

# Driving partner success in today's new normal

A channel leader's guide



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As end-customers' businesses evolve, so must the channel. Design, implementation, support and maintenance are no longer enough. Customers need trusted advisors that don't just deliver solutions but will ensure their value is fully realised across the organisation. This can be a challenge for many partners – particularly with all that's going on in the world.

Here, we look at how the market is evolving, hear from channel partners about their experiences, and explore the challenges and opportunities of providing these through-life, differentiating services to mid-market and small businesses.

We also introduce Ingram Micro's own extended services proposition – specifically designed to help partners adapt and respond in this fast-evolving new world. There are huge opportunities in change.

**Together we can grasp them.**

# Reflecting on today's new normal



**By Matt Sanderson**  
Chief Country Executive,  
UK & Ireland

On 23rd March 2020, Boris Johnson announced the strictest lockdown measures ever imposed by a peacetime UK Prime Minister. Overnight, everything changed – in the channel and elsewhere.

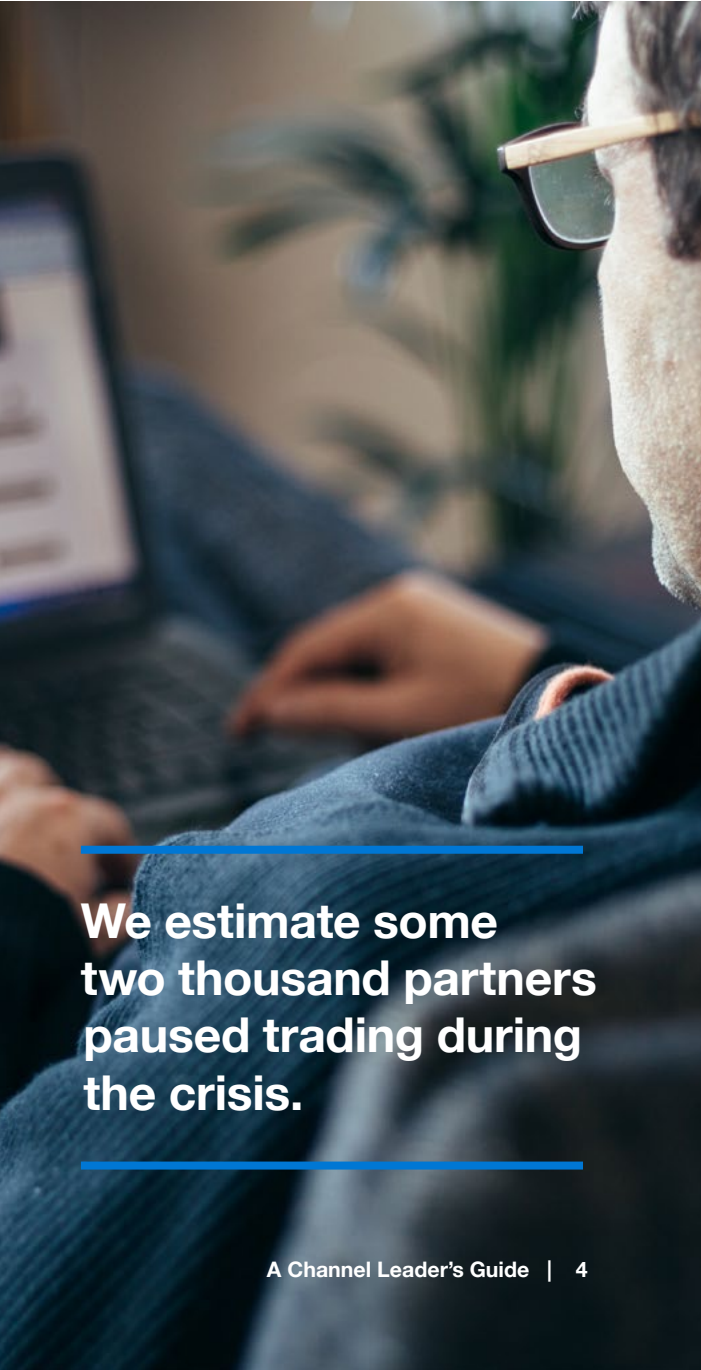
For many of us across the tech sector, the first weeks went by in a blur of customer support as end user organisations shifted staff to remote working models.

This set off a dramatic rise in device sales, unified communications, IP telephony applications and a range of associated services. Together with annuity revenues from ongoing managed service contracts, this helped many channel partners stay in profit.

