

The ISV's Guide to Successful Co-Selling on AWS Marketplace

Explore APN Customer Engagements (ACE) Program, co-sell frameworks, and best practices for accelerating growth on AWS Marketplace

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Introduction

The increasing competition within the SaaS landscape is pushing software sellers to embrace diverse channels to drive business growth. Invariably, adoption of cloud marketplaces or hyperscalers as a GTM (go-to-market) and sales channel has seen an exponential surge in the last few years. In addition to establishing a presence in cloud marketplaces, ISVs need to go a step further to effectively capitalize on the potential hyperscalers offers, like co-selling, joint marketing efforts, ISV specific programs, etc. Building collaboration with ecosystem partners and even cloud providers themselves plays a pivotal role in garnering and accelerating cloud marketplace success.

Fortunately, each cloud provider has been cognizant of the dynamic behavior of software buyers. Overall, hyperscalers have been proactive with partner programs, incentives and a support ecosystem to help software sellers drive business growth through the cloud. However, software sellers need to equip themselves with relevant knowledge, skills and partnerships to actually benefit from what the cloud marketplaces have to offer.

The book, titled “The ISV’s Guide to Successful Co-Selling on AWS Marketplace” has been exclusively put together for ISVs and software sellers who wish to strategically leverage AWS Marketplace as a high value growth engine for software sales. A large part of this book will focus on how you as an ISV can partner with AWS to drive tangible impact, highlighting its coveted co-selling program APN Customer Engagements (ACE), of which a new avatar is all set to accelerate collaborative transformation. Divided into several sections, this book help you:

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- Understand the AWS Marketplace, its opportunities and programs for ISVs to boost their software business
-
- Dive deep into the AWS ACE Program, decoding the eligibility, benefits and features
-
- Decipher the technical process for AWS ACE success, including submitting opportunities and seeking technical validations
-
- Identify the best practices to operate ACE effectively
-
- Get practical insights from success stories, showing business impact of the AWS ACE Program
-
- Understand the importance and process of automating the ACE pipeline to accelerate co-selling with AWS
-
- Decode APN Customer Engagements (ACE) Program, its impact on ISVs and the underlying objectives of introducing these changes
-

Though interconnected, each segment of this book fulfills a distinct purpose and can be consumed as a standalone resource on AWS Marketplace and the coveted ACE Program.

Chapter 1

AWS Marketplace: Understanding the Basics

This chapter will help you get a comprehensive view of how AWS marketplace operates, the benefits it brings for ISVs and software sellers along with the different partnership programs that this hyperscaler

runs to facilitate collaborative marketing, selling and revenue growth. In addition, it will start with an overview of the cloud marketplace landscape before shifting the focus to AWS marketplace.



Growth of Cloud Marketplaces

At a macro level, a cloud marketplace can be understood as a platform which allows customers to search, discover and buy diverse cloud computing services and products. You can consider it as an online marketplace for cloud solutions, i.e. solutions which use cloud compute or consumption as fuel to run. In addition, it enables software sellers to build, run, integrate and sell their solutions. The cloud marketplace holds immense potential for ISVs, considering the exponential growth being observed in the cloud computing market.

Within the cloud marketplace landscape, there are several small and big players that you can explore as

a growth channel for your software selling. However, within this growing ecosystem, three players have created a big identity for themselves as the top cloud marketplaces. These include, AWS Marketplace, Microsoft Commercial Marketplace (Azure & AppSource) and Google Cloud Marketplace.

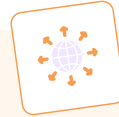
Initially, cloud marketplaces were considered as yet another channel for software sales, the market sentiment is changing though. These hyperscalers have transitioned to major revenue centers for software sales, away from their perception of mere alternative channels. There are several factors guiding this sentiment change, including:

The Cloud Marketplace Potential



Exponential Growth

Cloud marketplaces are expected to grow above 85%, exceeding the USD 150 billion mark, by 2027



Market Expansion

Cloud computing market size is expected to reach USD 1.44 trillion by 2029



Pre-committed Budgets

Hyperscaler cloud commits have surged to a staggering USD 348 Bn



Growing Marketplace Sales

Cloud marketplaces are expected to cross the USD 45 million sales mark by 2025, representing a CAGR of 84%



Customer Preferences

73% of B2B buyers prefer the convenience of ecommerce (cloud marketplaces can transform the B2B buying into a B2C experience)



