

Beyond the Marketplace

IT Distributors Empower
the Buyers' Journey
of the Future



GTDC

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Single-point transactions have become a less important part of the relationship between vendor partners and end users over the past decade (if not longer), as the **focus shifted from single product or service sales to subscription- or relationship-based engagements**. IT distributors have been at the forefront of that transition. From enabling solution providers and vendor partners with a variety of options for generating revenue to creating lasting end-user experiences, the value proposition continues to evolve.

The advent of cloud services is just one catalyst in this ongoing transformation. Adapting one-time software sales into subscription-based, “everything-as-a-service” offerings with recurring revenue opportunities is having a **profound effect on overall channel operations and programs**.

The focus has also shifted away from distributor and reseller relationships (with vendors and end-users serving important but lesser supporting roles). Now, **single-stream, end-to-end relationships are the optimal objective**. To build a successful technology lifecycle in this environment, each participant needs to be on equal footing, and IT distributors are continuing to evolve their programs and develop innovative new platforms to support these increasingly complex ecosystems. The changing dynamic between vendors, solution providers, and end clients is one result of those efforts.

Cloud marketplaces are also a strong first step in this transformation. As channel organizations look to optimize their sales, implementation, support, and billing processes, as well as manage the lifecycle of services and solutions, these platforms have become a key enablement tool.

Those factors are fueling the rapid expansion of IT distribution cloud marketplaces. While e-tailers and hyperscalers primarily focus on transactions, allowing potential customers to browse, select, and purchase various offerings in a mostly passive manner, **channel leaders need more engaging platforms to scale sales and support capabilities.** IT distributors are fulfilling those needs today while developing even more intelligent and streamlined options for tomorrow. These cloud marketplaces and platforms digitize the program capabilities of vendors, extend the reach of their partners, and further enrich the buyer's journey.

This report from the Global Technology Distribution Council (GTDC) and CommCentric will explore the present and future of these virtual channel ecosystems. What do distributors' cloud marketplaces provide that vendors and solution providers cannot replicate on their own? How will the next generation of platforms boost engagement, enhance lifecycle management, and generate new revenue streams for the channel? **Read on, in “Beyond the Marketplace,” for answers to those critical questions.**





A Virtual Strategy Allows Companies to:

Implement and configure workstations quickly **in remote / hybrid environments**

Shift rapidly to address changing business priorities and compliance requirements

Simplify the deployment and **management of increasingly complex applications**

Streamline integration with critical business solutions **(including multi-vendor systems)**

Cloud Marketplace Drivers

The global push for digital transformation has changed the way software companies sell, deliver, and support their solutions. Formerly, software solution sales encompassed one-and-done transactions with occasional communications and updates. Now, they require the development of long-term business relationships with high levels of engagement for lasting success. Organizational leaders are also seeking more advanced and flexible workplace tools that **increase productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention.**

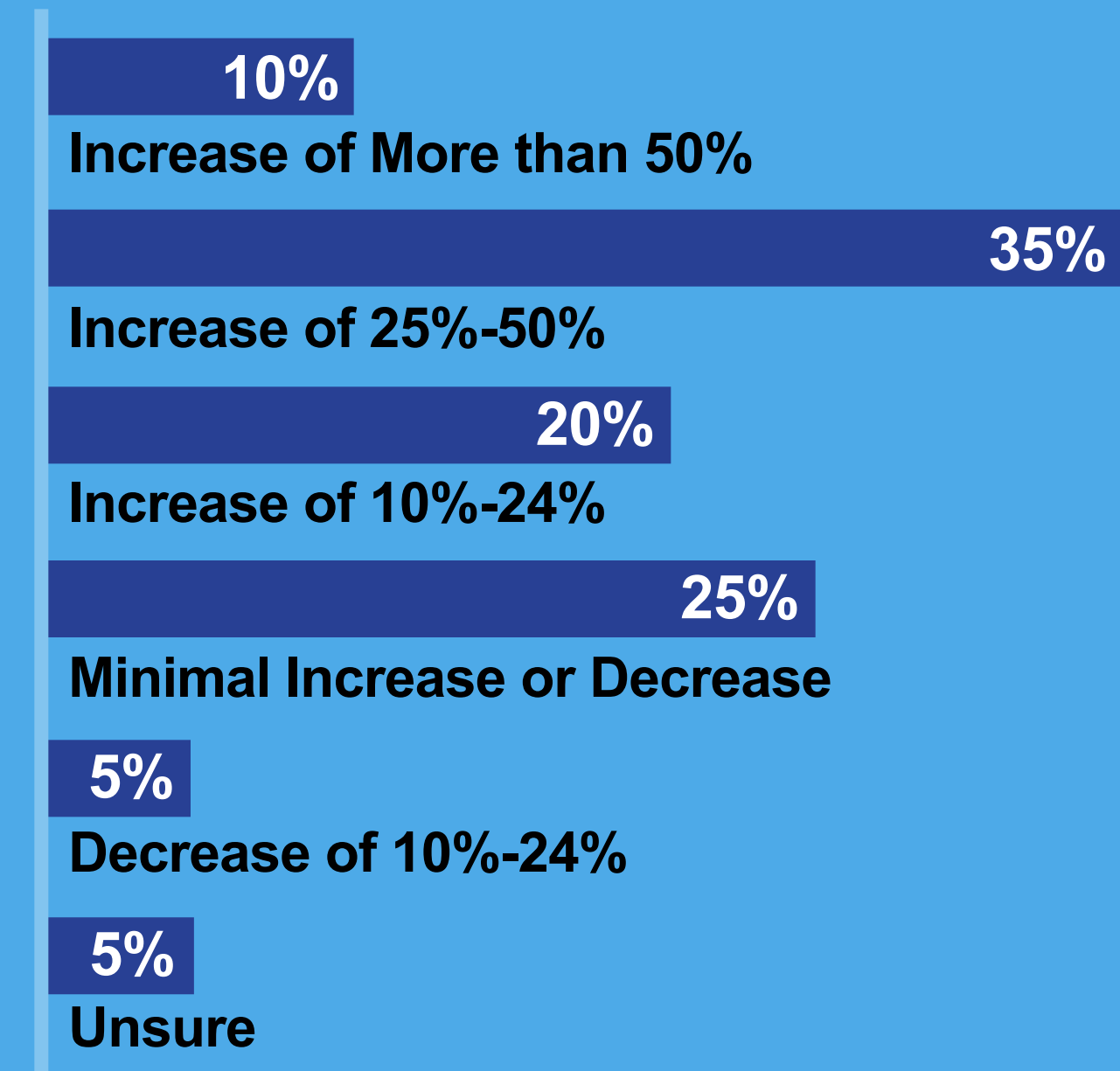
Those factors are surely contributing to the adoption of cloud-centric mindsets in the business community. Recent IDC research concluded that **95% of CEOs are embracing digital-first strategies** to compensate for shifting workplaces and ever-changing financial dynamics. Stepping up the pace and depth of cloud transformation equips business leaders with the flexibility needed to increase profitability, meet shareholder demands, and compete successfully in the current environment.