Others, however, were not so fortunate. We saw partners furlough staff as office closures and enforced social distancing put IT refresh and on-site projects on hold. In all, we estimate some two thousand partners paused trading during the crisis.

As partners look to bring furloughed staff back, there is real concern that Government business support measures may be masking a larger issue.

But while the longer term impacts of the coronavirus crisis are yet to be seen, there is little doubt a down-turning economy, combined with the fast approaching spectre of Brexit, creates significant uncertainties for businesses as we move through the second half of 2020.

A close-up, side-profile photograph of a person with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue sweater. They are looking at a laptop screen, which is out of focus. The background is a blurred office environment with green plants.

**We estimate some two thousand partners paused trading during the crisis.**

## Driving partner success in today's new normal

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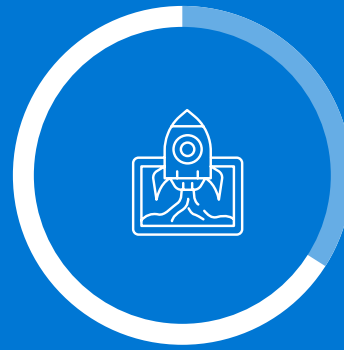
There is some cause for optimism, however. The crisis certainly highlighted the 'enabling' role of IT. Without a solid technology infrastructure in place, businesses would have been unable to support the vast numbers of home workers. As one mid-market partner put it "business owners don't see IT as a necessary evil anymore."

This change of perception is welcome. As is the positive growth through the second quarter, and a 34 per cent growth in investment in tech start-ups through April 2020. Indeed, there are some signs that the technology sector has the potential to play a very significant role in the UK's return to growth.

Whatever happens, it will be important to remain highly engaged with end-user customers. In uncertain times, close relationships are critical. Here at Ingram, we stand ready to help you manage through this period of uncertainty and beyond.

We can help you restart your growth through a range of sales and marketing services, resource your teams with pre-sales, consultancy and professional services expertise, and help build your annuity revenues. With cash king for both partners and end-users, we also offer tailored finance packages to enable (and help close) your deals.

We have a huge range of services on offer, and I urge you to get in touch to see how we can help you win business and grow.



# 34%

growth in investment in tech start-ups through April 2020



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uktech.news/2020-projections-for-uk-tech-sector-growth>

## Three years of change in three months – a fast evolving market

It has been a decade or more since we all started talking digital disruption. In that time we have seen a vast range of important technology trends emerge.

There's the headline grabbing evolutions in artificial intelligence, automation and IoT, and the more established adoption of XaaS. For mid-market and smaller businesses, the latter has really resonated – and with good reason. Why manage IT on premise or through a capex model when you can consume everything as a service?

There are some exceptions, of course – most notably in heavily regulated sectors where business leaders still feel more comfortable holding their apps and data on-premise. Although things are beginning to change, and hybrid models are quick to emerge.



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**Many partners we speak to have delivered three years' worth of cultural and technical change in just three months.**

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While this mid-market move to a cloud-based environment is hardly a new phenomenon, there's no doubt the crisis has proved the value of this changing consumption approach, and we anticipate programmes will accelerate.

Many partners we speak to have delivered three years' worth of cultural and technical change in just three months. And not just in terms of cloud based communication & collaboration platforms (Microsoft 365, Zoom, Cisco Webex, Logmein, Bluejeans etc) licences and UCC deployments. Partners are also seeing larger scale migrations brought forward as customers move to cloud-based versions of on-premise ERP and CRM apps, and invest in more software-defined network and storage to deliver it all.

We have also seen a major spike in demand for high-end devices. IT buyers are now recognising that to support effective and productive home working, people need the right levels of power and speed.

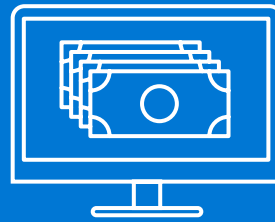
## The managed service opportunity

In all this change the biggest opportunity lies in extending partners' ability to move up the value chain and provide a true end-to-end service – from upfront consultancy to the provision of comprehensive managed services.

For the better informed IT buyer, the value of a trusted partner is shifting from specifying and pre-sales support to deployment and management. For others, particularly smaller businesses, today's dizzying array of technologies and providers makes selection a major headache and the consultative role remains critical.

And for all, the migration to cloud isn't a simple task – as partners know only too well. Aside from the very real issues of data residency, security, and accurate billing, businesses with considerable legacy are going to struggle (and will likely blow through budgets) without expert support.

All of which only goes to highlight the critical importance of partners in helping end-users set the direction and deliver. While there is also a place for reacting to self-specifying customers, partners have a tremendous opportunity to add more value by establishing themselves as expert guides and then, further down the line, as trusted managed service providers.



