

RingCentral[®]

**LOOK
BOOK.**

2021

Partner Programs

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LOOKBOOK:

A Sign of the Times

By any standards, 2020 has been the most transformative year in the last century. The way we live and work has changed dramatically, to the point where ideas, images, and concepts taken for granted in 2019 may no longer make sense.

Take, for example, images of people working. Prior to 2020, we might show a group of well-dressed individuals standing around in a well-lit office building, all “collaborating” around a computer (and definitely not social distancing). Normally, this sort of imagery coupled with the term “collaboration” would be unnoticeable and almost expected corporate creative.

Now, let’s take a look at the above creative with the lens of 2020, COVID-19, and work from home culture in mind. Suddenly, what would be a normal way to present the idea of “collaboration” doesn’t work, because currently, that is not how our society collaborates. As a matter of fact, I would argue that traditional corporate advertising would have the effect of making certain people very uncomfortable, which is definitely not what we want.

Let’s expand this idea a little further. Consider a few other seemingly normal activities in 2019 that are now the source of discomfort, sadness, or anger. Football games. Movies. Vacations. Weddings. Images that would normally evoke a positive response now could produce emotional responses that are best left separate from the RingCentral brand.

In short, when the world gets turned on its head, our creative strategy needs to evolve. If we don’t, we’ll get caught with, at best, ineffective creative. At worst, we could turn off some longtime RingCentral Champions.

This Lookbook seeks to document the changes in the way we talk about ourselves as the RingCentral Partner Program, and give us a unified strategy moving into what will likely be an equally unpredictable year.

—Max Schosid, Senior Manager, Partner Programs

PART 1

Identity and Voice

The most important question that an organization can ask themselves is, “Why do we exist?” Though this question, taken at face value, might seem heady and philosophical in nature, for organizations, it is crucial for their continued success.

Should the answer of this question remain the same day after day, year after year? Probably not. Most organizations pivot in their products, priorities, and intended audiences. Nintendo, for instance, started as a playing card company. Pivot much?

The work represented in this part is an essential step in designing new creative, as all the creative ideas will relate back and refer to our updated value proposition statement. Likewise, it also informs our newly-updated Partner Team Style Guide, also included in its entirety in this section.



Partner Team Identity

Previously stated Ringcentral Partner Program value proposition:

No hassle, big payouts, happy customers—RingCentral’s award-winning and frictionless Partner Program enables partners to maximize their success by allowing them to leverage no-cost training and certifications, meaningful partner events, and impactful marketing programs that consistently generate leads.

Updated RingCentral Partner Program value proposition:

A one-size partner program does not fit all. RingCentral empowers partners like you with the tools, resources, and flexibility to run your business your way. Whether you want to own the entire sales process, simply hand off the lead, or be involved somewhere in between, RingCentral’s Partner Program offers unparalleled choice. Add on our no-cost certifications, industry-leading partner events, and world-class subject matter experts, and it’s clear why partners consistently Think RingCentral First.



Style Guide

How NOT to start your writing

As a rule, don't start anything, written or otherwise, with a definition.

As soon as you hear the words: "Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines," you can be certain that something boring will follow. The dictionary approach has been the bane of best man speeches, third-grade debate clubs, and anything you're likely to write down. So just don't.

That said, allow me to start with a definition:

Writing is nothing more than the visual representation of the spoken language.

I say this because too often issues of style occur when writers forget this mind-numbingly simple fact. The truer you are to the spoken word, the fewer problems you'll have.

I advise writers to write the way they wish they could talk. Think Aaron Sorkin dialogue or all of the clever things you wish you could have said in hindsight—pauses and ums excluded.

I also started with a definition to make a point. Writing rules are made to be broken, so long as you know what the rules are, why you're breaking them, and what effect doing so will have on the writing. If you must choose between writing naturally and being grammatically correct, write naturally. And then read it aloud to prove it.

Finally, I opened with a definition to take a risk. Why? Because if your writing is stale or you're afraid of being original, you've completely missed the tone and brand of RingCentral's Partner Program.