Post-pandemic workplace changes, economic concerns, global and regional conflicts, and the rapid pace of innovation continue to influence digital transformation. Research firm MARKETSandMARKETS predicts the market for these service offerings **will rise from \$696 billion (USD) in 2023 to approximately \$3.15 trillion by 2030**, which equals a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 24.1%. Those numbers illustrate the tremendous opportunity available to the IT industry, particularly the channel, which supports a large segment of the SMB community.

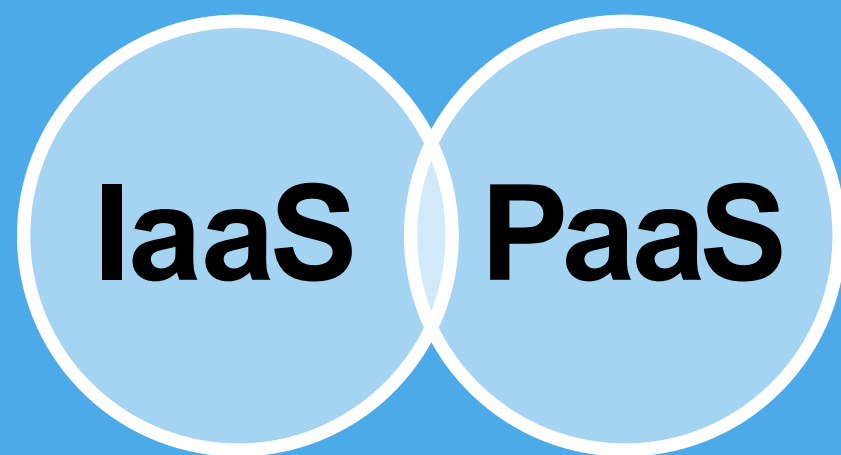
Cloud marketplaces create the path to success for distributors, vendors, solution providers, and their collective customers. As the complexity of business and compliance requirements rise, the IT industry must provide faster and easier ways to sell, implement, support, and pay for virtual technologies. **IT distributors are filling that need today** with cloud marketplaces and digital platforms.

“Demand for cloud services is skyrocketing and, with companies facing ongoing staffing shortages and looking for greater productivity and discoverability, there is a growing need for more comprehensive cloud services and bundled offerings,” **Victor Baez, Senior Vice President of Cloud and Global Vendor Engagement at Ingram Micro.** “Marketplaces make that possible by simplifying and accelerating the sales cycle, bringing transparency into the collective supply chains, and giving resellers more ways to serve the end customer.”

Vendors' Anticipated Distribution Cloud Marketplace Revenue in the Next Twelve Months



GTDC Vendor Survey



As companies like **Amazon, Google, Microsoft** and others introduced highly scalable Infrastructure as a Service (**IaaS**) and Platform as a Service (**PaaS**) to the mix, the cloud became even more accessible for businesses.

The Evolution of Cloud Procurement

Online purchasing is not new. People have been able to buy and download software applications through the internet for their homes and businesses for decades, with the number of offerings, consumption models, and payment options growing exponentially. The advent of cloud technologies has only accelerated technology adoption by providing access and simplifying the procurement process for anyone with a computing device and web connection.

