



INGRAM MICRO SERVICES THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

3 Safeguards To Help Overcome Your Partnering Objections

If you're a VAR or MSP who's ever been burned by a vendor, distributor, or another company that turned into a competitor, the mere thought of partnering might cause you to avoid future partnership opportunities at all costs. The thing is, however, taking a 'no partner' stance actually puts more pressure on your company and could be a major culprit to your flat sales. Working with the right business partner can extend your technical skill set as well as your current geographic reach. Additionally, it can mean the difference between being able to say 'Yes' to a large deal vs. having to turn it down.

At Ingram Micro, we introduced the IM LinkSM (www.ingrammicrolink.com) to help channel companies identify and partner with a network of proven IT specialists. Don't worry, though, we didn't focus on the IT skill set side of the equation only when we built the service network; we also took several measures to ensure partners can use this service with peace of mind. Consider the following:

1. Program Agreement.

Each VAR or MSP that signs up to participate in IM Link must first sign a program agreement, which includes nondisclosure and non-compete clauses that legally bind participants from working directly with end users discovered through other IM Link partners. The program also includes an operations manual all participants agree to follow.

2. Upfront Vetting.

Ingram Micro's team does all the background work to confirm that only qualified service professionals are going on-site to represent your company. If somehow a partner accepts a project, but finds that it's unable to complete a task, we have a dispatch team in place that can reassign the job to another qualified partner to make sure the transition happens in a smooth and professional manner.

3. 10-Star Quality Rating System.

To ensure IM Link continues to be a professional resource for Ingram Micro channel partners, we've built in a service rating system, whereby partners are rated in multiple service categories by end users following the completion of every project. To continue providing IT services in the service network, service partners must maintain at least a 9.0 out of 10 star quality service rating.

In addition to ensuring true partnerships are formed via IM Link, we changed the price structure so that service buyers no longer pay a fee to use the network. Now, a reseller has no financial risk to sign up and try out this service. In addition to serving as a resource to assist channel companies with IT implementations, the IM Link network can be used to help resellers find temporary or permanent employees for their businesses. Unlike a local staffing firm, which may or may not understand

the IT-specific business requirements you seek in a candidate, our resources are very knowledgeable about these matters, plus they cost less than what most local staffing firms charge.

Even if you've had a bad experience in the past with partnerships, IM Link is a tool your business should not be without. We've addressed all the concerns you could ever have with a potential business partner and built in safeguards along the way to ensure these future partners provide your company with all the benefits you want in a partnership without any of the drawbacks.



John Redman, Manager of Professional Services Operations, Ingram Micro

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