Sure, this style guide will offer plenty of writing rules that you can break at your own peril. You'll even find rules that you should follow for the sake of consistency across the organization. But what you'll find most are guidelines, exceptions to the rule, and a healthy dose of common sense.

Grammar and style are tools, not shackles. This guide will teach you the difference.

Let us begin.

—Colin Hacker, Partner Program Content Lead

On Style and What Makes for Good Writing

If you walk away learning only one thing from this style guide, let it be this:

Follow the Golden Rule of Content.

What is the Golden Rule of Content?

Never send out something you wouldn't want to receive.

If what you're writing doesn't add value to the intended audience, don't write it, and certainly don't send it. Either find a way to add value, or save yourself and the reader time.

A kind estimate is that more than half the content that gets sent out in the marketing world doesn't rise to this basic standard.

To avoid the mistake yourself, ask, "If I were in the shoes of my intended audience, would I find value in this?"

The best content is urgent, unique, useful, and (dare I say) fun. At the very least, the reader should find the content worth the time they spent reading it.

If the project doesn't yet live up to the Golden Rule of Content, keep tinkering.





What factors determine writing style?

When composing sentences, writers are essentially balancing three elements of style:

1. **Clarity**
2. **Economy**
3. **Musicality**

Clarity is how easy the writing is to understand.

Economy is using the fewest words necessary to convey meaning.

Musicality is how those words sound next to each other.

It's important to understand that if you go overboard with one element, the other elements will likely suffer.

If you're too focused on clarity, you're likely to impact the musicality of the words.

If you write too lean, you're likely to damage both the clarity and musicality.

And if you're overly focused on musicality, you're likely to become long-winded and insufferable.

The balancing act between these three elements is the art of writing. But let's say you don't aspire to write the Great American Novel. Instead, you'd just like to send out an email that isn't embarrassing. Then ask yourself the following questions, as they are sure to improve your style:

For clarity, ask: **"Have I written this in the simplest way possible?"**

For economy, ask: **"Is every word in the sentence contributing meaning?"**

And for musicality, ask: **"What does this sound like out loud?"** (And then read it aloud, of course)

Asking these three questions will strengthen your writing and help you avoid most pitfalls.



On Voice and Tone

Voice is the personality of what you have to say; tone is how you say it.

The voice of the partner program should remain consistent. For us, it's playful, witty, and fun.

Why?

Because most of our communications are to partners. These people know us and like us. For that reason, we're much more familiar in our communication style than corporate marketing, who might be sending out an email to someone who has never heard of RingCentral before.

That said, remember to use common sense and to match the tone to the occasion. Don't break bad news with a flippant tone and don't act somber when you have something exciting to say.

Writing Rules to Live (or Die) by



DO NOT hit the spacebar twice after each sentence

For the love of all that is good, do not hit the spacebar twice after each sentence. The practice of double hitting the spacebar is a holdover from the days of typewriters, where you needed to hit the spacebar twice after a period or you would crowd the first letter of the next sentence.

If you're still using a typewriter, by all means doublespace. If not, you're just creating more work for your copy editor, who has to go in and delete each extra space.

Avoid cliches like the devil

Cliches tend to violate the rules of clarity and economy. Once clever, these phrases have lost all meaning with their overuse. Avoid them and come up with original ways of saying things.

Don't mix your metaphors

The only thing worse than cliches is using cliches to mix metaphors. I might be going out on a limb here, but I caution you to nip this habit in the bud. See how lame that sounds?

Long words or short?

Never use a long word when a short one will do. Why? Because long words are harder to understand and tend to violate our guiding principle of clarity.

Better yet, ask yourself, "What is the most accurate word?"

Avoid expressions in foreign languages

Looking for *le mot juste* [the right word]? Find it in your own language. Choosing phrases from other languages doesn't make you sound literary; it makes you sound pretentious.

The exception? Foreign words that have entered common use like faux pas.

The guiding question: "Could I say this word or phrase aloud to another person without them rolling their eyes?"

Active vs Passive Voice

No doubt you've heard the advice to write in the active voice and avoid the passive. Wrong! You should write in the active voice when it's appropriate, and write in the passive voice when it's not.

First, which is which?