IT distributors also stepped up to support the digital transformation needs of their vendor and solution provider partners. Many created cloud-focused programs and resources to enhance the sales, marketing, technical, and management capabilities of the channel, strengthening the bonds between their collective supplier and IT services communities. Distributors invested heavily in the early days of digital transformation and continue to leverage and expand their partnerships to ensure their partners remain at the forefront of digital transformation. According to the latest IDC data, **distributor marketplaces are already driving nearly ten percent (9.94%) of total revenue for software providers**, and experts predict those numbers will increase rapidly in the coming years.

As companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft and others introduced highly scalable Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) to the mix, the cloud became even more accessible for businesses. The addition of new subscription and consumption models gave organizations even more cost-effective technology procurement options to transform their operations and better service their customers. With such a rapidly expanding range of solutions to choose from, many companies, especially SMBs, are increasingly reliant on cloud consultants, developers, and solution providers to develop and manage their digital transformation strategies.

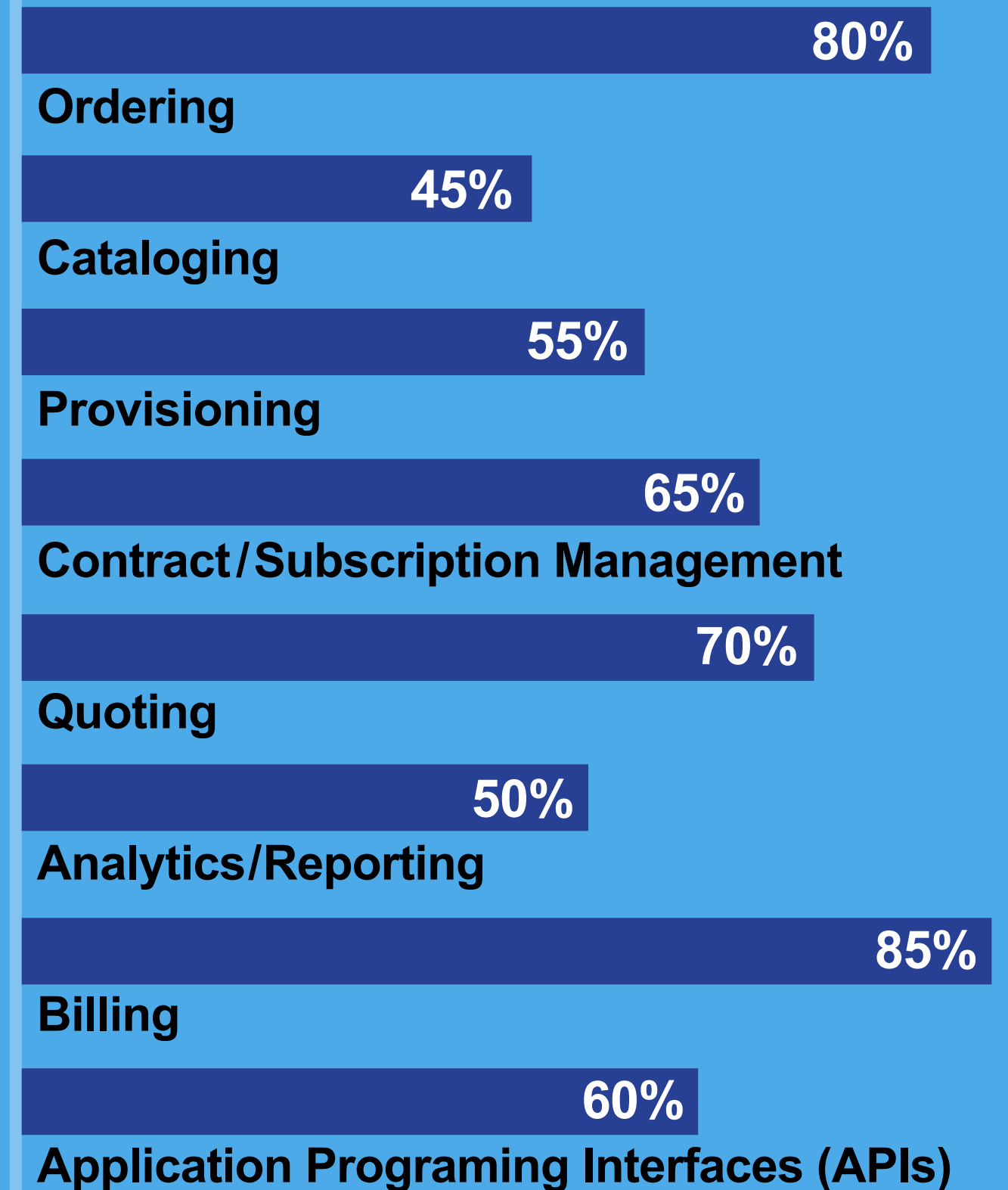
While hardware manufacturers appreciate the two-tier go-to-market model from years of collaboration experience, born-in-the-cloud vendors may not appreciate the value distribution can offer in an online setting. The latest platforms encourage long-term client engagements by supporting the lifecycle management needs of the channel. Rather than one-time transactions, distribution-based cloud marketplaces boost customer retention, optimize integration, enhance upselling and cross-selling opportunities, and strengthen the bonds between vendors and solutions providers.

