaligned performance expectations.

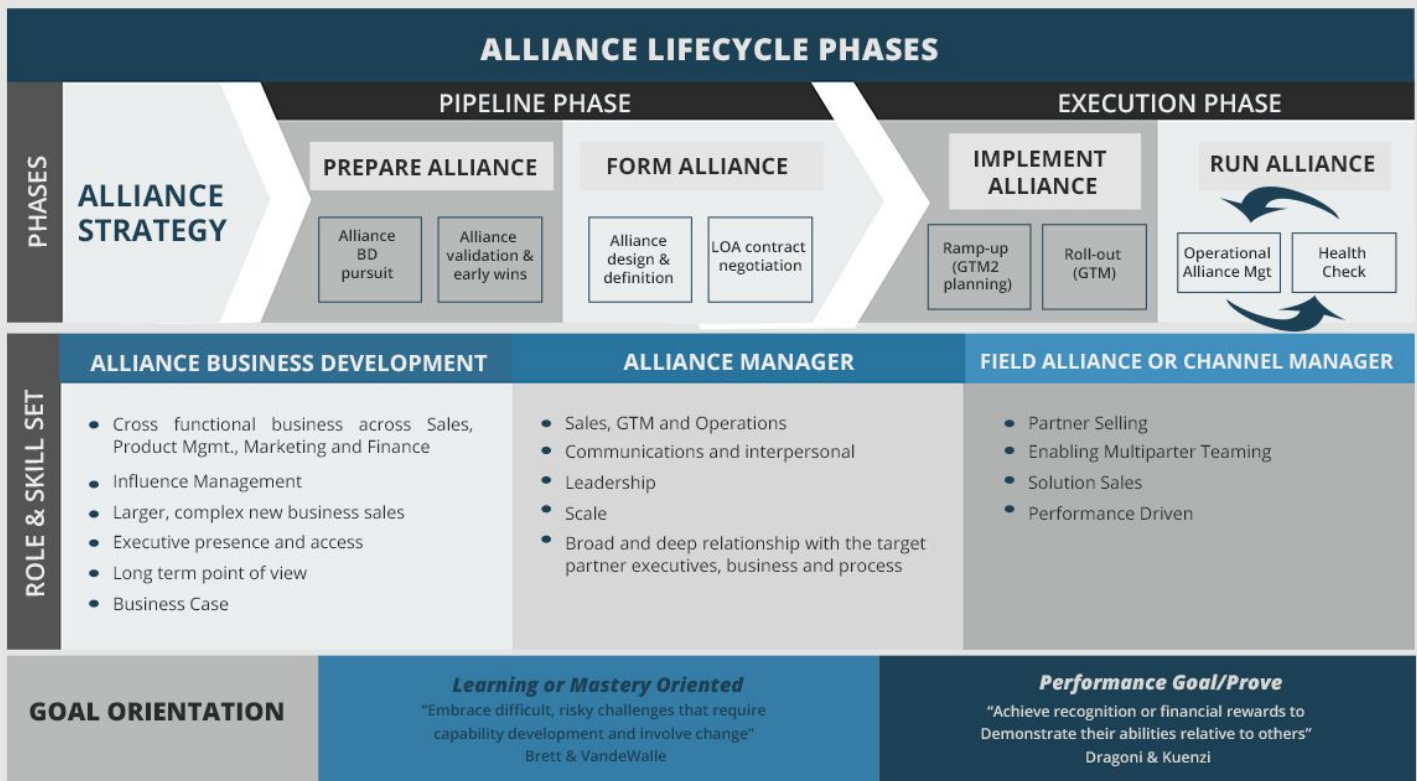
Candidly, companies with the long-term DNA of successful collaboration functions, such as Cisco, HPE and IBM, have strong leadership mentors, internal professional development roadmaps and training that can mitigate absent skillsets and experience specific to new Alliance development needs. Additionally, outside organizations such as the **Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals (ASAP)**, which provides access to focused Alliance training, best practices, and professional development guidelines, can help motivated professionals complement a company's alliance development programs and overcome experience deficits. As the statistics demonstrate, however, alliance success without alliance-specific skillsets and experiences is a rarity rather than a commonality.

