

Partner Success Story

2004 NOVELL DISTRIBUTION PARTNER OF THE YEAR



Ingram Micro

The dedicated commitment from Ingram Micro and Novell® to constantly look for ways to enhance their relationship has led to significant opportunities for growth and ultimate business success.

Overview

As the world's largest technology distributor and a leading technology sales, marketing and logistics company, Ingram Micro is at the forefront of the global technology marketplace. A vital link in the technology value chain, Ingram Micro creates sales and profitability opportunities for vendors and resellers through unique marketing programs, outsourced logistics services, technical support, financial services and product aggregation and distribution. In its partnership with Novell, Ingram Micro continues to grow its Novell business while maintaining its position as the leading Novell Authorized Distributor in North America. For its continued leadership, success and dedication to growing its Novell business, Ingram Micro received from Novell the 2004 Novell Distribution Partner of the Year award.

Challenge

Technology solution resellers face significant challenges in navigating their way through the complex maze of information disseminated from the wide array of manufacturers and solution partners that they deal with. Ingram Micro guides its reseller customers through this maze, demystifying and simplifying the technology marketplace. The company assists resellers in bringing together all the different vendor offerings that address their end user customers' needs. They help resellers understand how the solutions will work together in their end user customers' current environments and how they will address those customers' business challenges. They also help the reseller sort through all the associated licensing issues. In essence, Ingram Micro takes the complexity out of information technology purchases. To top it off, when Novell offerings come into play, Ingram Micro has dedicated teams of Novell tech support specialists and licensing experts to make life even easier for its reseller customers.

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Senior Vendor Business Manager
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Ingram Micro and Novell Solution

Since its beginnings in 1979, Ingram Micro has connected technology solution providers with vendors worldwide, identifying markets and technologies that shape the IT industry. The company offers a broad array of solutions and services to nearly 165,000 resellers by distributing and marketing hundreds of thousands of IT products worldwide from nearly 1,400 suppliers. The wide breadth of its vendor relationships enables Ingram Micro to offer resellers complete solutions that include all the hardware and software components that its customers might need.

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Key to this success has been the establishment of tech support and licensing support teams dedicated to the Novell relationship and the comprehensive array of Novell business solutions. “I think the way in which Ingram Micro has structured its support and licensing specialists offers our reseller customers a valuable simplification of what could be complex business solutions,” says Lori Emi, senior vendor business manager at Ingram Micro. “As far as I know, our dedicated model, where we focus both presales and licensing sales team on one vendor only, is different from most of our competition. By having these highly trained Novell resource specialists we provide a significant value to our reseller base.”



Figure 1. Left to Right: Mark Hardardt, Vice President and General Manager, Partners and Channels, Novell, Inc.; Jodi Honoroe, Vice President North America Vendor Management, Ingram Micro; and Ron Hovsepian, Executive Vice President, President Worldwide Field Operations, Novell, Inc.

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In 2004 alone, the Ingram Micro presales engineers dedicated to its Novell business fielded almost 6,000 presales technical support calls from solution provider customers. Through these calls, the Ingram Micro team identified approximately 800 qualified Novell sales opportunities, “More than 90-percent of our tech support calls are presales,” says Emi. “And, I believe our tech support team does an excellent job of suggesting how and what Novell solutions will work, providing solution troubleshooting to our reseller customers from a presales perspective.”

In addition to dedicating a team of engineers to Novell presale issues, Ingram Micro also has dedicated vendor licensing specialists to focus on its Novell business. “Our vendor licensing specialists are constantly trained on solutions and offerings from Novell,” say Emi. “That really allows them be able to help resellers work through the different licensing issues, understand what licensing levels their end users already have, and steer them through the numerous price lists. All of our sales resources work hard to help the reseller get the right Novell products, right part numbers, right SKUs and the right solutions into the ultimate end user’s hands.”

Another critical element to the successful relationship between Ingram Micro and Novell is the open lines of communication that exist between the two companies. “Not only does Novell provide our team numerous opportunities for getting the latest solution and competitive positioning information, but they let us know what’s going on internally to Novell. Also, prior to implementing new programs or operational procedures, they often come to us and their other partners for feedback on how those changes will affect our business and the overall distribution channel. The willingness of Novell to listen to and understand our feedback fosters that feeling of openness and is ultimately very valuable to us as a partner.”

One of the programs that Novell asked Ingram Micro for feedback on dealt with rebates that Novell planned to offer its distribution partners. “They talked to us and worked with us on the structure of the rebate program,” Emi says. “They were very willing to hear our feedback and that’s a quality that we really appreciate. Now that they’ve launched the rebate program, it definitely helps us drive sales and be more profitable.”



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But Ingram Micro doesn't just wait for Novell to come to them for feedback. The company is constantly looking for ways to improve the relationship and ultimately its business success. "We look for opportunities to work with Novell," Emi explains. "We look at areas where we can improve operational efficiencies. We explore business development opportunities that can further grow the business. From a strategic perspective, we look at where we need to take the relationship to be successful."

Of course, the company also looks at and leverages the different opportunities that the array of Novell business solutions offers its resellers and their end user customers. Specifically, Ingram Micro sees the Identity Management and Linux* offerings from Novell as presenting some significant growth opportunities. "I think that both the Identity Management and Linux focuses will

help us capitalize on new opportunities," Emi says. "They give us the ability to reach out to new and existing reseller customers and alert them to the opportunity in this new market based on what they already sell or the type of end users they support."

Results

Both large and small vendors trust Ingram Micro to take their offerings to market. The trust that exists between Ingram Micro and Novell is one of the main reasons that there has been a long standing and successful relationship between the two companies. "Just like in any good partnership, we both have worked together to try to continue to grow the business and work through the ups and downs," says Emi. "Novell is a very valuable partner to Ingram Micro. We look forward to continued progress and growth of business into the future."



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