They all loved him. (subject doing the acting, verb, thing acted upon)
He was loved by all. (thing acted upon, verb, subject doing the acting)

When to use the active or the passive voice?

95% of the time you should write in the active voice. Why? It's usually harder to visualize the action (the verb) if you don't know who is performing it (the subject).

However, use the passive voice when you want to avoid responsibility (like when mistakes are made), or you want to emphasize the recipient of the action more so than the person who performed it. Naturally, this depends on context.

For example, "He was loved by all" would likely sound better in the context of a funeral, where the emphasis is on the person who died, not the people there to mourn.

Likewise, don't confuse standard "to be" verb constructions with the passive voice.

Writers often try to make all of their writing in the active voice and kill off these natural turns of phrases.

Dickens wouldn't go with, "The times were the best; the times were the worst," and neither should you.

Use common sense. Go with what sounds best and where you'd like to place the emphasis in the sentence.

And what about starting a sentence with a conjunction?

Go ahead, start a sentence with a conjunction. But what about those grammar books?

Again, write the way you would talk. In the real world, people start sentences with conjunctions all the time.

And sentence fragments like this?

Sentence fragments lack a verb related to the subject, but that doesn't mean they don't imply them. Not only do people speak in sentence fragments all the time, they can also be powerful in the right situation. Very powerful.

Why so serial (comma)?

Also known as the Oxford comma.

A great debate rages among writers and editors (and no one else) over whether to include the serial/Oxford comma. What is it, you ask?

It's the final comma in a list (series) of items.

For example, you should use the serial comma because it improves clarity, takes up very little space, and it's what we advise in the partner program.

Dropping the serial comma is merely the habit of tyrannical newspapers, who were trying to cut extra characters so that they could fit more copy on the page. If you drop the comma, you can sometimes confuse your readers with something like this:

Bill and Ted brought the dogs, Abe Lincoln and Socrates.

Are the dogs called Abe Lincoln and Socarates? Or did Bill and Ted bring the dogs, as well as the historical figures Abe Lincoln and Socrates? Hard to say.

When should you not use the Oxford comma?

When you're writing for a newspaper or a magazine, in which case you should follow their house style.

Acronyms

The first time you introduce a word that is to be replaced with an acronym, spell it out and put the acronym in parentheses after it. Then use the acronym for the rest of the writing.

Example: The partner account manager (PAM) is responsible for reaching out. You can reach your PAM at the following number...

Exceptions: Common acronyms like NASA, where they are known more for their acronym than their full name. These can be written in acronym form with no further explanation.

And don't put periods between acronym letters. It looks weird.

Time and Date

Unlike acronyms, a.m. and p.m. should be lowercase and have periods between them.

And know your locale for proper date format.

US dates are written January 1, 2021.

UK and AU dates are written 1 January 2021.

Ending a sentence in a preposition

This is a rule you should feel completely comfortable stepping *on*.

People end sentences with prepositions all the time, in natural conversation and in writing.

As Winston Churchill once joked, "This is the type of arrant pedantry up with which I will not put."

Don't twist yourself into convoluted sentences like that. Trust me, this isn't a rule you want to get tripped up *by*.

Contractions

If *you'd* make it a contraction saying it out loud, then write it down as a contraction.

To write or not to write, THAT is the question.

Avoiding the word "that" in your writing is yet another silly rule foisted on us by newspapers.

Newspapers like to cut out all instances of "that" because it shortens the character count, which allows them to fit more pennies in what they pay writers and allows them to fit more "news" into the paper.

In the partner program, we don't care about that.

Instead, if you would say "that" in a sentence out loud, then write *that* down on paper.

Gender neutral pronouns

Many grammarians would tell you that when referencing a singular, non-specific person, either choose the gender of either pronoun and be consistent, alternate the gender of the pronoun throughout the work, or use the awkward construction of “he or she.”

These approaches are awkward at best and sexist at worst.

Instead, use the singular they when referring to a non-specific person that could be of either gender.

Example: Ask anyone on the content team about gender-neutral pronouns, and *they* will tell you to use the singular they.

Jane Austin and Shakespeare used the singular they, so can you.

