



aws marketplace carahsoft

A winning strategy for selling through AWS Marketplace

Amazon Web Services and Carahsoft can help independent software vendors streamline and strengthen their approach to reaching the right government buyers.

Cloud computing has become integral to nearly every government mission, and cloud solutions are in critical demand by the government sector. To meet these needs, independent software vendors (ISVs) are looking for ways to reach the right government buyers, streamline their sales process, and increase their revenue.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) Marketplace is an ideal solution for ISVs looking to reach government buyers. AWS Marketplace is a secure, compliant marketplace where ISVs can sell their software to government buyers. AWS Marketplace also provides a secure, compliant marketplace where government buyers can purchase software from ISVs.

There are a number of compelling reasons why ISVs should choose AWS Marketplace as their primary sales channel for government buyers.

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Article

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A winning strategy for selling through AWS Marketplace

Amazon Web Services and Carahsoft can help independent software vendors streamline and strengthen their approach to reaching the right government buyers.

Cloud computing has become integral to nearly every government mission, and cloud solutions are as varied as the challenges the government faces. To meet their goals, agencies are looking for reliable, flexible and innovative solutions. Given Amazon Web Services' role as an industry leader, it's not surprising that more than 7,500 agencies at all levels of government rely on the company's commercial offerings and its purpose-built GovCloud.

In turn, AWS relies on independent software vendors (ISVs) to continually add to its robust ecosystem, and the conduit for reaching government buyers is AWS Marketplace. In the past five years, the catalog of ISVs in the marketplace has nearly doubled from 10,000 to close to 20,000.

There are a number of compelling reasons why ISVs would choose AWS Marketplace as a route to government business, beginning with the company's powerful infrastructure. "We start from a solid foundation of what I believe is the best infrastructure in the business and then layer vendors' technologies on top of that," said Jim Helou, worldwide leader of business development for AWS Marketplace. "Whether that's a machine image or a software-as-a-service offering, you're building on top of a secure and powerful engine."

In addition, AWS provides a vital connection to government decision-makers, who are already spending time in the marketplace because of the ease with which they can find and buy new technology offerings.

Furthermore, AWS can handle data and workloads across the gamut of security classifications. The company's GovCloud helps agencies manage sensitive data and controlled unclassified information, and AWS has worked with the government to build an air-gapped marketplace that supports secret and top secret missions. The company can also provide security clearance billets for an ISV's employees.

'Start with the customer and work backward'

Registering with the marketplace is not as difficult as, say, gaining a spot on one of the General Services Administration's Schedule contracts, but AWS has streamlined the process even more by teaming with Carahsoft to help software vendors, and smaller companies in particular, deal with the operational aspects.

Helou noted that there are self-service tools for joining AWS Marketplace, but "from a public-sector perspective, my recommendation is to lean on the teams at Carahsoft. They know how to do this."

Nevertheless, he emphasized that being listed in the marketplace is only the first step. "The phone doesn't start ringing just because people can go into the marketplace and look up the kinds of tools an ISV offers," he added. "You're essentially at the starting line of a very long race, and you need to do a lot of things to successfully cross the finish line."

Beyond traditional tools such as demand generation and go-to-market support, AWS and Carahsoft help companies create a comprehensive strategy for winning government business. "We have a saying at AWS: Start with the customer and work backward," Helou said. "So when an ISV presents us with an exciting new technology, we always ask: Who's your customer? Why did you create it?"

He works with vendors to identify who their potential buyers are and how they evaluate technology tools. "Essentially, we're trying to figure out the best way to reach those buyers through government procurement channels," he said.

Often, AWS, Carahsoft or one of its channel partners or systems integrators holds a contract with an agency that an ISV wants to target, giving the ISV the opportunity to co-sell its technology with a company that has already established a strong relationship with the agency. It's a win-win situation: The government customer gets the technology it wants while the original contract holder can expand beyond providing infrastructure to providing solutions as well.

Providing an 'easy button' for companies

Success also hinges on understanding the stages of an agency's buying process. The federal government's fiscal year ends in September, for example, and in April, technology buyers typically begin gathering and analyzing information about existing solutions and their costs, with the procurement happening over the course of months.

ISVs need to determine where their government customers are gathering this information so they can show up in the relevant publications and at the appropriate events. Throughout the process, Helou said, "ISVs should be asking: How can AWS help? How can Carahsoft help? How can I help myself?"

For example, when federal agencies start building their wish lists in April, ISVs should consider ways to simplify the procurement and make it more cost-effective, perhaps by creating an incentive that encourages the agency to buy an ISV's technology rather than a competitor's. An AWS Marketplace program enables ISVs to provide a discount to buyers on a quarterly basis, which spurs contracting officers to make a decision within a certain

timeframe so they can potentially get a better price. Carahsoft also promotes those incentives across its portfolios.

Once the negotiations between the seller and the buyer are complete, AWS streamlines the process of finalizing the procurement. "What we do exceptionally well is compress that last mile of procurement," Helou said. "After all the fair and reasonable pricing is done, and the contracting officer says, 'OK, I'm ready to go,' we work with Carahsoft and the ISV to create a private offer."

The offer is an email message that includes the quote the agency has approved, the end-user license agreement and the AWS payer account. As soon as the contracting officer checks it over and clicks "accept," the new technology moves into the agency's infrastructure and starts to run. AWS handles all the backend billing through Carahsoft and the technology partner.

Helou said ISVs are motivated to join the marketplace because of the desire to contribute to the government's mission success. "That's why we're all here," he added. "We want to help the government do things better, faster and in a more efficient manner."

ISVs maximize their ability to do that when they take advantage of all that Carahsoft and AWS have to offer. "There are a lot of things companies have to do that are hard," Helou said. "This should be the easy button for them."

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