

We went in to show DCN to Sarah's technical arm. We came out with an invitation into Adobe's FY27 Partner Experience roadmap, and a cleaner road to sales ops than a demo would have given us.

Sumant Guha owns the martech and data layer behind the Partner Experience Hub. He has been in Adobe's partner org for ten years, came up through experiential marketing at George P. Johnson and EMC, and now carries a new mandate: turn partner engagement data into predictive, next-best-action insight at the user and account level.

Kevin, Jon and Sumant. Scheduled for 35 minutes, ran about 40, with a hard stop and one network drop. No demo. Discovery conversation only.

THE ONE THING THE TEAM NEEDS TO KNOW

This was not the call we expected, and that is fine. Sumant is not the DCN buyer and said so himself: *"I may not be the right person to answer that... I can include somebody from the sales ops team."* DCN is built for sales ops. **What he does own is the thing Adobe is writing right now:** the FY27 Partner Experience roadmap and requirements, due end of October, with PwC in discovery alongside. We can help shape it before it locks, through workshops and working concepts, at no cost. That work puts us inside the data layer sales ops will draw on, which is why it leads to sales ops rather than away from it.

"At this point of time, this is owned by the sales ops team, but I'm sure, as we move forward, it is going to be a common layer when it comes to the data."

SUMANT GUHA · ON WHY THE TWO CONNECT

End of October

FY27 roadmap and requirements clear. Not a launched product. He corrected that himself at the end of the call.

A team of three

Sumant, one remote employee in India and two temps on event infrastructure. Everything else is borrowed from Ensemble and Kyle's SMEs.

Q4 budgets frozen

No money is moving. Free senior capacity is the only kind of help he can say yes to right now.

WHAT HE IS TRYING TO FIX, IN HIS OWN WORDS

Rearview reporting	<i>"Every report... always takes into account the things what those companies have done in the past. Which is more of a rearview mirror view."</i> Their scoring today weights engagement (webinars, training, Hub content, downloads) and rolls it up to an account-level engagement score. He called ours prescriptive and theirs descriptive. That is the gap.
The long tail	The objective is <i>"helping those uncovered or unmanaged partners to register their first deal with us."</i> Same shape Tony described: a handful of partners covered by people, everyone else served by nothing.
Silos	<i>"That has been a kind of legacy problem with the Adobe. Everybody is working in silos."</i> Sales ops, program and experience are each building their own version of partner intelligence.
What he asked us for	<i>"I just wanted your guidance... your recommendation in terms of we moving ahead with the kind of data capabilities what we have built."</i> Guidance, not a product. That is the door.

THE ORG MAP, AS OF THIS CALL

PERSON / GROUP	ROLE	WHY THEY MATTER
Sumant Guha	Sr. Manager, Partner Engagement & Experience	Our way into the PX Hub roadmap. Bangalore-based, works US East Coast hours. Wants guidance, not a product.
Sarah Lacey	Leads Partner Experience	Still the champion. Sumant takes this back to her first.
Lisa Hudson	Partner programs, services and engagement	The Q1-to-Q4 pull-in story belongs with her and Mike, not Sumant.
Sales ops	Owns Partner IQ	The real DCN buyer. Built on Crossbeam plus ZoomInfo and others. Poor adoption; now building a simpler conversational UI on top.
PwC	Six-week discovery, low-cost India team	FY27 recommendations land around end of October. Our workshops should feed their output, not compete with it.
Ensemble	Build partner (Vlad; Kyle as advisor)	Built the Dynamics schema, Marketo and AEP audiences, and the Web SDK on the PX Hub feeding CJA. In discovery on GenStudio for content velocity.
Mike Neumann	NA Sales VP	Separate track. In Houston this week; Kevin and Mike go deep on his accounts when he is back.

Route: Sumant to Sarah, then a separate sales ops session with the ask coming from the top. His words: "If the communication is coming from top, then there is more seriousness."

THE SALES OPS PROBLEM, SAID BY AN INSIDER

He brought up our Delta demo example unprompted, and he used it to describe their attribution gap:

"It could be possible that Accenture might have helped in registering that deal with Delta... but it could be also possible that Ensemble was somebody which has helped in implementing that... and that has been a biggest question mark for us."

SUMANT GUHA · ON THE DATA SALES OPS CANNOT SEE

That is the DCN thesis, and it's the same story as Tony's Deloitte at Nike. The contribution is real and it's invisible. Keep it for the sales ops meeting, where it belongs. On Partner IQ he added: *"The adoption rate has been really poor, and it could be also because of the complexity when it comes to the user interface."* Every co-sell tool dies the same way, when the seller stops opening it. That's The Filter showing up in someone else's product.

CROSSBEAM

This confirms Sarah's 9 September call and Kyle's warning: sales ops has put real money into mapping Crossbeam data into Partner IQ, and it's embedded in their process. Our position doesn't change. Crossbeam answers who overlaps, and we start at the matched row. **Do not bash it.** We are not replacing the mapping. We are providing the experience that makes it actually work, and we can take in their Crossbeam data if Adobe wants that.

