



SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

Sharpen Your Focus with Ingram Micro's Vertical Advantage

Research shows that choosing a vertical specialization is one of the best ways for IT solution providers to raise their game. Ingram Micro's Vertical Advantage gives partners the tools they need to succeed in the most lucrative specialized industries.

LEARN

Inventor Alexander Graham Bell said it best: "The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus."

In a crowded IT services market with a growing number of commoditized technologies, solution providers increasingly find they can no longer be all things to all customers. The answer for many is to transition away from general technology product sales and find an area of business expertise in which to specialize.

This move from transactional reseller to provider of business-focused solutions in specialized markets has numerous provable benefits. Focusing on a fertile vertical space gives partners an edge in revenue and growth, according to the most recent SMB 500 research compiled by Ingram Micro's Business Intelligence Center and U.S. SMB business unit and channel research services firm The 2112 Group.

Ingram Micro SMB 500 solution providers serving the top 11 vertical markets enjoy a 60 percent three-year average growth in spending with Ingram Micro, well above the overall list average of 43 percent for partners already among the highest-performing in the channel. Solution providers with no vertical focus averaged annual growth of about 36 percent over three years, the research found.

Leading the pack are partners with a legal services focus, whose growth averaged 87 percent. That segment is followed by public-sector VARs, with 70 percent growth. Other notable verticals include:

- **Retail**—64 percent
- **Education**—54 percent
- **Finance**—54 percent
- **Healthcare**—52 percent

Partners with strong vertical acumen understand their clients' systems and processes, as well as their regulatory compliance and risk management burdens, their competitive pressures, and their unique business needs. Every touch on a vertical client — from security services and networking to backup and disaster recovery — builds deeper, specialized insight and greater customer entanglement, the keys to the long and successful recurring-revenue relationships that are the cornerstone of success in modern IT services.



SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

INNOVATE

In many ways, transitioning to a vertical focus defines the evolution from IT reseller to true solution provider. Partners crafting a vertical practice move past product-based, transactional sales models to focus on high-margin solutions that deliver specific business outcomes aimed at meeting the customer's unique operational needs.

The move to vertical specialization requires nuanced changes to many areas of the IT solution provider's offerings and the way they're marketed and sold. Marketing teams need to speak in a new vernacular. Sales must revolve around different calendars and buy cycles. Technologies become components in solution sets that target highly specific pain points. And delivering high-value services means being fluent in the workflows and business processes of a singular industry.

Ingram Micro's Vertical Advantage services are purpose-built to address such issues. Put simply, Vertical Advantage helps solution providers become specialists. Assistance is available to partners venturing into new practice areas such as healthcare, legal, finance, retail, education, and public-sector IT.

Vertical Advantage features dedicated program managers that can help partners research solutions and proactively support those partners as they expand their vertical businesses. Business development resources are also available to help solution providers craft strategic plans for a new practice. Ingram Micro's in-house marketing arm, Agency Ingram Micro, can assist with vertical market development, business intelligence, demand and lead generation, creative services, events, and media engagement.

The enablement services from Ingram Micro Vertical Advantage include assistance with the technical aspects of a specialized practice, including:

Computing, Storage, and Software: Vertical Advantage is backed by Ingram Micro's Advanced Solutions organization, which helps partners sell and support complex server, storage, data management, security, and virtualization solutions tailored to address the needs of key verticals. **Networking and Data Security:** Every vertical industry has its own needs for security and data loss protection. Ingram Micro Vertical Advantage guides partners through the full range of vertically focused security solutions in a way that lets partners "talk the talk" of client industries.

Cloud and Managed Services: As a master cloud service provider, Ingram Micro helps partners speed the configuration, provisioning, and management of vertical-specific cloud technologies. Ingram Micro Vertical Advantage partners get access to a global marketplace, expertise, vertical solutions, and enablement programs to help build cloud-enabled vertical practices that stand out from the competition.