**No one invests in IT unless they have a problem to solve or an opportunity to gain.**





## Exploring the channel resource challenge

Mid-market and SMB customers want to embrace the enterprise class applications and services now available. But they do need help, end-to-end. Speaking to partners, one of the biggest barriers to maximising these business opportunities is having the available skills and resources in house.

It's certainly not a new challenge but it has been exacerbated in the short term with some partners having furloughed staff. More widely though, the lack of appropriately skilled resources affects the ability of many to provide the kind of through life support end-user organisations need. It also impacts their ability to scale to address customer requirements – particularly with many more businesses looking for nationwide and European coverage.

As we discuss later, this lack of resource doesn't have to be a major barrier to growth, and partners don't have to be experts in everything to deliver a comprehensive end-to-end service.

## The changing role of the CIO and what it mean for partners

There is little doubt that the ability of partners to provide comprehensive, end-to-end service delivery is increasingly important as the IT leader's role changes. Ten years ago, chances are the CIO or IT director was heavily aligned with, and involved in, managing the technology. But things have changed.



IT leaders, even those in mid-sized and smaller firms, are now much more aligned to the business – and looking to focus their time on exploring how tech can help their business innovate, evolve and achieve competitive advantage. The speeds and feeds matter to them, of course, but to a much lesser degree than before.

This offers a huge opportunity for the channel to become trusted advisors – not only to support the strategic alignment with the business, but to take on the business as usual tasks that swallow so much of the IT leader's time.

There's another, more immediate opportunity here too. During lock-down, most businesses bought and deployed in anger and at pace. But now we're over the initial peak, thoughts are turning to return on investment and lessons learnt. Partners have a key role here in fine tuning these solutions, supporting users and turning on the richer capabilities and functionality that may have been implemented but not activated – to extend customer value and make their solutions and services ever more relevant for the business.



**CHANNEL OPINIONS:  
EXPERIENCES FROM THE COAL FACE**

# Growing together in tough times



**By James Yates**  
Commercial Director and Head  
of Enterprise Sales, Highlander

“Having restructured the business over the past three or four years, we managed to remain profitable during the recent crisis. Our MSP business generated recurring revenues and we were able to deliver projects remotely during lockdown. New business was certainly thin on the ground and projects that needed site surveys or access to the network had to be put on ice.

There's no doubt it was hard work. Every deal was harder, logistically and economically. The remote worker deployment made for a hugely busy time, with the main challenge being stock availability – but we have good relationships with distributors so that worked out well. Overall, I think we've done well to come out relatively unscathed and existing and new business is beginning to come back online.

Looking across the sector I think people will be preoccupied by the potential of bad debt and reductions in support contracts, and things are looking uncertain as we move through the fourth quarter and beyond.

When it comes to the technology, COVID-19 gave the SaaS approach

a shot in the arm it probably didn't need – except perhaps to bring projects forward three years or so. UCC and Microsoft Business Voice are increasing areas of interest for customers. And with the hardware an enabler for cloud services, we're seeing average unit prices for devices going up and people investing in better user technology. Demand is strong as well for CRM and ERP applications. But there's still a need for on-premise solutions and we are seeing hybrid IT environments develop with a 60/40 split in favour of SaaS.

Interestingly, we're also seeing some mid-market customers move towards new technologies like IoT as a direct response to the crisis. We now have out of the box solutions that use smart wearable tech to ensure people are social distancing and following hand sanitising policies. This is not about IT being faster and brighter because that doesn't resonate with SMB and mid-market companies. It's about our ability to offer practical solutions. And it really shows the value.

Moving forward, SMB buyers are so bewildered by the array of choice of products and services that the channel has a massive role

to play in delivering and deploying best of breed. Many people rushed to cloud without doing the preparatory work. These things have to be done properly; well researched and fit for the business. Which means there's an increasing role for consultancy.

There's no doubting the power and potential of IT. And as long as you have the right offer, you can be a true enabler. This is not just about keeping the lights on. IT partners have to prove value in different ways.

Customer IT teams are so stretched they don't have the time or inclination to organise beauty parades of multiple network vendors or security vendors. IT providers can be a sounding board, and have a real opportunity to move into that value position as a trusted advisor. But we're never going to be all things to all people, and it's important we're able to plug in partners with the expertise to fill gaps and deliver on our behalf, or work with us so we can learn and build.