Growing Budget Allocations

79% CXOs claim that cloud infrastructure is one of the top spending priorities

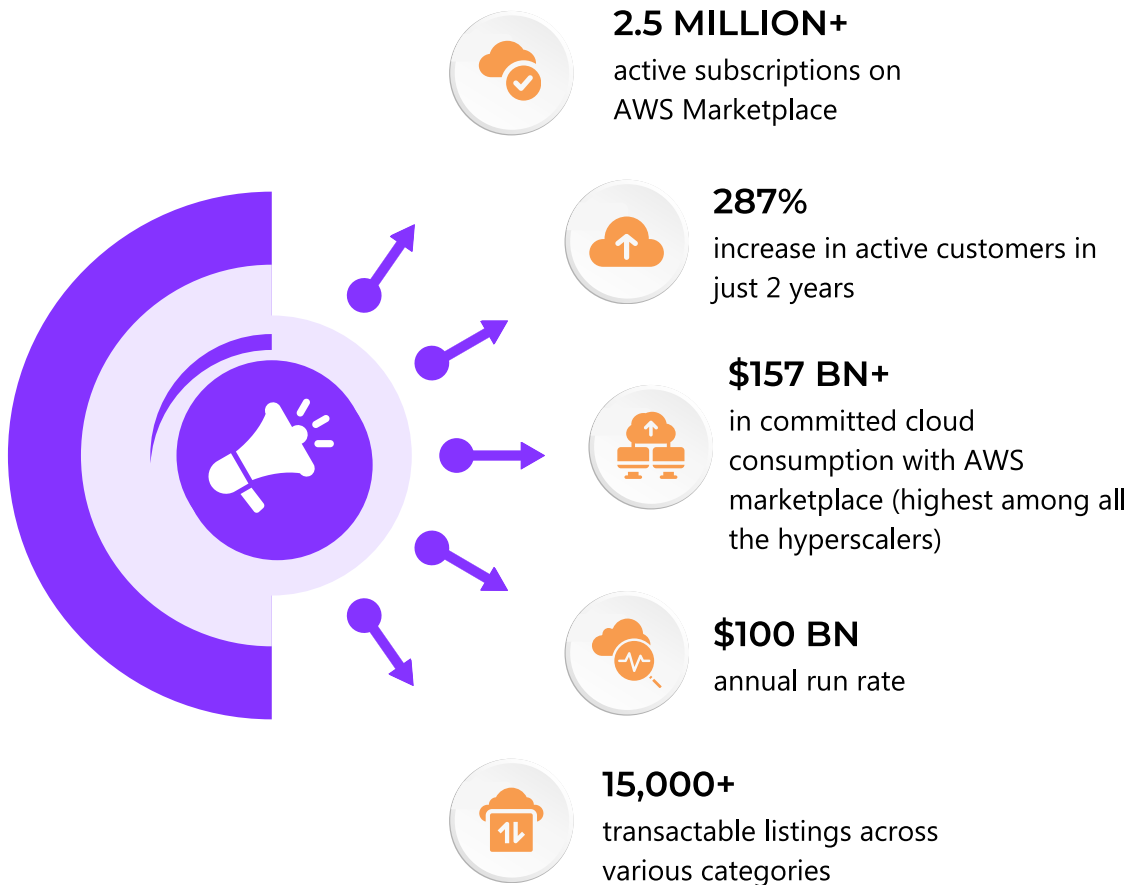
This clearly illustrates the exponentially growing potential of cloud computing and specifically cloud marketplaces for ISVs. Creating a sustainable growth model within the hyperscaler ecosystem

will definitely enable ISVs to expand their footprint, accelerate sales and overall create tangible bottom line and top line impact.

A Closer Look into AWS Marketplace

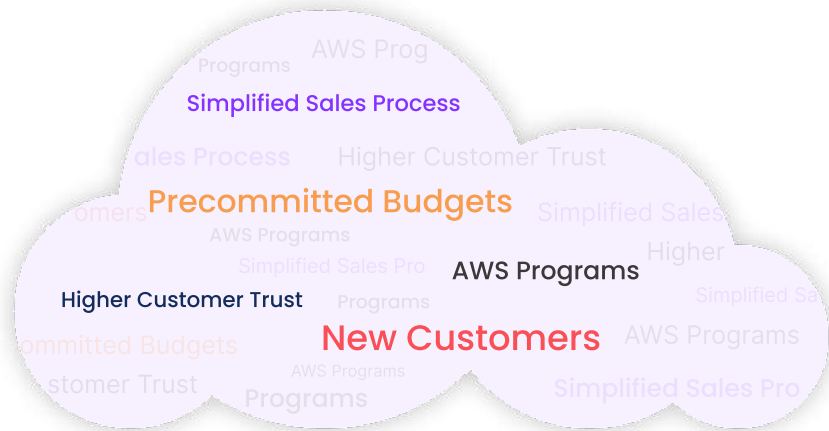
The cloud marketplace landscape is undergoing a seismic shift. Cloud marketplaces are transforming B2B buying. With a projected value of \$45 billion by 2025, cloud marketplaces are rapidly becoming the preferred channel for software acquisition. Within the hyperscalers ecosystem, AWS Marketplace, Microsoft Marketplace and Google Cloud Marketplace continue to dominate the cloud space. Combined, they now account for two thirds of the ever-growing

cloud market, with other smaller players competing within the single digit focus. However, dissecting further brings out the fact that within these three competing forces, AWS (Amazon’s cloud platform) has managed to maintain a lead, capturing over 30% of the cloud market share. There are several other factors complementing the AWS marketplace growth story, including:



Selling in AWS Marketplace: The Opportunity

While these factors clearly illustrate the growing potential, there are specific reasons why ISVs should list and transact through the AWS marketplace:



Access to new market segments and customers:

Reach customers beyond one's geographical area of operation, leveraging AWS' global presence.

Capitalize on the credibility of AWS:

Leverage customer trust in Amazon and AWS during the solution procurement process. Transactions through AWS offer greater customer comfort, as listed products and services have undergone rigorous due diligence. This makes customers more likely to buy software from the AWS marketplace than from other conventional sales channels.

Access pre-committed cloud consumption:

AWS's EDP (Enterprise Discount Program) allows customers to commit to a minimum cloud consumption for discounts. ISVs selling through AWS Marketplace can help software buyers use these pre-committed budgets (currently at \$157 Bn+) for their solutions.

