



# Channel Sales Take Flight Through Collaboration



By Michele P. Warren

Making Ingram Micro's SMB 500, a list of the distributor's top-performing channel partners, is no easy feat. A company has to demonstrate exemplary growth, expertise, and innovation.

And yet no one solution provider can do it alone. Vendors, other integrators, and distributors make up a tried-and-true ecosystem that can help VARs reach high levels of competency, extend market reach, and fill in skill-set gaps. It's not surprising, then, that many of the most noteworthy SMB 500 list-makers rely heavily on Ingram Micro, especially when it comes to their sales efforts.

On the whole, solution providers on the SMB 500 have a moderate to high degree of interaction with Ingram on sales. Only 10 percent demonstrate a low level of sales collaboration, and among those, not a single one has demonstrated a growth rate of 100 percent or more over the past three years.

By contrast, about 40 percent of this year's SMB 500 channel partners have sales relationships with Ingram characterized as "high touch" or "very high touch." Of the 55 or so in the "high touch" category, 40 (73 percent) are on the top half of the list (1-250).

Visit [www.IM-SMB.com/smb500](http://www.IM-SMB.com/smb500)

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A look at the cream of the crop—at the top five SMB 500 solution providers—is quite telling in and of itself. While the No. 1 partner, Safe Systems, has a normal level of interaction with Ingram on sales, the other four have high or very high levels of sales collaboration with the disty (No. 2, Omega Systems, CAGR: 247%; No. 3, Geelers, CAGR: 225%; No. 4, Automated Data Systems, CAGR: 210%; and No. 5, AvTek Solutions, CAGR: 169%).

The Ingram Micro SMB 500, compiled by Ingram Micro's Business Intelligence Center and U.S. SMB Business Unit, and business strategy firm The 2112 Group, recognizes the sustained growth and business performance of SMB-focused channel partners.

This year's fourth annual Ingram Micro SMB 500 shows the group growing at a compound rate of 42 percent, with the highest-ranking channel partner posting a three-year annual growth rate of 266 percent. The annual ranking is based on the performance of more than 20,000 small-business solution providers operating under the Ingram Micro umbrella, and shows partners growing at rates three to four times the channel industry average and well above the channel average for SMB-focused resellers.

**The collective sales capacity of Ingram Micro SMB 500 members through the distributor is \$505 million and, on its current trajectory, will approach \$3 billion by 2018.**

Ingram Micro offers its channel partners a number of sales-centric services, many of them aimed at shortening the sales cycle. The distributor's Advanced Solutions group boasts more than 30 field-based technical consultants and two multimillion-dollar Solutions Centers. The unit also makes ample professional services and technical training resources available to its integrators and VARs. With Ingram Micro Link, partners have 24x7 online access to IT services experts and additional resources.

"If it's part of the sales cycle, nine times out of ten, Ingram Micro has a resource, service, or solution in play that will help channel partners close more deals," says Kirk Robinson, senior vice president of commercial and global markets at the Santa Ana, Calif.-based distributor, in an online brochure. "Some of our most successful channel relationships started with the partner saying, 'Wow, I didn't know you did that.'"

## ABOUT the Ingram Micro SMB 500 Program

### Ingram Micro SMB 500

The Ingram Micro SMB 500, facilitated by The 2112 Group, tracks and studies the performance of the top U.S. solution providers in the Ingram Micro network servicing small and midsize businesses to provide actionable intelligence for improving sales, revenue, and profit of all companies in the go-to-market value chain.

For more information about the Ingram Micro SMB 500, visit [www.IM-SMB.com/smb500](http://www.IM-SMB.com/smb500).

### Ingram Micro, Inc.

Ingram Micro Inc. is the world's largest wholesale technology distributor and a global leader in IT supply-chain and mobile device lifecycle services. As 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 and mobile solutions, technical support, financial services, and product aggregation and distribution. The company is the only global broad-based IT distributor, serving approximately 160 countries on six continents with the world's most comprehensive portfolio of IT products and services.

For more information, visit [www.IngramMicro.com](http://www.IngramMicro.com).

### The 2112 Group

The 2112 Group is a business strategy firm focused on improving the performance of technology companies' direct and indirect channels through our portfolio of market-leading products and services. We leverage proprietary intelligence with qualitative research, market analysis, tools, and enablement programs. By looking at the technology market from the viewpoint of vendors, partners, and end users, 2112 is uniquely positioned to develop go-to-market strategies that are beneficial to all parties from both a channel and enterprise perspective.

For more information, visit [www.The2112Group.com](http://www.The2112Group.com).