These powerful platforms:

- Accelerate and elevate total solutions sales
- Promote recurring revenue-based services
- Support multiple languages
- Allow the use of multiple currencies

Unlike traditional online sales websites, **distributors' cloud marketplaces empower vendors and solution providers, providing each with a platform to optimize channel engagements.** Scalability is a major value proposition. For new or long-established cloud vendors, the ability to quickly transact, deploy, and collect payments helps optimize cash flow. Distribution cloud marketplaces also streamline ISVs' implementation and integration processes and leverage collected data to identify potential sales and partner opportunities.

Capabilities / Features that Vendors Value Most in a Distributor Marketplace



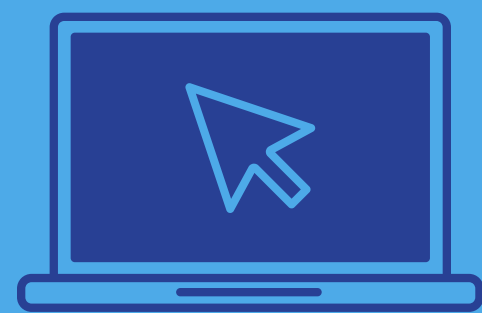
Go-to-Market Strategies

Direct vs Indirect



Direct

Carries a Level of Risk for Poorly Trained or Insufficiently Staffed Organizations



Indirect

Expands the Reach of Sales and Marketing

Direct and Hyperscalers Play

Go-to-market strategies for cloud solutions are constantly evolving. Businesses may procure solutions directly from vendors' websites or e-tailers or rely on the expertise of third parties (i.e., solution providers, consultants, developers) to handle those responsibilities. The growing number of options can be a benefit and detriment to the channel.

Direct IT purchases carry a certain level of risk for poorly trained or insufficiently staffed organizations. When those companies buy technologies directly from manufacturers or cloud suppliers through online marketplaces or hyperscalers, the chances of problems with purchasing, implementation, integrations, and support increase exponentially. Those issues may taint the buyer's experience and negatively impact the purchasing journey, which can damage the vendor's reputation, reduce customer satisfaction and retention, and threaten future sales.

Channel partners mitigate those risks. **An effective indirect go-to-market strategy expands the reach of sales and marketing and can massively increase demand generation activities and technology support capabilities for vendors.**

While hyperscalers are adept at delivering cloud services to the masses, AWS, Google, Microsoft, and other IaaS/PaaS providers have developed IT distribution alliances to increase reach and engagement. These partnerships provide access to new customers and solution sets.

Direct sales platforms lack the value proposition channel programs provide. “While hyperscaler marketplaces include a large number of ISVs, they don’t have all the pieces needed for a successful buyer’s journey for the partner or end-user,” suggests **Sergio Farache, Chief Strategy Officer for TD SYNEX**. “Channel companies need to manage contracts and quotes, converge billing for consumption and subscriptions, and integrate their own products or third-party vendors. That doesn’t happen with hyperscalers.”

Channel-centric cloud marketplaces typically provide those capabilities and can help IaaS and PaaS companies drive more of their sales through the IT services community. **Hyperscalers have become a critical piece of the total cloud solution for many businesses today by helping to virtualize workplace solutions and their overall technology environments.** Partnering with distribution allows hyperscalers to get the best of both worlds — directly (or indirectly) supporting the infrastructure needs of enterprise companies while leveraging large networks of IT services companies to empower the SMB with those offerings.

Inclusion in distribution cloud marketplaces allows partners to obtain licensing, configure applications and virtual servers, enable Application Programming Interface (API) integrations, and set invoicing preferences. “The collective cloud services charges can be constructed like a utility bill,” says **Jason Bystrak, Senior Vice President, of the Modern Solutions Business Unit at D&H Distributing**. “Invoicing can be an integrated experience that flows from the marketplace to the customer (through the partner), so the platform essentially becomes a back-end operational engine for the channel.”

“While hyperscaler marketplaces include a large number of ISVs, **they don’t have all the pieces needed** for a successful buyer’s journey for the partner or end-user.”



Sergio Farache
Chief Strategy Officer,
TD SYNEX

“A digital platform lets partners and vendors **learn a lot more about the customer** than in the past.”



Patrick Aronson

Chief Marketing Officer
& Head of APAC,
Westcon-Comstor

A Valuable Information Hub

Data has become one of the greatest assets for businesses. That is especially true for IT-related organizations that appreciate the operational value of the information they or their customers collect, including orders and sales histories, license renewal dates, types of applications in use, and a plethora of other details. **Cloud marketplaces allow vendors and solution providers to evaluate trends and identify new revenue opportunities** based on activities in the platform.

Every activity generates information that can help suppliers optimize their offerings, pricing, promotions, support programs, integrations, and other factors. “A digital platform lets partners and vendors learn a lot more about the customer than in the past,” says **Patrick Aronson, Chief Marketing Officer & Head of APAC at Westcon-Comstor**. “We can gather information to optimize the buyer’s experience and work on more strategic issues, with automation providing personalization and addressing the common problems.”

Distributors are creating conduits to expand data collection and analysis possibilities for solution providers and vendors. For example, some of the new digital

platforms encourage partners to connect and share information through their companies’ Professional Services Automation (PSA) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools.