Expedite deals with a simplified sales process:

AWS Marketplace reduces the operational burden of software sales for ISVs. Customers enjoy the convenience and self-service capabilities, while ISVs benefit from streamlined visibility, billing, and payouts.

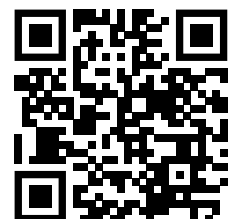
Leverage AWS-led programs, incentives, and opportunities:

AWS offers programs for co-selling, partner enablement, and more. These programs help ISVs gain AWS support for joint marketing, selling, and achieving necessary certifications and competencies.

Getting started with your AWS marketplace journey?

Leverage SaaSify's 30 day free trial to list, transact and manage AWS marketplace offers with no coding in just one week

<https://bit.ly/41nVzUt>



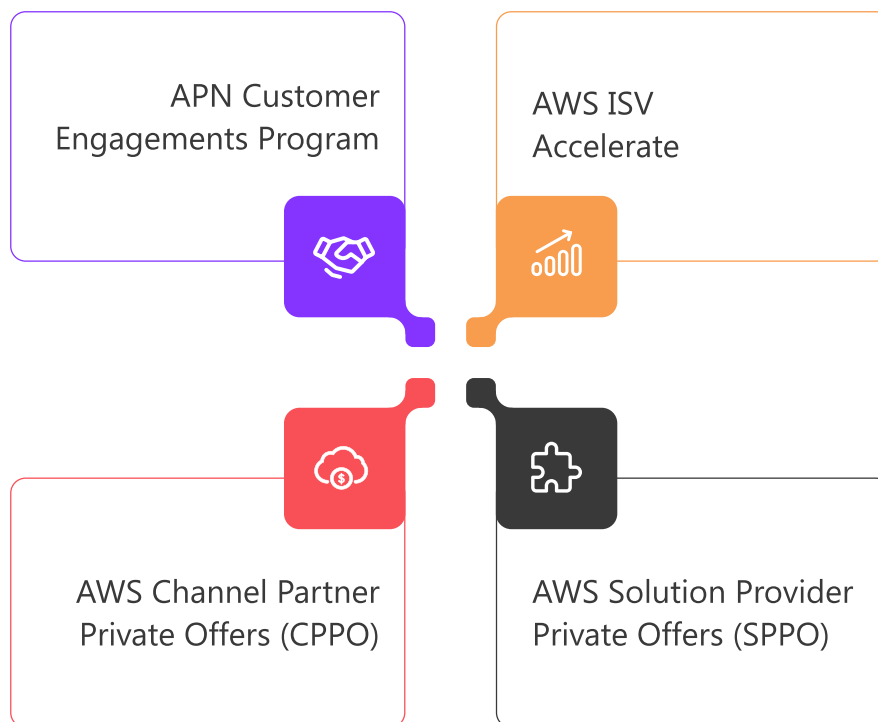
Succeeding in the AWS Marketplace with Partner Programs

As mentioned in the proceeding section, AWS marketplace has created several partner programs, leading to a transformational experience for all AWS partners. These programs, focused on creating diverse opportunities and incentives, can help you build, market, and sell your offerings in the AWS Marketplace. The core objective of these programs is to help ISVs unlock marketplace success with the requisite support to innovate, expand, and differentiate your offerings. Once an offer gets listed on the AWS Partner Network (APN) and is validated, ISVs can unlock access to differentiation programs, go-to-market resources, funding benefits, and more to gain recognition with customers and grow your business.

These programs will not only help you build your solutions on AWS marketplace, but can also help receive AWS specializations and certifications which

become critical for software buyers in their software procurement decisions. Research shows that 87% of cloud customers rank specializations as a top three partner selection criteria and 74% review their partners' certification at least twice a year.

In addition to helping you become a preferred choice for software customers, AWS partner programs create opportunities for ISVs to sell and grow with AWS. Such programs enable ISVs to collaborate and co-create with partners in the AWS ecosystem, both AWS field sellers and third party AWS partners to expand their reach and capitalize on the credibility of the partners under consideration. While there are several partner programs that exist, the top ones from a co-selling point of view are as follows. Essentially, a co-selling relationship involves engaging with cloud providers and ecosystem partners to increase visibility and sales opportunities.



AWS Partner Programs

APN Customer Engagements Program

One of the most coveted and sought after co-selling programs within the AWS ecosystem is APN Customer Engagements Program or the ACE Program. This program empowers you (ISVs) to securely collaborate and co-sell directly with AWS (via field sellers), fostering greater customer engagement and accelerating business growth. Essentially, it provides ISVs and AWS with a common platform to share joint leads and opportunities to win customers together. In addition to sharing leads and opportunities

(including receiving inbound opportunities from AWS), the ACE Program helps ISVs better understand customer needs and leverage the knowledge and expertise AWS sales teams carry about different customers. As the engagement grows, ISVs also become eligible for special discounts, access to development funds and several partner benefits. As a key focal area for this book, more details on the ACE Program have been covered in the subsequent chapters.

AWS ISV Accelerate

The AWS ISV Accelerate is another co-selling program powered by AWS marketplace that can help you gain access to co-selling resources and support from AWS field sellers, servicing millions of customers globally.