Exclamation points

Go ahead! Use exclamation points to convey enthusiasm. It makes you sound human and is common in emails, where the writing is more informal and it's difficult to convey tone.

But with all things, use common sense.

Don't overuse exclamation points, and don't use them when the tone needs to be more formal and sober.

And when you use an exclamation point, make sure that the sentence is actually exciting! Otherwise, it defeats the purpose! See what I mean?

Rules are made to be broken

I haven't met a writing rule that I haven't taken great pleasure in breaking. But half the fun in sinning is knowing that it's a sin. So if you're going to break a grammar rule, do it for a reason, and do it for effect.

Take time to avoid word echoes and rhymes

Unless you're writing a jingle or poem, leave word echoes and rhymes alone.

What are word echoes? Word echoes are when you repeat the same word too frequently, often in the same sentence or paragraph.

Example: *Writing* down the same word too frequently can make your *writing* sound awkward, *right*?

That said, don't get overly creative trying to find synonyms to avoid a word echo, especially if the synonym reduces clarity.

To catch word echoes and rhymes, simply read your writing aloud.

Save the best for last

End your sentences with a bang—always save the best part of the sentence for last.

Err...let's try that again:

Always save the best part for last—end your sentences with a bang.

PART 2

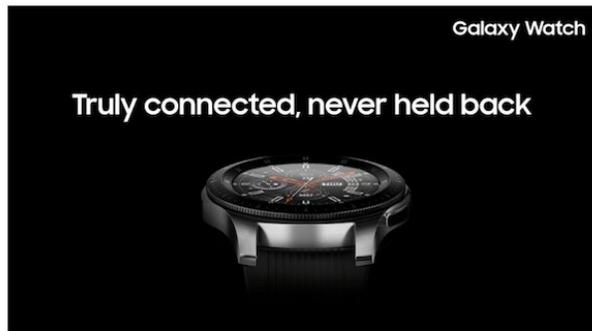
Industry Trends

What is considered to be “Good Design” is often dictated by invisible forces of the cultural Zeitgeist. While we are updating our own brand identity, we always have an eye on the major trends we are seeing in the world of design, to ensure that our look and feel is always on the cutting edge.



Minimalism

Stripping down design to its most essential elements, minimalism continues to catch our eye with the use of simple shapes, uncluttered text and empty space. Proving that less is more.



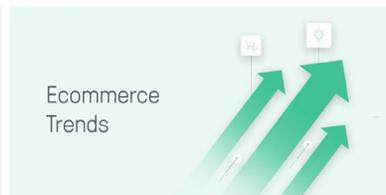
Authentic Photography

You want people to believe in your brand, and using authentic photography can help build that credibility. Whoever your audience is, using images of everyday experiences and events that are instantly recognisable and believable will immediately establish their trust. You remove the risk of a competitor using the same shot and avoid any cringe-worthy captures being turned into an embarrassing meme, which might just see you gaining attention for all the wrong reasons.



Neutral Colors

Replicating our environment's natural palette, neutral colors are one of the easiest and most effective ways to evoke an organic, natural feel in your designs. In addition to the soft browns, beiges, whites, and greys that come to mind when you think 'neutral', faded pinks, blues, and greens can also be great additions to your neutral palette. When paired with brighter colors, neutral colors can also help make bolder hues appear more vibrant.



PART 3

Creative Themes

The following creative themes are the result of writing with our value and style identified in Part 1, as well as the industry design trends identified in Part 2 squarely in mind.

These creative studies revolve around our two major creative offerings: Virtual Events (formerly webinars and in-person events, now combined to align with how our program has updated), and Partner Promotions. While they are studies, they are designed in a way that any creative design could be deployed as it is represented or with minor adjustments to design or headline copy.



Virtual Event Themes





RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

Learn about the New Law of the Jungle.