**CHANNEL OPINIONS:  
EXPERIENCES FROM THE COAL FACE**

# Looking for the 'unicorn' supplier that doesn't exist



**Brian Dunleavy**  
Commercial Director, Viadex

We're a global IT service provider, playing in the global mid-market. Which is a pretty unique place to be. It's something we've been doing for over twenty years, and have gradually evolved into a managed service provider – with the scars to prove it!

Our sweet spot is in the global datacentre solutions space, particularly those businesses needing high performance computing – like gaming and life sciences. Delivering this on a global scale is complex and not many end-customers truly appreciate the challenges associated with this, so our goal is always to simplify the complexity associated with global IT projects. And that's exactly what customers want.

Everywhere we operate our customers are hugely focused on finding a single provider that can deliver everything. We call this the unicorn supplier – it just doesn't exist. No one supplier out there can do it all, which is why partnerships are so important. Ultimately, customers don't really care where the solutions and

services come from as long as the commercials are right, there's a result at the end, and someone is there to take full responsibility for delivery. Which, in our business, often comes down to having engineers capable of walking into the minefield that is a third party data centre and getting the job done.

Businesses like ours need to have a choice of working with distribution partners that have the capability we need in house, or have a trusted network of partners we can lean on.

We have been working with Ingram Micro in this capacity for over 15 years. To my mind, the company has three core capabilities: technical (the services and solutions), commercial (finance) and operational (distribution and logistics). We can pick and choose depending on what we need at the time.

For example, we may want technical support to validate solution sets and recommend up and coming technologies, and its help with the distribution, pre-sales and solution delivery.

There's an important element around commercials here too, of course. We know customers have an appetite to move from CAPEX to OPEX, but often their own commercial models make it difficult. If, for example, they want a five year project and only get their budgets annually, they need someone to take the financial risk.

Part of the solution is educating the customer and engaging with them to see how they are consuming IT so we can procure it properly. And doing it early, before their new financial year starts.

We work with Ingram Financial Services (IFS) to have the commercial conversation with customers even before projects are planned. Ingram looks at different funding schemes and then applies a global solution. And we don't have to buy from its catalogue to use IFS – so we get flexibility here too.

All of which gives us the capability and flexibility we need to deliver the result the customer wants – whoever delivers it.

# A service-led evolution at Ingram Micro

Having recognised the direction of travel in the market towards a Solution Enabler model some years ago, we have invested heavily in a wide variety of services to enable partners to scale up to match customer demand. And while we recognise that many know us as a broadline distributor, and one of the biggest in the world, we know that fewer partners identify Ingram Micro as a service provider. This perception, however, we aim to change.

Specifically designed to allow partners to simply and quickly bridge the resource gaps, scale at speed and accelerate up the value chain, our services span the customer lifecycle – from business intelligence and sales and marketing support to drive demand, to initial pre-sales consultancy, procurement and financing to professional services, configuration and deployment and support. In fact, wherever you have a gap, we have a service to fill it.

Our model is built on the principle of supporting your success – enabling you to focus on your particular areas of expertise without needing to invest in additional skills or support infrastructures (like NOCs).

Working with you, we will co-deliver the services you need so you can take the business in the direction you want. Our services are available on-demand or you can enter into a deeper strategic relationship. It's up to you. Plus, we can simplify the management of multi-country projects – with Ingram Micro working in the background to centrally source the technologies and provide single or region-specific invoicing options.

Our finance proposition underpins these services. We are able to leverage global strength to deliver access to the widest array of capital available – so we can say 'yes' more often, offer better rates, and better structures. This will become ever-more important as we move through the expected downturn and return to growth.

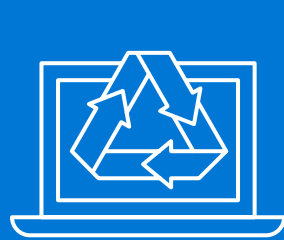


# Detailing the Ingram Micro service proposition



## Cloud Services

Our global marketplace offers access to an expansive portfolio of Cloud service providers with a streamlined and simplified approach to provisioning and management. Partner with the industry's leading expert and benefit from our extensive enablement programs.



## ITAD Services

Our ITAD services can help you reduce risk, cost and complexity when your customers IT assets reach end-of-life. Ensuring compliance with environmental and data security regulations as well as recovering value from your customers retired assets.



## Support Services

Our comprehensive suite of channel-only support services encompass a 24/7/365 technical support team and field-based hardware maintenance technicians. Our experience and expertise reaches across all major vendors, products and technologies to provide efficient problem resolution.