The program facilitates mutual commitment from ISVs and AWS account managers. Here is a quick list of what this program entails for ISVs:

Increased commitment from AWS Account Managers as they become eligible for a cash incentive upon closing opportunities successfully.

Feature in AWS Solution Library and gain visibility with links and collaterals in the library accessible to AWS Account Managers.

Participate in AWS-led marketing activities to boost visibility through AWS sales team initiatives.

Focused co-sell support with prioritized access to resources and support to drive ISV solution adoption.

Exclusive webinars to learn best practices for working with the AWS Sales organization.

Reduced listing fees for AWS Marketplace, AWS Data Exchange, and other financial incentives

While the two programs mentioned above enable you to collaborate and co-sell with AWS directly, the following two focus on developing partnerships

with other AWS ecosystem partners to drive business growth.

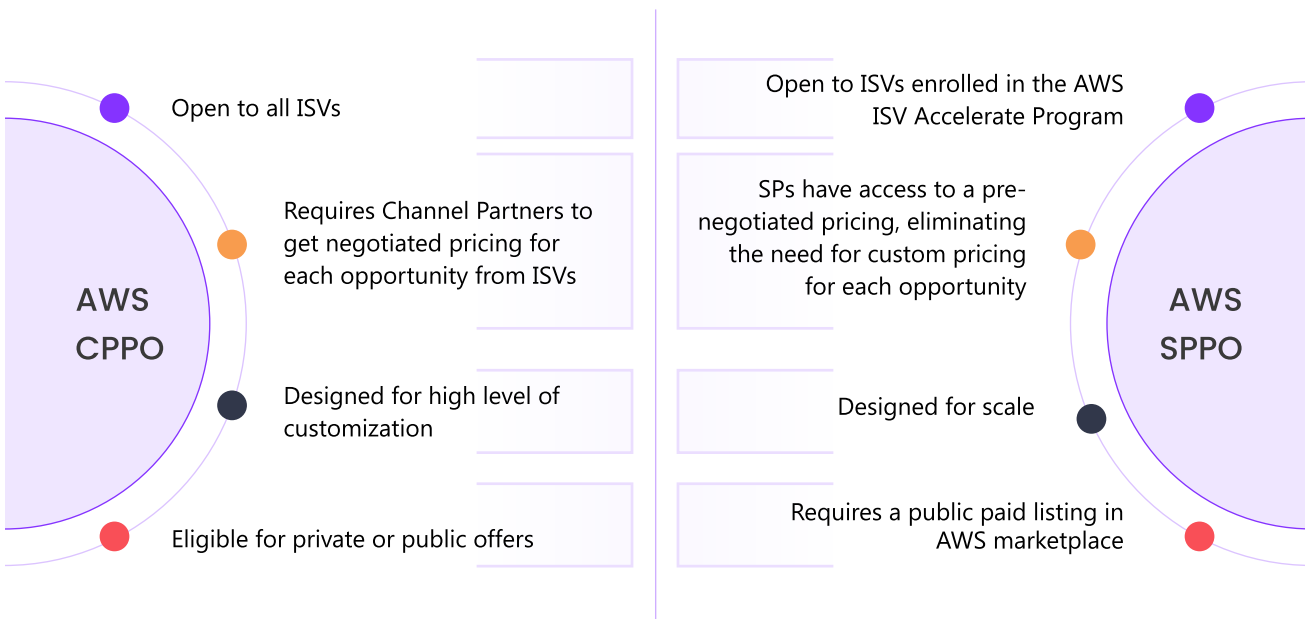
AWS Channel Partner Private Offers (CPPO)

With the Channel Partner Private Offer (CPPO), ISVs transacting through the AWS marketplace can authorize consulting partners or channel partners to receive wholesale pricing for the software solution and offer it to their end customers as a part of a bundled offer. This allows channel partners to customize the offer listing as they deem fit, on the pricing, terms, etc. as per customer needs. Generally, Channel Partners are long term affiliates

for enterprise customers, understanding customer’s need and retaining expertise to suggest appropriate software solutions. Hence, ISVs can capitalize on the knowledge, localized support capabilities, and the overall trust that channel partners carry to boost their software sales. At a macro level, CPPO can be understood as a reseller relationship for ISVs to widen their scope and reach.

AWS Solution Provider Private Offers (SPPO)

Built on top of the CPPO program mentioned above, the AWS Solution Provider Private Offers (SPPO), seeks to help ISVs leverage ecosystem partners to increase sales, albeit in a scalable format, as a standardized pricing authorization program. As a part of the channel program, SPPO essentially resell authorized ISV products listed in the AWS marketplace. However, there are some specific differences between the two leading channel programs, CPPO and SPPO.



Overall, with these channel programs, ISVs can capitalize on the AWS partner ecosystem for both enterprise customers that require customization as well as facilitate scalability where standard pricing works. Clearly, AWS marketplace has several co-selling and collaborative growth avenues that can enable software sellers to capitalize on its partner and

sales team ecosystem. ISVs that can leverage these programs, not simply as a tick mark, but a growth mindset are guaranteed to have a competitive edge over others. While we have given a macro view of the different partner programs, in the subsequent chapters, we will have a concentrated focus on the APN Customer Engagements (ACE) Program hitting the marketplace grounds.