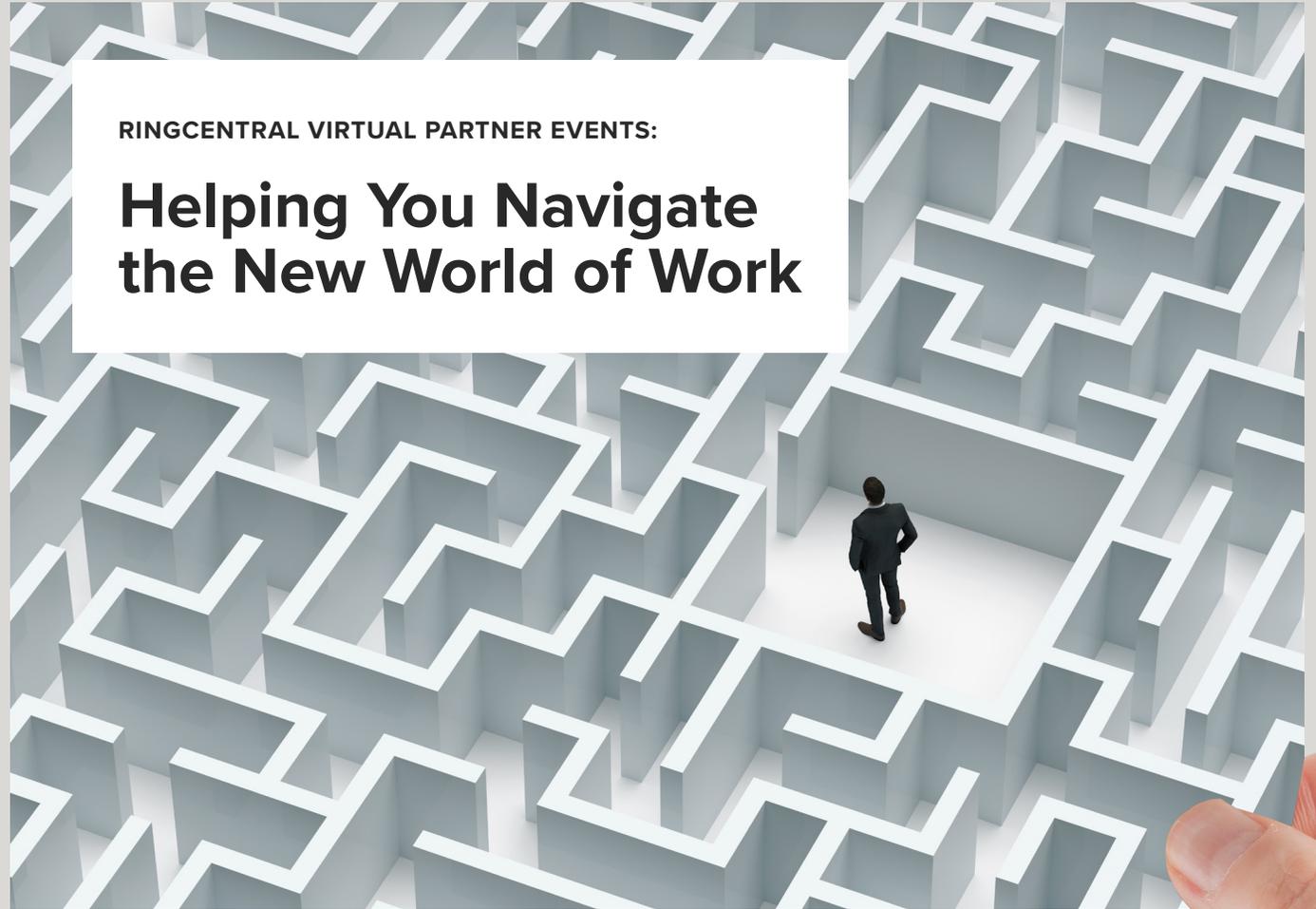
RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