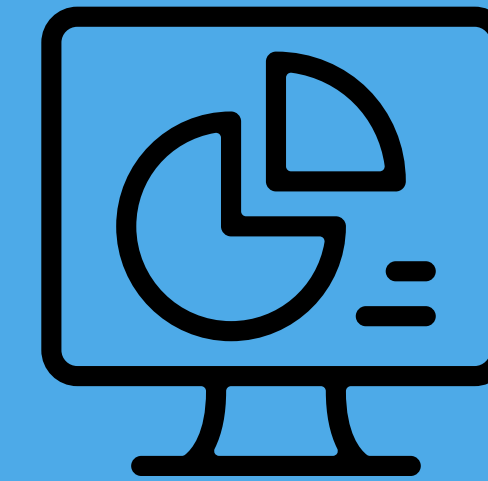
These links allow solution providers to synchronize and analyze their data looking for upselling and cross-selling opportunities with clients and influencing sales prospects. “Sellers would like to influence the deal earlier in the buying cycle and increase retention, and those objectives are difficult to attain through direct marketplaces,” states **Frank Della Rosa, Research Vice President, SaaS, Business Platforms, and Industry Cloud at IDC**. “Distributor platforms can address those needs, giving vendors visibility or data insights into transactions, which was difficult to do until recently.”

That collected data can also help partners, vendors, and end-users identify complementary solutions. Using tested algorithms and leveraging the latest technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), these platforms empower sales teams and purchasers, providing options and advice to optimize their solution choices. A distribution-based cloud marketplace or digital platform can be configured to suggest the best possible combinations based on required specifications, pricing and promotions, margins, and other factors critical to solution providers and vendors.

Data controls the back-end processes as well. **“Unlike e-tailers, distribution-based platforms can control provisioning, integration, billing, and reporting for our partners,”** says *Daniel Laguna, Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer for Valley Advanced Solutions España, a subsidiary of Esprinet Spa.* “These technologies allow us to highlight the KPIs and create pulsars (triggers) that allow vendors to sell more solutions and grow their businesses.”

Platform automation simplifies invoicing and collections for the channel, too. “A key component of these ecosystems is how you manipulate the data to provide real-time settlement and billing capabilities,” adds *Farache.* “It’s not enough to simply bill a partner or end user, we must offer subscription and consumption invoicing competencies incorporating analytics.”

Leveraging data analysis tools in digital platforms allows distributors, vendors and solutions providers to identify sales and resource utilization trends, watch buying behaviors, and address problems. That knowledge can be used to **increase revenue, margins, and retention and prevent partner and end-client churn.**



Collected Data Can
**Help Partners,
Vendors, and End-
Users Identify
Complementary
Solutions**

Distribution Marketplaces Offer:

Enhanced Portfolio Flexibility

Improved Management Controls

Better Scalability and Growth Potential

Empowering True Lifecycle Management

IT distributors are the only technology companies with the ability to bring everything and everyone together in one ecosystem. Digital platforms take that a step further, allowing solution providers to **extend those resources to their end-user communities with highly engaging and cost-effective automation tools**. More importantly, a distribution-hosted cloud marketplace can give vendors and partners greater insight and control of the IT ecosystem.

Those capabilities allow channel organizations to influence technology lifecycles. This process goes far beyond a simple online sales transaction, instead guiding customers through the design, procurement, implementation, utilization, and, if done properly, upgrades and refreshes of various pieces of their IT ecosystem. Distributors are removing much of the complexity for vendors and solution providers with the latest digital platforms and cloud marketplaces. These powerful and highly integrated systems can collect and analyze data related to sales, licensing, renewals, warranties, and other activities, and help partners identify possible refresh and upgrade opportunities and suggest corresponding solutions/services options.

Distribution Marketplaces Offer:

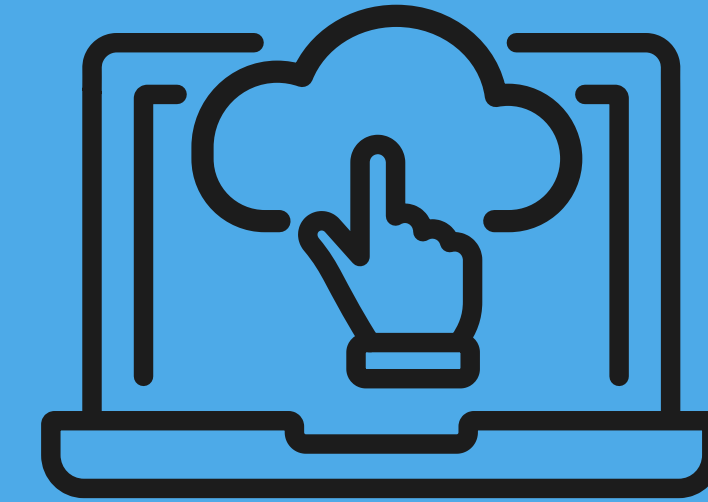
- **Portfolio flexibility:** Cloud marketplaces allow solutions providers to instantly multiply their offerings to address the dynamic demands of the businesses they support. Similarly, distributors can more readily add integration options and other features for their vendor partners to enhance the lifecycle of their solutions.
- **Controls:** A cloud marketplace provides a single pane of glass for partners, customers, and vendors to manage IT systems. Solution providers can analyze and review client activities and systems and collaborate virtually with suppliers' teams to optimize lifecycles and maximize revenue opportunities.