Chapter 2

Decoding ACE Program: Overview

The APN Customer Engagements (ACE) program allows AWS Partners to securely collaborate and co-sell with AWS, drive successful customer engagements, and grow their business. It is a holistic program providing AWS partners with a dedicated platform to manage their leads and collaborate with AWS sales team to boost customer experience. The core objective of the ACE program is to enhance alignment and collaboration between AWS account teams and AWS partners to boost cloud consumption and software sales, which foster delight for mutual

customers. Overall, it helps sow the foundation for recurring sales for ISVs and AWS account managers. With the ACE program, subject to meeting minimum threshold criteria, AWS partners or ISVs become eligible for inbound and outbound referral opportunities, which allows them to cross-sell, upsell and co-sell with AWS. AWS Partners can leverage the ACE Pipeline Manager to submit, receive, access and manage leads and opportunities for co-selling. Here's a quick understanding of the leads and opportunities:

AWS Lead Referrals:

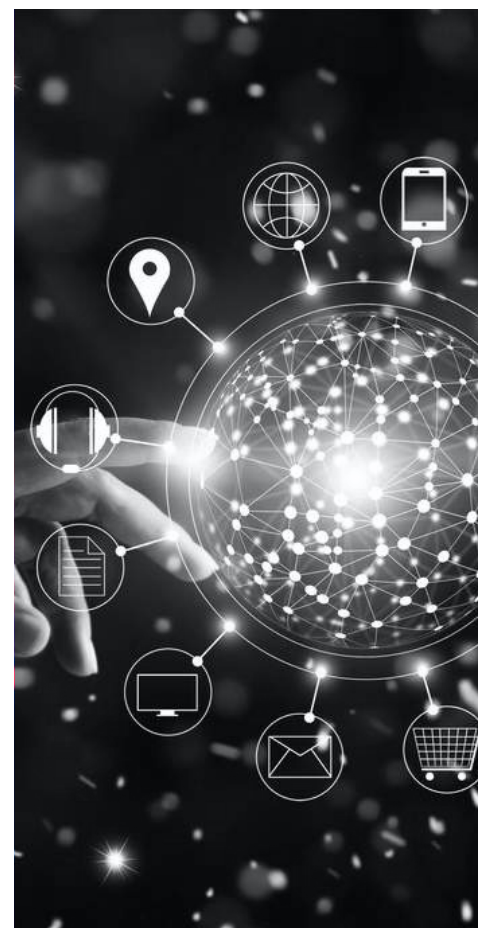
These are generally inbound prospects that have engaged with or have shown interest in one or more of AWS campaigns, while giving their consent to be contacted by APN partners to address their needs. (Originated by AWS)

AWS Opportunity Referrals:

These are leads that have been qualified and referred by AWS that have consented to be engaged by APN partners. (Originated by AWS)

AWS Validated Opportunities:

These are net new opportunities for AWS businesses which have been validated by ISVs and have given consent to be contacted further. Submitting these opportunities can help ISVs request sales or technical support to facilitate favorable customer outcomes. (Originated by ISVs)



Why Join the ACE Program?

As a leading co-selling program for AWS marketplace, being a part of ACE can open multiple avenues for ISVs or AWS partners, these include:



New revenue opportunities:

APN partners in the ACE program gain access to new sales leads from AWS, accelerate collaborative deals, and collaborate on joint marketing efforts.



Foster a delightful customer experience:

Co-selling with AWS account managers helps ISVs better understand customer needs, enhancing pitches and solution customization for higher closure rates.



Earn financial incentives:

Creating new customer opportunities can lead to financial incentives, including access to MDF and Partner Opportunity Acceleration Funds.



Receive technical support:

The ACE program provides technical and sales support from AWS experts to simplify the sales process.



Achieve competencies to show expertise:

Closed opportunities in the ACE pipeline contribute to competency requirements, showcasing expertise and a proven history of client success with AWS approval.

ACE Program Eligibility Requirements

Submit opportunities to AWS

Join the AWS Partner Network (APN) at no cost by creating your AWS Partner Central account

Accept the ACE Terms and Conditions available via the Partner Central

Receive referrals from AWS

Be a Standard, Advanced, or Premier-tier APN Partner

Submit AWS-validated opportunities dependent on tier level

Receive 10 APN Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) reviews

Have an active Partner Solutions Finder (PSF) directory listing

Recipient of APN Program designation such as AWS Competency, AWS Service Delivery, or AWS Managed Solution Provider (MSP) Program



How ACE Program Works: Understanding the Process

The major foundation of the ACE Program is built on sharing leads and opportunities with AWS sales teams and account managers to collaborate and jointly seal the deal. Essentially, the process starts with ISVs sharing opportunities of net new customers that have shown a willingness to transact

through the AWS marketplace. However, once a sizable number of opportunities have been shared by the ISV, after meeting the other eligibility criteria mentioned in the preceding section, ISVs begin receiving opportunities and leads from AWS. Here is the process of submitting and receiving referrals.



Identify the Opportunity

Start by identifying opportunities from within your existing or prospective customers that have shown an interest in transacting through AWS marketplace. Generally, customers that have committed cloud consumption with AWS are more likely to be inclined towards the opportunity. To identify the opportunity, you should:

Engage potential customers to understand their cloud status and budget outlook.

Build relationships with cloud teams to gauge committed consumption across hyperscalers.

Focus on well-engaged prospects interested in your solution for high conversion potential.