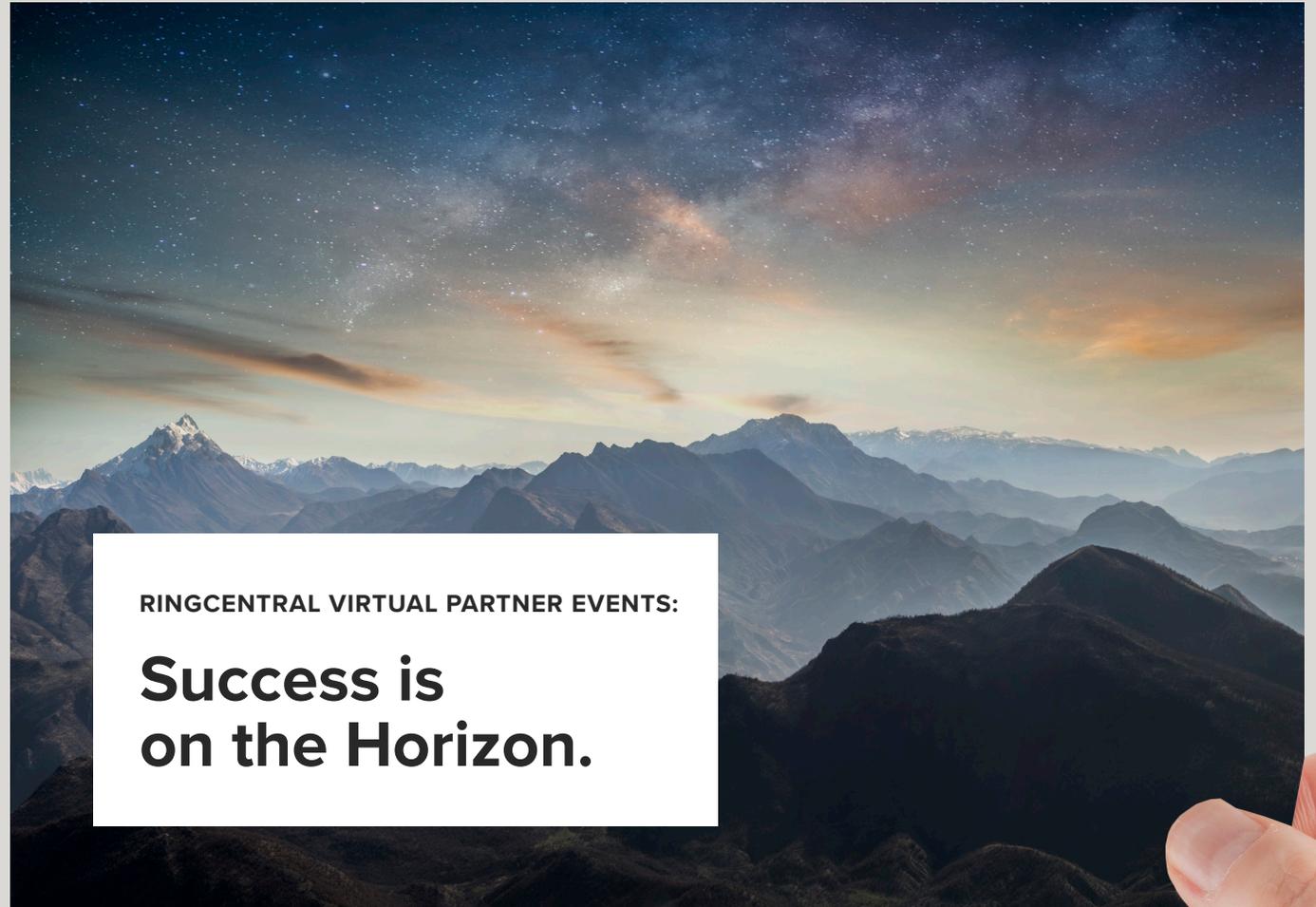
Know Your Next Move



RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

Helping You Navigate the New World of Work





RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

**Success is
on the Horizon.**



RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

**Time to Rev Up
Your Business!**



RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

**2021: Enhanced Focus.
Unstoppable Drive.**





RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:

**Where We're Going,
We Don't Need On-Premise PBX.**



RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL PARTNER EVENTS:
Teleport to Success!