(Continued)

- **Scalability:** creating and managing online procurement platforms can be costly and time-consuming for emerging and legacy vendors, and an even larger burden on their solution provider partners. Most distributors offer cloud marketplaces that IT services firms can extend to their clients as an automated sales and marketing portal. These flexible platforms allow providers to add their branding, customize offerings, and deliver real-time pricing based on current market conditions and business objectives.

That strategy works whether moving upstream or downstream in the IT ecosystem. From the smallest end of the SMB to larger midmarket or even enterprise clients, distribution cloud marketplaces simplify procurement and lifecycle management for channel companies. **“If a vendor is looking to streamline the experience for customers, there’s a tremendous benefit of working through these ecosystems,”** adds *Baez*. “Full lifecycle management allows partners and vendors to grow MRR (Monthly Recurring Revenue), shorten implementation and provisioning timelines, and enhance the overall customer experience.”

Few technology vendors can effectively manage the long tail of the SMB without strong support from solution providers. Cloud marketplaces allow suppliers and developers to reach partners and customers outside their normal “spheres of influence,” using a flexible and easy-to-navigate platform. These digital ecosystems allow distributors to match and connect complementary applications from multiple vendor partners, creating a neutral environment that optimizes solution development and integrations.



Cloud Marketplaces
Allow **Suppliers and
Developers** to Reach
Partners and Customers
Outside Their Normal
“Spheres of Influence”

Cloud Marketplaces and Digital Platforms

Distributors are **Removing Much of the Complexity** for Vendors and Solution Providers

Effective lifecycle management requires those capabilities. While solution providers ultimately control the design and implementation of their client's business systems, most value, if not defer to data-driven recommendations from distributors and their collective toolset. **Cloud marketplaces and digital platforms have those capabilities, leveraging a vast amount of collected information to determine the best solutions for each unique customer situation,** and delivering those options to partners and/or their customers in a suitable format.

The sophistication of these systems that globally connect vendors and providers, as well as their clients, is colossal, which is precisely why IT distribution should lead the way. They remove the complexity and empower the back-end, according to *Aronson*, who also emphasizes the need for simplicity. "Partners and end users should be able to log in and use in-app guides to add features and functions. The focus around training and education is making sure sellers understand how to use these tools to get the best experience possible, but platforms should be really intuitive."

Could any other entity replicate the supply chain and technology capabilities, partnerships, financing options, and sales and marketing support capabilities of distributors? **Combining all of those vital services in one easy-to-navigate application creates an environment for true lifecycle management.**

Build Lasting Success in New Markets

Global expansion is never as easy as it seems, even for “born in the cloud” companies that deliver their offerings through the internet. Between language and cultural barriers, currency conversion, and a myriad of different regulatory requirements, few vendors have the resources needed to grow their geographic footprint.

Entering new regions without dedicated local sales, support, marketing, and financing teams in place can significantly slow partner adoption and revenue growth. IT distributors have been helping vendors in those areas for years, providing the “feet on the street” to manage, build, and promote local channel activities. The advent of digital platforms simplifies the process, allowing cloud suppliers to launch and scale the adoption of their offerings anywhere in the world faster and more cost-effectively than ever. Leveraging the virtual and physical resources of distribution reduces go-to-market timelines and investments.

Cloud marketplaces provide vendors with technical advantages across international business communities, too. “Our partners in Spain, Portugal, and Italy each provision different integrations and billing options through our platform,” says **Fernandez**. “Technology alliances and preferences vary by country, so a truly worldwide company must adapt to regional requirements.” An effective distribution cloud platform provides partners with the tools and features they need to be successful in the geographic areas they cover.



IDC CloudShare report, 2023



Combining the flexibility and technology advantages of a digital cloud marketplace with distributors' expansive knowledge and resources in various regions of the globe can be a game changer for vendors looking to enter and succeed in new markets. These programs also limit risk, **providing suppliers with a cost-effective way to scale sales and grow share** without the need to hire additional staff, lease office space, or make other financial investments.

Enhance the Partner and End-User Experience

A key objective of cloud marketplaces and digital platforms is to enable sales opportunities. In the case of distribution, these systems can empower partners and become an extension of their businesses, providing clients with a brandable and easy-to-navigate online procurement option. The back-end automation streamlines transactions, invoicing, configuration, integration, and collections for solution providers to suit their individual preferences.

Distribution cloud marketplaces can be a virtual catalog of the partner's business, allowing clients to select various services, including custom support offerings and packages. "Partners can add company logos and URLs and allow customers to self-search the entire catalog by providing different permissions or setting up roles for individuals," adds **Bystrak**. "For example, one employee might just be allowed to see invoices or consumption totals, and another could process or change orders. **There are hundreds of granular permissions that an MSP could assign or block to control end-users' activities on the downstream marketplace platform.**"

These engagements provide several benefits to solution providers, including control over the solutions clients purchase and monthly recurring revenue streams from those added services. "Platforms are really about personalization," adds **Aronson**. "Customers will settle on multiple purchasing motions that make the most sense for them at those particular points in time. Marketplaces do not replace the sellers, they handle the low-value activities so channel partners can focus on more strategic, high-level things."



**A Key Objective
of Cloud Marketplaces
and Digital Platforms
is to Enable Sales
Opportunities**

“Platforms are **good business enhancers for partners** because they create a daily, or at the very least monthly, interaction with end users.”