Mobile Computing: Ingram Micro provides a full line of vertically targeted mobile solutions, including tablets, printers, software, and support. Whether touch-screen displays in a doctor's office or tablets in a classroom, these industry-specific mobility offerings help partners



SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

demonstrate their in-depth knowledge of the client's unique business needs and position themselves as a go-to trusted advisor.

Physical Security: Many vertical organizations such as hospitals, banks, schools, and government offices require stringent security and access control in and around their facilities. Ingram Micro helps partners design, sell, and support IP-based video surveillance and access control solutions for most major vertical implementations.

Of course, no package of vertical enablement services would be complete without the force-multiplying ability to augment existing services capabilities in support of a vertical practice. Ingram Micro Professional Services offers industry-specific services that help partners increase vertical services revenue, extend geographic reach, expand their vertical services portfolios with reduced risk, and acquire new business at reduced cost.

“This move from **transactional reseller to provider** of **business-focused solutions** in specialized markets has numerous **provable benefits.**”

GROW

As vertical practices mature, partners gain new insights into the industries they serve — their trends and terminology, their regulatory compliance and risk management challenges, their competitive pressures. Armed with this experience, solution providers can refine their offerings and turn early forays in vertical markets into robust, profitable, and repeatable business solutions that cement the provider's reputation as a skilled and trusted advisor in their industry of choice.

Growing the business requires the partner to stay up-to-date on industry trends and regulatory changes. Maintaining a dynamic vertical practice also means keeping abreast of technology changes and fine-tuning solutions to deliver maximum performance and competitive advantage to the client.

Ingram Micro's Vertical Advantage isn't just a starter kit. Ingram Micro maintains a deep bench of vertical industry knowledge and acumen to help partners establish and grow their vertical offerings for the long haul. Each segment in the Vertical Advantage portfolio features continuing expert help in systems, software, regulatory compliance, marketing, and sales.

Healthcare Advantage

Partners can augment their healthcare IT practices with Ingram Micro's secure, HIPAA-compliant hospital and ambulatory solutions in mobility, EHR, telemedicine, storage, cloud, document management, and consulting/assessment services.



SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

Legal/Finance Advantage

Growth in the legal and financial services verticals means getting comfortable with a variety of highly specialized software and understanding how security and regulatory compliance affect technology initiatives such as mobility and virtualization. Partners looking to take advantage of this high-touch, high-margin space can benefit from Ingram Micro's seasoned team of legal and finance subject-matter experts who understand the nuances of the vertical and wring out its complexities.

Public-Sector Advantage

Federal

Working with Ingram Micro for federal engagements means getting access to a coveted GSA IT Schedule 70 contract, plus a whole lot more. Experts on government technology sales provide RFP support services, as well as contract support and guidance, to help solution providers deal with the intricacies of selling to federal clients.

State, Local, and Education (SLED)

Building out a SLED practice requires a firm understanding of procurement trends in the statehouse, as well as an ear to the ground on emerging technologies in the schoolhouse. Ingram Micro offers dedicated support for SLED partners, with programs to help navigate NASPO cooperative purchasing opportunities and support for state-of-the-art digital curriculum and mobile education resources.

Retail Advantage

Satisfying clients in retail demands a partner that can deliver technology that improves both operational efficiency and the customer experience. Ingram Micro Retail Advantage offers experienced and dedicated resources for advanced point-of-sale systems, mobile payments, Big Data analytics, and digital signage designed to help solution providers thrive in the retail IT space.

For partners ready to take the leap into vertical markets — or those looking to improve existing specialty offerings and grow market share — Ingram Micro's Vertical Advantage delivers technical and professional services, sales and marketing assistance, and the power of long-term relationships with leading hardware and software manufacturers.

Vertical markets represent significant opportunity in the channel at a time when margins from traditional IT sales continue to erode. The high-touch, high-value services of specialized solution providers do more than just drive revenue; they create deeper relationships with clients, the kind that come from being a true trusted advisor.