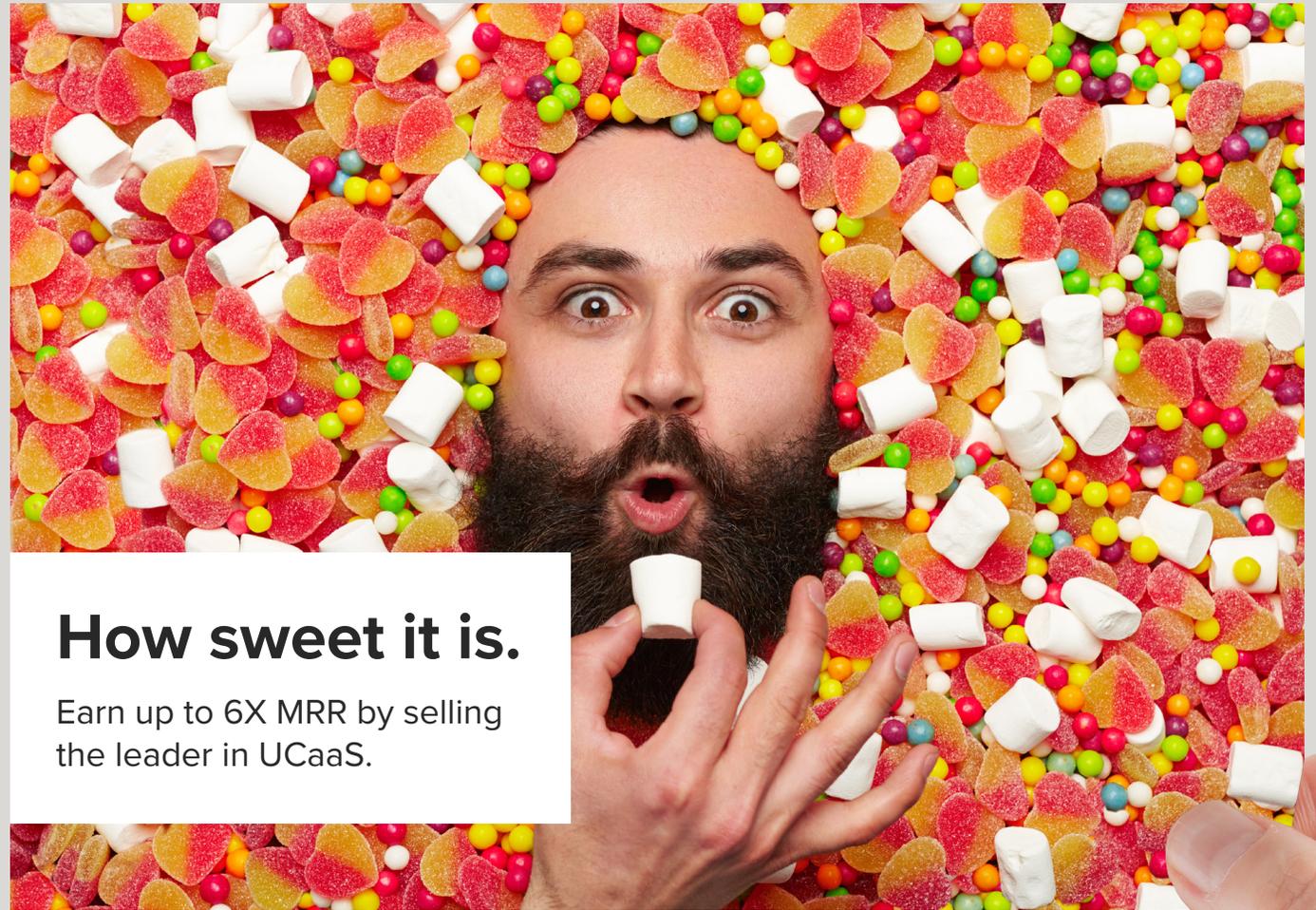


RINGCENTRAL VIRTUAL
PARTNER EVENTS:
**Skyrocket
Your Sales.**

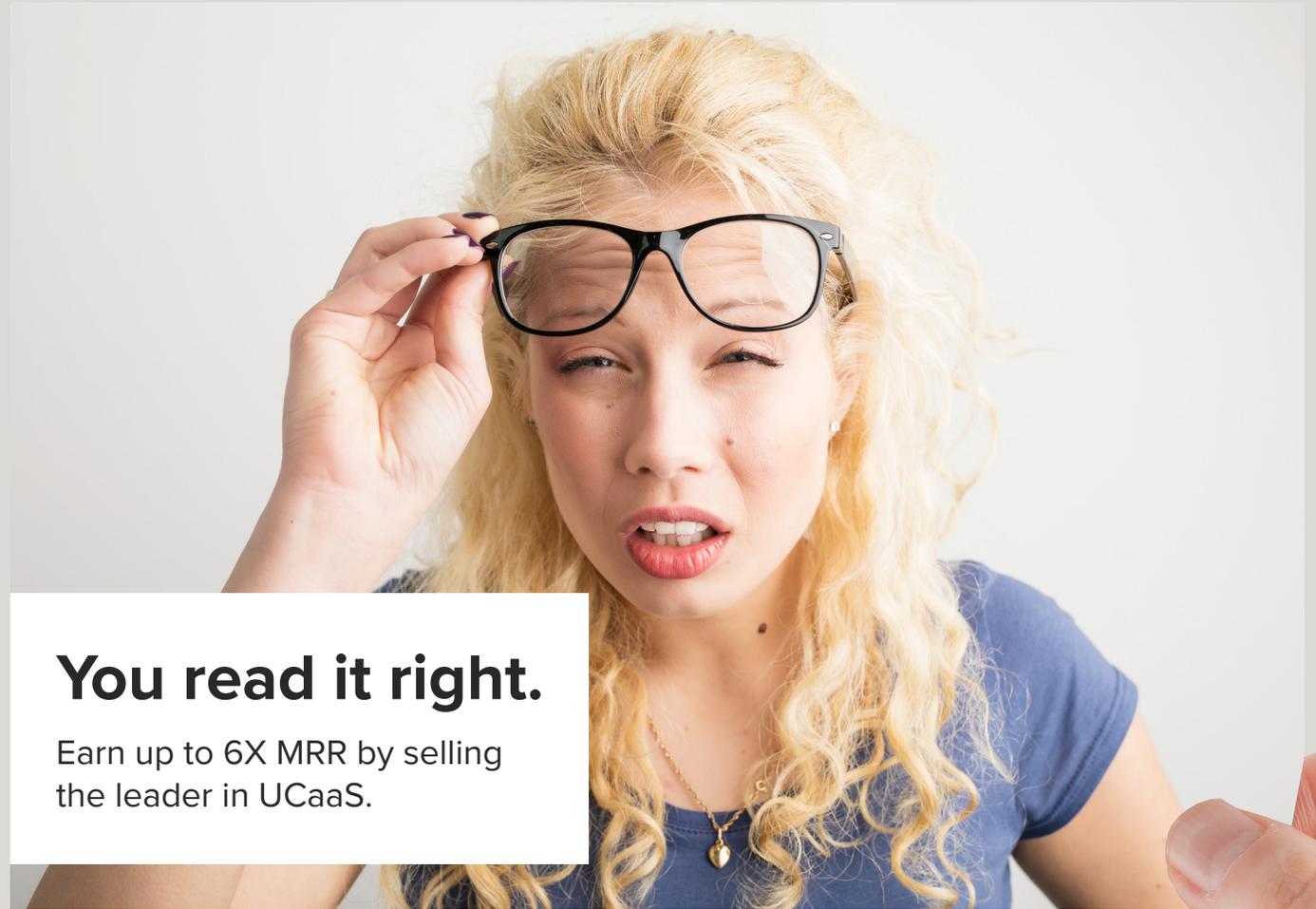


Partner Promotions





How sweet it is.
Earn up to 6X MRR by selling
the leader in UCaaS.



You read it right.
Earn up to 6X MRR by selling
the leader in UCaaS.



Clean House with RingCentral!

Earn up to 6X MRR by selling
the leader in UCaaS.



Rake it In.

Earn up to 6X MRR by selling the leader in UCaaS.



What a knockout!

Earn an additional 1x MRR
with RingCentral IGNITE.



**With 6x MRR,
you get a
bigger slice.**

6x Marks the SPIFF!





6x MRR?

Now that's worth smiling at.



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Partner Programs