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With Ingram Micro's support, a small Apple solution provider succeeds in a city full of retail giants.



The Windy City can be an especially cold place for an Apple solution provider that dares to go it alone. After all, like most major metro cities, Chicago is home to big-box retailers that cater to price-conscious IT shoppers; smaller businesses are forced to compete with big-box budgets when it comes to slick TV ads and glossy newspaper inserts.

Yet for this local Apple solution provider, the Windy City is a win-win, thanks to the support and teamwork of its multibillion-dollar distribution partner, Ingram Micro.

"We've been working with Ingram Micro from the beginning," says Dustin Templeton, co-founder of the firm. "We've leveraged Ingram Micro's marketing programs and they have been great about finding vendors to fund events and

other sales initiatives. They are really helping us grow."

Today, MacSpecialist has 35 employees, more than double its 2006 number. In addition to its Apple service, training and support, MacSpecialist sells an array of complementary products, many of which were recommended by Ingram Micro.

"The sales and marketing teams at Ingram Micro are always showcasing new technologies and they're great about inviting us to events. They hold a lot of useful training and education seminars that help us further differentiate ourselves from competitors and the big-box retailers."

To demonstrate his point, Templeton reflects on a recent Ingram Micro event that one of his managers attended. "It was a two-day

education seminar on digital signage that was designed to help us create a practice that addresses this growing market," he says. "The event provided us with valuable information that we could turn around and quickly use to boost our business."

Ingram Micro was also the first distributor to extend credit to MacSpecialist when Templeton and two partners acquired it in 2006. Despite its 20-year history, most distributors viewed the business as a startup and required extensive paperwork in order to qualify for credit lines, Templeton says. "We basically started from scratch. Ingram Micro told us, 'We believe in you guys,' and then proved it by making the credit process simple ... Two years later, we've really blown our business plan out of the water."

MACSPECIALIST

MacSpecialist Chicago

Market Segment
B2B, retail, music and corporate

Challenge
Compete with local big-box Apple retailers while building market awareness.

Solution
Team with Ingram Micro to create a competitive market advantage and stay abreast of trends and new technologies.

Customer Benefit
In less than two years, the company has grown from 16 to 35 employees, opened a second store and realized a YOY sales increase of 40 percent. Sales are expected to double in 2008.

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