

The contributions matrix

To provide a little structure to your initial meeting with a prospective partner, a contributions, needs and benefits matrix can be a very helpful tool. This matrix is basically a 3 x 3 matrix as the example below. In the matrix you simply list the contributions for your partner and for you, you list the needs for your partner, yourself and the customer and you list the benefits for all three parties.

	Partner	You	Customer
Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

This matrix will create an overview of how the partnership is balanced and will help answer the question everyone will at first be looking for: “What’s in it for me?”

The best way to use the matrix is to come prepared to the meeting by doing your homework. Fill in the matrix before the meeting with your view of the partnership, then discuss it with your partner and adjust where possible. It will help to create clarity quickly and it will help to build trust with your partner.