## Managed Services

Our managed services enable you to monitor, manage and optimise your customers IT infrastructure, freeing up valuable internal IT resources to focus on strategic IT projects.



## Professional Services

Our broad portfolio of Professional Services encompass the full lifecycle of a customer's IT infrastructure and provide specialist expertise to ensure the delivery of best-practice solutions. From planning and solution design to project management, migration and deployment.



## Configuration Services

Our Staging and Pre-configuration services range from Image deployment and hardware configurations to asset tagging/management. All services are provided in accordance with ISO27001 (Information Security Management) and ISO20000 (IT Service Management) standards.



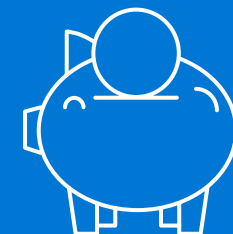
## Forward logistics

Our fulfilment and transportation solutions enable your growth — through any channel, any market, anywhere. Whether fulfilling Marketplace orders on Amazon, or supporting your Magento or Shopify website, we have the technology, infrastructure and expertise to help you every step of the way.



## Reverse logistics & Repair

Our fulfilment centres process returns, handle configuration and offer value added services to ensure your returned products are managed efficiently. Our order management platform, Shipwire, also automates and optimizes each return shipment to minimize shipping costs.



## Financial Services

Our financial solutions leverage our global strength to deliver you access to the widest array of capital available. Partners can access better rates, and structures, with greater likely-hood of financial acceptance. We can also finance solutions that are not sourced from Ingram Micro to offer greater flexibility and simplicity.



# Meet the team

When we team-up no one can stop us



**Matt Sanderson**  
SVP & MD UK & Ireland

Matt has had a long and distinguished career at Ingram Micro since joining in 1994, holding senior leadership roles at a country and regional level in both EMEA and APAC since 2010. Having successfully managed some major turnaround projects over that period, Matt returned to lead the UK & Ireland operation in mid-2016 and joined the Ingram Micro Global Leadership team in 2019.



**Raj Pandya**  
Director, Speciality Solutions

Raj began his career at Ingram Micro in 2012 to establish and lead the PRO AV business unit, in 2014 he assumed the role of Head of Europe for PRO AV. Raj came back to the UK in 2016 to lead the volume commercial division. In 2017 was appointed Director of Specialty Solutions. Raj holds a BA in Business and Finance and has previously held various leadership positions within Sony UK.



**Mike Farrah**  
Director, Core Solutions

Mike joined Ingram Micro in 1998 as a Sales Manager. He moved to the Commercial function in 1999 and has held a number of roles of increasing responsibility across different disciplines including purchasing, product management, marketing and vendor management. Mike holds a BA and BPI in Town Planning from The University of Manchester.



**Gary Lomas**  
UK Sales Director

With 3 decades of experience in IT, Gary is an experienced Sales Professional who brings a wealth of knowledge and technical prowess to Ingram's partner community. Joining Ingram in 2020, he has a proven track record of developing trust-based, long standing relationships with customers, vendors and partners at all levels. Prior to joining Ingram Gary held leadership roles within Logicalis for the past 7 years.

# Meet the team

When we team-up no one can stop us



## Julian Thompson

Director, Advanced Solutions

Julian first joined Ingram Micro in 1995 as an Account Manager. Julian was instrumental in supporting the launch of Ingram Micro's Advanced Solutions division in 2013, assuming the role of Director of Advanced Solutions. Thompson holds a BSC in Psychology and Law.



## Scott Murphy

Director Cloud UCC & Cyber Security

Scott joined Ingram in 2017, bringing 20 years of enterprise technology IT Channel expertise. He's responsible for the strategy and execution of high growth technologies. In this role he leads the teams to drive value to channel partners, through innovative initiatives and programmes.



## Bhavesh Patel

IoT & AI Solutions and Services

Bhavesh is a multi-disciplined Global Executive, having held Senior Leadership roles across EMEA, APAC, LATAM and SA. His last major role was the implementation of a successful start-up in Manufacturing of Mobile Devices and Accessories for Carriers, Retailer and Enterprise markets. Having left Ingram Micro 2 years ago to pursue his passion for solution engineering in the IoT/AI space helping start-ups, Bhavesh has now returned to Ingram Micro to head up the newly created IoT and AI Solution and Services business unit.

For further information and to find out how we can help you grow your business call us now on **0371 973 3000**

Or visit [uk-new.ingrammicro.com](http://uk-new.ingrammicro.com)

You may also be interested in:

## Closing the deal with finance

The second paper in our Channel Leader's Guide series explores the issues and opportunities around financing your deals.



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