Hugo Fernandez
CEO,
GTI Software and
Networking

Just as important is the data and insight these platforms provide to channel partners and vendor communities. **Tracking and evaluating transactional information allows providers to identify complementary product and service sales opportunities and engage in more meaningful conversations with those clients.** For example, account managers can explore the reasoning for new purchases, gain feedback on the process and solutions, and address any potential issues. Using the data, solutions providers can work to improve the customer experience and client retention.

“Platforms are good business enhancers for partners because they create a daily, or at the very least monthly, interaction with end users,” suggests **Hugo Fernandez, CEO of GTI Software and Networking, V-Valley a division of Esprinet.** “These activities are interactive, not merely transactional, and can help develop new business opportunities year after year.”

Cloud subscription and consumption models, when utilized effectively, can help partners generate longer-term engagements. Platforms change the equation drastically, shifting the channel focus from one-time projects and point product purchases to a true lifecycle management relationship. That transition is difficult to articulate without the right tools and programs. “A platform must support the buyer’s journey from end-to-end and be extendable through multiple tiers, including partners and end-users,” adds **Farache.** **“What that means is enabling the channel with a complete and easy process,** from providing access to the portfolio and building quotes to provisioning and managing subscriptions, consumption, training, and billing.”

Automating any of these activities will also enhance the customer and partner buying experience.

A True Security Play

Another benefit of platform technologies is their ability to aid in the protection of infrastructure, data, and people. Cloud marketplaces help indirectly by allowing providers and end-customers to identify gaps in their cybersecurity solution set and, if properly configured, can deliver prompts to encourage the purchase of components that enhance defenses.

Digital platforms will continue to advance and provide an even deeper validation of solution providers and end-customer environments. Integrating network assessment tool options would allow partners to identify protection gaps in their collective IT ecosystems and suggest recommended solutions that fit their specific requirements and align with their portfolios.

Marketplaces can simplify the process of procuring Security Operation Center (SOC) services for solution providers' current and prospective clients. The options for buttressing critical IT defenses are virtually limitless, and under the right conditions, these platforms help partners identify and address potential points of failure.

“Organizations must be able to deploy software, buy licenses, and ensure they have the necessary maturity or posture in their environments,” says *Farache*. “How do they compare versus the standard benchmarks? By utilizing dashboards and analyzing deployments, partners can identify gaps and then promote additional needed layers of security. An end-user interface provides similar capabilities, allowing them to add all the necessary elements and connect with third-party security vendors.”

Benefits of Platform Technologies

Aid in the **Protection** of Infrastructure, Data, and People

Allow Providers and End-Customers to **Identify Gaps** in their Cybersecurity Solution Set



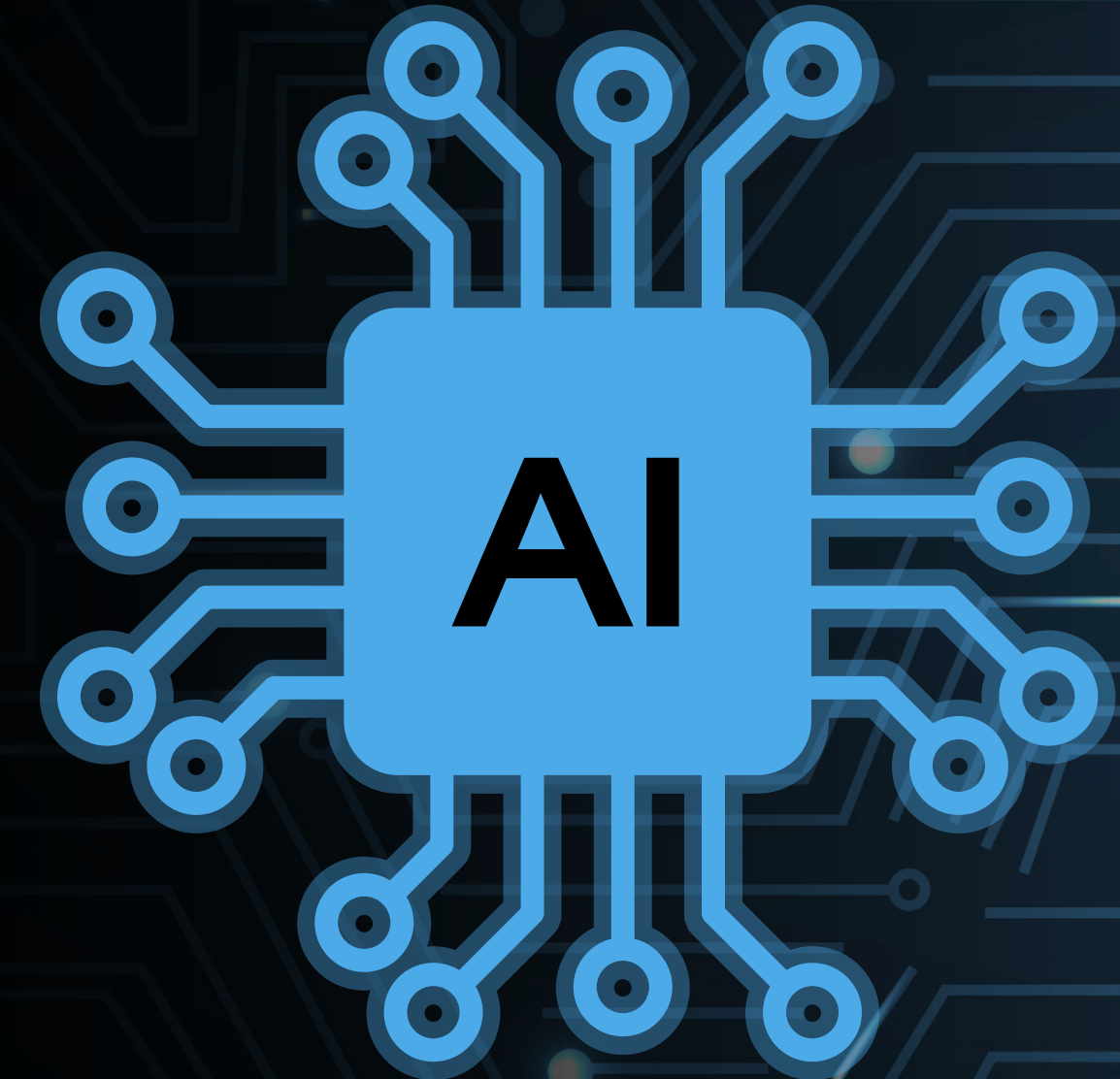
When combined with the sales and marketing resources of distributors, cloud marketplaces allow IT services firms to strengthen, promote, and grow their cybersecurity practices. The platform is only one part of the play. **Distributors have long augmented channel partners' capabilities**, providing vendors and solution providers with access to a dedicated group of security professionals with technical, sales, and marketing expertise. Those resources, combined with increasingly more powerful digital platforms, will ensure greater success and protection for the IT industry and those it supports.