Submit the Opportunity

Once you have identified the opportunity, submit or register it via the APN portal and add it to the ACE pipeline manager. You need to:

- Log in to APN Partner Central
- Click on "Opportunities" from the main navigation menu and select "Add New"
- Fill in the applicable fields including the end-customer information and details about the opportunity being submitted
- Review all information before submitting the opportunity for AWS validation

You can either use the bulk upload option to register all opportunities at one go, or submit them separately. While bulk upload might seem to be operationally efficient at the first look, the next steps for each might become overwhelming when handled together. Therefore, it is ideal to submit opportunities at a consistent pace which you can manage to avoid unnecessary stress and also reflects on your sustainable collaborative potential.

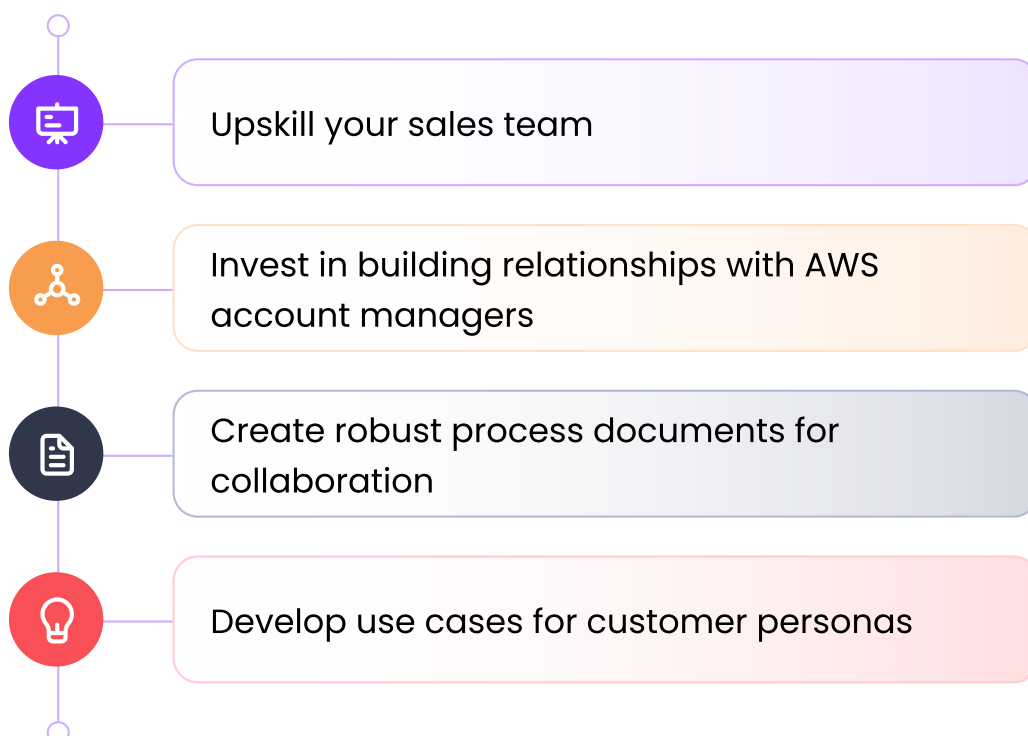
Identify the Opportunity

Each submitted opportunity to AWS undergoes technical validation to ensure that the opportunity or lead shared is authentic. The opportunity validation process can take up to a few days depending on the backlog AWS needs to address. In case AWS has any queries, they may reach out to you for additional information about the submitted opportunity. In most cases when the opportunity is authentic, it receives technical validation and moves to the next stage.

As the number of validated opportunities you submit increases, the propensity of receiving referrals from AWS also sees an exponential surge. Therefore, only submit opportunities which are authentic and you feel have a high probability of conversion.

Engage with AWS Team

Once the opportunity is validated, ISVs receive an email with details of their AWS reps or account managers. Additionally, there will be substantial communication regarding the next steps of the co-selling process. This is an extremely critical step and can make or break your ACE success. Some of the best practices to drive engagement successfully include:



Educate your sales team:

Train them on the ACE program and co-selling process, including sandbox training if possible, as they will interact with AWS reps and account managers.

Build relationships with AWS account managers:

Close collaboration helps them understand your product and refer potential customers. They can provide valuable insights on customer needs to align your pitch and marketing. Request specific support, such as pricing or technical complexity.

Create process notes and templates:

Document the ACE lifecycle and communications with AWS reps, from validation to closure. This proactive approach shows that joint efforts benefit the end customer and creates visibility.

Document collaboration ideas:

Create playbooks or use case documents for different customer archetypes, addressing common questions. This provides AWS reps with valuable knowledge assets for a better co-selling experience.

Receive Referrals from AWS

As AWS teams better understand your product and you meet the eligibility criteria, you will start receiving opportunities or leads from AWS. These referrals will have already consented to be contacted by you and you can directly get in touch to take the conversation forward. Since they have come to you post vetting by AWS teams, chances are high that they are looking for what you have to offer. To ensure that you get only relevant leads, educating AWS teams about your product effectively is extremely important.

Whenever an opportunity has been sourced by AWS reps or they have helped you land the opportunity, make sure to communicate the same to ACE portal when prompted. This will help improve your relationship with AWS reps, further incentivizing them to support you. Whether leads are originated by you or AWS reps, focus on collaboratively closing them. The more you engage with them, the higher chances are that you will have more referrals coming your way.