# THE AGILE FIT-FOR-PURPOSE STAFFING MODEL »

Building and recruiting leaders with comprehensive collaboration skills and competencies is only one piece of the larger Alliance puzzle. Alliance success also requires identifying and aligning resources across two key dimensions: the development stage of the target partnership(s) across an Alliance lifecycle and the optimal leadership skill sets and experience needed to produce desired outcomes through each stage.

At ARM Partners, our **Agile Fit-for-Purpose Staffing Model** is designed to help you recruit and align your collaboration resources in a highly malleable approach determined by where the partnership(s) sits across the Alliance lifecycle and the overall relationship as it is advanced.

**Chart A:** *Agile Fit-for-Purpose Staffing Model—Applied to Alliance Management Roles*





# IMPLICATIONS OF TALENT PERSONALITY AND GOALS »

Beyond resume skill-sets, research suggests innate personality characteristics, such as performance-motivated or competitive personality types, might drive success in a field alliance or channel sales roles but may lack the characteristics needed to develop and grow a new Alliance, such as the desire for consistent collaboration. An **Agile Fit-for-Purpose Staffing Model** looks to further align Alliance roles with personality and goal-orientations. For example, prospective talent can be assessed to ensure a future Alliance leader tasked with forming a new alliance innately seeks to embrace high-risk challenges and are entrepreneurial in developing skill-sets as needed in real-time.

While early phases of the alliance lifecycle call for leaders to possess a stronger learning than performance orientation, these needs often change as the alliance moves through negotiations and into later implementation and operational phases. Moreover, depending on the objectives of the alliance, different needs in these leaders' personalities and competencies can also become evident. Through our **Collaborative Research Alliance**, ARM Partners is developing and utilizing next-generation technology assessments to evaluate personality characteristics, which, when combined with Alliance-expertise, can identify and predict the ability of future leaders to drive Alliance performance and stability in the case of these various complexities.

<https://www.thearmpartners.com/download-view/role-choice-and-alliance-manager-behaviors>

## REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS AND IMPACT

With the number of Alliances and Ecosystem oriented models dramatically expanding, companies can no longer afford the costly and stagnant approach of mapping Alliance and Partnership generalists to one partner or group of partners. Indeed, the activities and competencies required in forming a net-new Strategic Alliance across multiple potential internal and external intersection points (joint strategy, solutions, marketing, supply chain, business-case development, etc.) can be quite different than those required for managing a mature operational alliance or channel partnership(s) with set solutions and playbooks.

To address our earlier misaligned talent example, we would suggest that organizations seeking to form and build material strategic new partnership(s) would optimally seek formative Business Development and Alliance leaders with proven executive presence and skill-sets across strategy, influence management, contract negotiation, finance, and technology. The need for these types of leaders is even more important in the case of innovation-aimed alliances. On the other hand, in the case of mature Alliance or Channel Manager needs, leaders who are driven by performance metrics and possess a highly competitive orientation are likely to be more successful recruits, especially once aligned for specific Alliance life-cycle phases according to the ***Agile Fit-for-Purpose Staffing Model***.

“**Expanding Collaboration  
is the NEW NORMAL for global  
technology businesses.**

**INNOVATIVE LEADERS will want  
and require the ability to  
respond to the exponential  
scope and pace required.”**

We believe that structuring collaboration teams against the variables captured in our model will allow companies to dynamically respond and achieve the outcomes they desire.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**TIM STEELE**

*President and Founder of ARM Partners.*

Prior to forming ARM Partners, Tim enjoyed a broad foundation of alliance leadership experience with both larger Fortune 100 size companies, including CA Technologies, IBM, Motorola, and Siemens, along with entrepreneurial venture and private equity-backed companies. A performance-driven senior executive with broad international experience and domain expertise in technology services, Tim created ARM Partners to help his clients leverage his domain expertise and network. To ARM Partner clients, Tim brings his history of instituting a repeatable and pragmatic alliance framework that delivers positive business outcomes for the business and partners while promoting profitable growth for clients.

# ABOUT ARM PARTNERS



ARM PARTNERS

Worldwide technology executives leverage ARM Partners to build, operate and optimize tailored collaboration opportunities. Our executive advisors supplement your teams with expert insight, frameworks, and an industry-wide, partner network to help grow your unique ecosystem. Disruptive leaders leverage ARM Partners to systematically plan, implement, and manage collaborative partnership programs for scalable business growth.

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