The AI Factor

Automation is where IT companies, particularly channel organizations, prosper. Though still in its infancy, artificial intelligence (AI) is gaining traction quickly as a force-multiplying engine for all types of technology, opening new doors for solution providers, vendors, and distribution.

Cloud marketplaces can benefit greatly from these breakthrough innovations. **The amount of data captured on digital platforms is escalating exponentially as transactions and the types of information being collected grow.** Incorporating AI into marketplace programs will increase the speed and aptitude of information collection and analysis tools, providing greater insight and automation opportunities for solution providers, vendors, and distributors.

“Aggregating the business into one platform, including hyperscalers such as Google or Amazon, creates a tremendous amount of activity and data,” emphasizes **Fernandez**. “With all that information at hand, AI can accelerate and power activities like vertical marketing and solution upselling and cross-selling.” While still a relatively undefined area of opportunity for solution providers, these innovations look to be a **promising part of the channel roadmap**. From enhancing procurement, support and training programs to allowing transactions with natural language, AI has an increasing role in the success of the channel.





NextGen Platforms
will Benefit the Buyer's
Journey and **Increase**
"Stickiness" Between
Providers and their
Customers

NextGen Platforms

The cloud marketplace model enhances sales, revenue, and partnership opportunities for channel vendors and solution providers. The great news is these ecosystems are still in their infancy. However, the innovation race is underway, with many global distributors moving from the planning and beta stages to full implementation with partners and clients. **Digital platforms are sure to incorporate even more options in the future.** What will those systems and programs look like and how will they benefit channel partners?

First, multi-cloud provisioning including hyperscalers (i.e., Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and others) will likely become the norm. While distributors can fulfill hardware procurement requests through automated emails and light automation today, integrating those steps seamlessly into marketplaces as SKUs and bundled solutions will simplify the processes. **Adding a "hardware as a service" (HaaS) option to these portfolios can further strengthen partner/client relationships and drive more monthly recurring revenue streams** for the channel. These developments will all benefit the buyer's journey and increase "stickiness" between providers and their customers.

IaaS and PaaS suppliers have an opportunity to be a larger part of the collective mix on digital platforms after the parties iron out a few business logistics. "If the hyperscalers in this complex ecosystem can pass on the benefit of drawdown to the distributor they can become the cloud component of a multi-vendor solution in a deal, and the customer will be able to leverage its committed cloud spend with that provider," suggests **Della Rosa**. "Sellers tell us that cloud marketplaces provide a superior buyer experience, but those are typically point products with integrations done by the customer, whereas the distributor model incorporates that step as well as testing and certification. Those features provide even greater benefits to end-users."

Della Rosa points out that hyperscalers frequently provide private offers that let vendors create custom quotes for buyers with terms and conditions based on the size of the deal. Extending those specialized programs to distribution platforms would exponentially grow sales and drive channel adoption for IaaS-related services.

Both the partners' and buyers' experience is sure to improve with enhanced automation and workflows. Designing, bundling, and procuring solutions using distribution-based digital platforms will get easier and provide exponentially more options for configuring and integrating applications and hardware. The technology for many of these activities is available now, and many distributors are constantly incorporating new features and programs into their marketplaces.

Vendors and their partners have a **new and more powerful tool to manage technology lifecycles for the businesses they support**, from the smallest SMB clients to larger enterprises. Distribution-hosted cloud marketplaces and platforms are already driving the next wave of digital transformation, with new capabilities and offerings coming online every day.



**Distribution-Hosted
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