AWS Partner Central API for Selling

To simplify the co-selling process and enable AWS Partners to integrate their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems with AWS Partner Central, AWS launched the AWS Partner Central API for Selling. This API enables partners to optimize and scale their co-selling processes by automating the creation and management of APN Customer Engagement (ACE) opportunities within their CRM systems. It offers superior efficiency, scalability, and advanced error handling compared to the conventional Amazon S3-based CRM integration. Accessible to all AWS Partners, it streamlines operations and boosts overall productivity.

AWS Partner Central API for Selling enables partners to:

Create, update, view, and assign opportunities, and accept invitations for AWS referrals.

Retrieve a list of solutions on AWS Partner Central and associate specific solutions, AWS products, or AWS Marketplace offers with opportunities.

Stay informed with real-time notifications about opportunity changes via AWS EventBridge.

Monitor co-selling activities using Amazon CloudWatch and perform audits through AWS CloudTrail.

Combine this API with the AWS Marketplace Catalog API to manage the entire lifecycle directly within your CRM.



How to Ace the ACE Program?

Facilitating success with the ACE Program goes beyond submitting or receiving opportunities, or even building a working relationship with AWS teams. Undoubtedly, these are integral to success, however, it is extremely important to build a strategic plan to navigate the way to co-selling success with ACE. The following best practices, as adopted by several ISVs leveraging the ACE program, can be a comprehensive starting point.

Set Clear Co-Selling Objectives and Align with ACE Program Goals

Like any other sales process, it is extremely important to clearly determine what you wish to achieve from co-selling. It can range from driving X launched opportunities (closed won) to generating Y in revenue through co-selling to receiving Z referrals from AWS teams. Be sure to make your goals or objective SMART, ambitious, but achievable. It is ideal to break your goals with milestones, while the initial few months can focus on submitted opportunities and building a rapport with AWS teams, later years can be directed towards closing deals together and driving co-sell revenue. In fact, in the later years, you can even set goals like A% of your total revenue to be derived from ACE co-selling.

Once you have set your co-selling goals, align them with objectives specific to the ACE program. For instance, if one of your co-selling goals is to receive more referrals from AWS, a corresponding ACE program goal can be to connect with AWS sales reps

at least X times in a month or Y times for every Z opportunities that you collaborate on.

Leverage AWS Marketplace as a Strategic Software Sales Channel

Once your goals are set, it is extremely important to position the strategic role of AWS marketplace as a sales channel. If you maintain the perception of AWS marketplace as an alternative and push it to the periphery, chances of driving successful co-selling campaigns within ACE program will be extremely low. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, AWS marketplace is becoming the preferred mode of software purchase for customers.

At the same time, AWS sales teams are only interested in helping you close deals that are directed through the AWS marketplace. Hence, making a strategic move towards AWS marketplace as your sales channel of choice, with transactable offers, can drive greater attention from AWS teams.

Educate, Enable and Empower Sales Teams

To leverage the ACE program benefits, it is important to ensure that your sales teams understand the diverse nuances of co-selling. This means not just memorizing the terms and conditions of the ACE program, but also the subtle undertones which lead to success. Ideally, you should start by evaluating how much your teams already know to understand where the gaps lie.

Focus on building knowledge of your Sales team about:

ACE Benefits

Different Key Stakeholders Your Teams will be in Touch with

Organizational Structure within AWS Teams

Overall Co-selling Process

Best Communication Practices with AWS Teams

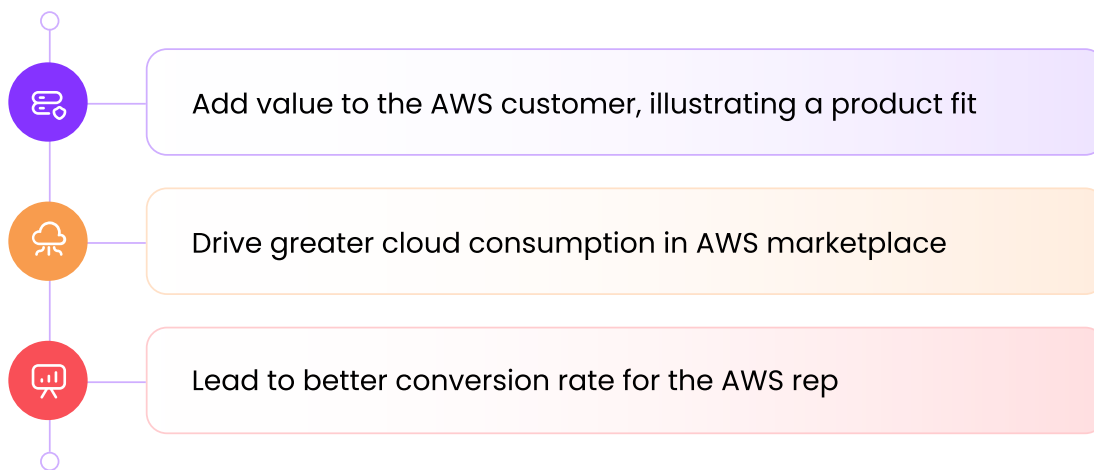
Periodic evaluations and tests, along with reviewing results from previous training sessions can help make the trainings more effective. However, siloed 1-day training might not be the most ideal. In fact, you should try to integrate ACE training and knowledge dissemination at every step of the employee learning lifecycle from induction to refresher at frequent intervals.