Landed

The videos. He watched the 11-minute walkthrough and read it as far more mature than what they have, because it "takes into account all the other pieces."

Currency. The Daylight and Merck story, and partner SAs as resources that don't add to Adobe quota. He followed it.

No cost, give-get. In a frozen Q4, that's the only offer he can accept.

Journey mapping. It fits exactly what he asked for.

Not reached

The demo. The hard stop and the network drop ate the time. He has not seen the collaboration layer live, and that's fine, because it belongs in the sales ops session.

Q1-to-Q4 pull-in. No reaction. He isn't a revenue guy. It goes to Sarah, Lisa and Mike.

Multi-brand, single interface. Strong point, little reaction. Hold it for Sarah, who has lived the partner side.

THE OPENING, AND HOW WE TAKE IT

1 Workshops before requirements lock

Journey mapping sessions built around one question: what does a partner actually need from the PX Hub to register a first deal? Sessions come after the NDA, and well ahead of end of October. Our output should make PwC's recommendations stronger, not second-guess them. If we look like a second opinion, we're a threat. If we feed their work, we're an asset to Sumant.

LEAD WITH THIS

2 Working concepts, in concert with Ensemble

Workshops surface the needs. Then our team turns them into live concept views that Sumant's team can click through, react to and mark up, so the requirements Ensemble builds against are sharper than a PRD alone would make them. **Ensemble builds, we iterate.** We are not a second build team, and nothing we make goes to production. The payoff for Ensemble is cleaner specs and fewer rework cycles. It costs Adobe nothing extra and it costs Ensemble nothing at all.

HOLD THIS LINE

3 Sales ops gets its own meeting, through Sarah

That's where DCN, the Delta attribution gap and trust in action get shown live. Don't let it bleed into the PX Hub thread. The PX Hub work earns the introduction. Sumant has already offered to have Sarah make the ask from the top.

SEPARATE TRACK

+ Revenue stories go to revenue people

The Q1-to-Q4 pull-in and the forecast lift go to Lisa and Mike. Sarah's own pain point from Kyle's brief, spiiffs that arrive too late, is the same argument from the experience side, so she'll hear it too.

HOW WE DESCRIBE THE CONCEPT WORK OUTSIDE THE TEAM

"Working concepts" or "live concept views." Quick, and built in concert with Ensemble. Our tooling and how fast we produce them stay internal. Nobody at Adobe or Ensemble needs to know how we build them, only that they're quick and they're right.

COMMITMENTS MADE

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Call notes and next steps to Sumant, with the working-concepts tease	Kevin	Drafted, going out now
Connect with Sarah on our role	Sumant	This week

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Walk us through the data foundation, the PwC work and the Data Insight Engine roadmap	Sumant	Early next week
NDA in place before any PRD or Experience Hub review	Kevin, via Sarah	Before that session if possible
No-cost tech stack review, journey mapping workshops, working concepts	Kevin and Jon	After the NDA, ahead of end of October
Ask Sarah to bring in the head of sales ops	Sumant	Separate track
Deep dive on Mike's accounts	Kevin	After Houston

He also offered informal access to the engineers who built the backend. That's valuable, so handle it quietly. Don't put it in writing to Sarah, and don't name them upward. His next US trip is February or March at the earliest, so Indianapolis is the in-person play, not Sumant.

POST-CALL: JON AND KEVIN

Jon's read	<i>"He's definitely not the right person, but he's like very involved with the discovery process... he's not the decision maker."</i> Agreed. He is the right person for the PX Hub work, and that's the door we're taking.
The Ensemble risk	Jon raised the conflict of building in parallel to what Ensemble is engaged to do. Kevin's position is that we don't know what they've built yet, they're still in discovery, and we stay complementary. Kyle is the bridge. Preview the concept work with Kyle before Vlad hears it from anyone else. If Ensemble learns about it from Sumant first, "augment" starts to sound like "compete."
Commercial model	At \$5,000 per partner per year paid by the brand, Adobe's ~852 partners come to about \$4.3M a year. ClickHouse's ~1,200 partners come to about \$6M. Partners pay separately for additional brand connectors. This is directional only. Check the partner counts before it goes on a slide.

JUDGEMENT CALLS FOR NEXT WEEK

Bring an agenda, not a deck	Sumant asked for guidance. Walk into his session with a proposed workshop agenda and one open question about partner needs. Save the product for sales ops.
Tease, then show	One line about working concepts in the follow-up. Show the first concept only after a workshop has earned it, and always frame it as "in concert with Ensemble."
Get the NDA done first	We can't review the PRD without it, and nobody at Adobe should get exposed for showing it to us.
Play the long game	Same advice as Sarah's brief. A slow design partnership beats a fast yes. His end of October date is a reason to move quickly, not a reason to push.