In addition to educating your sales teams, you also need to enable and empower them with the right resources and tools needed to win at co-selling. Create enough use cases, practice documentation

and other collaterals which can help your sales teams understand ACE and work with AWS teams better. Having the right pitch decks and marketing collaterals can significantly accelerate ACE success. Here, leveraging existing AWS resources including marketing, technical and sales enablement support, along side checklists, etc. can help educate and empower sales teams. AWS routinely publishes blogs, videos and live webinars, in addition to its flagship events, all of which can be a great source of latest knowledge for sales teams.

Build a Co-selling Narrative

Taking cue from the point on collaterals and pitch decks, ACE success is also largely dependent on the co-selling narrative you create for AWS sales teams. Instead of simply calling out what your product does or highlighting the USP, define how your solution can:



It is critical to demonstrate why co-selling with you is a better proposition for AWS sales reps than any of your competitors. Here, the more you understand about their customers and explain about your product can make a difference. Don't forget to add some success stories and case studies in your co-

selling narrative. It might also be a good idea to create targetted use cases for different industries or customer archetypes as a part of your co-selling narrative. Overall, your focus should be on how collectively (you and AWS sales rep) can offer a winning solution for the customer.

Establish Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

All of the aforementioned strategies to ace the ACE program will fall in place once you establish metrics and KPIs to track co-selling performance. The objective is not only to track the performance on the goals set forth initially. Undoubtedly, that's important. But, you also need to track the engagements through the process and measure them for success. Some of the engagement metrics for ACE could be:

Number of joint meetings held

Number of leads or opportunities closed won together

Number of leads where co-selling support was sought and received

Number of referrals received from AWS

Tracking these can help measure the overall progress and even identify the gaps in the process. Frequent discussions with the sales teams to create feedback loops can help address challenges early on. Having KPIs and metrics also set clear expectations from sales teams and others. Measuring progress on KPIs can also help redefine ACE strategy and refine the overall business' sales tactics.

It is evident that ACE program comes with immense

potential and following the right co-selling strategy can make it a top revenue house for ISVs. However, preparing the sales teams and getting the relationships right with AWS sales leaders is integral for harnessing this potential. The practices and guidelines mentioned above can help you cross the bridge and capitalize on the ACE potential like leading businesses have, as mentioned in the following chapter.

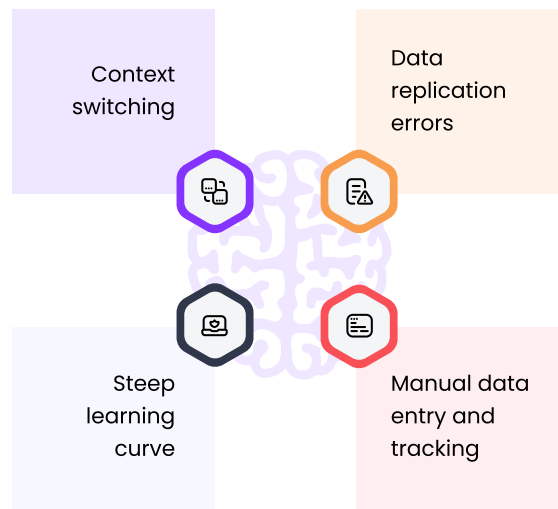
Chapter 3

Automating ACE Pipeline Management

Conventionally, managing the ACE pipeline to facilitate co-selling is a highly manual and operational intensive task. ISVs sometimes consider it to be an inefficient approach to resource allocation.

Challenges with Manual ACE Pipeline Management

In its manual avatar, ACE pipeline management presents the following challenges for ISVs and software sellers:



Context Switching: Moving between CRM (like Salesforce, HubSpot, Zoho) and AWS Partner Central for submitting opportunities is time-consuming, adds unnecessary steps without any additional value, and leads to delays and missed opportunities.

Steep Learning Curve: Managing the ACE pipeline requires ISVs to train teams on AWS Partner Central, involving technical steps and data mapping or requires ISVs to bring on additional resources who are already trained for this job. This upskilling is costly and often seen as unnecessary by sales teams.

Manual Data Entry Errors: Replicating data from CRM to AWS Partner Central manually is error-prone, with workers spending 1-3 hours daily fixing mistakes. These inaccuracies can damage the ISV's reputation with AWS, hampering the co-selling relationship.

Building CRM Connectors In-House: Some ISVs create custom connectors to automate the ACE pipeline process, but this is engineering-intensive and diverts resources from other priorities.

Tracking Status: Monitoring submitted opportunities requires constant toggling between portals and updating statuses, making the process ineffective and burdensome. Since a successful co-selling relationship is dependent on closely monitoring joint leads, manually tracking them across platforms can make the process ineffective.

Complexities: AWS Partner Central API Integration

An alternative to the manual ACE pipeline management process is leveraging the AWS Partner Central API that enables AWS Partners to integrate their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems with AWS Partner Central. Integrating the AWS Partner Central API can revolutionize

sales and streamline workflows for ISVs. However, the complexity of custom coding and the need for engineering resources often pose significant challenges, particularly for teams with limited technical bandwidth. Some key challenges include:

Custom coding for CRM integration: Connecting AWS Partner Central API with your CRM system requires tailored code, which can be time-consuming and resource-intensive.

Strained engineering resources: Engineering bandwidth is critical for a smooth integration, which may overburden teams already managing other high-priority tasks.

Developer upskilling: To manage integrations effectively, teams may need additional training and expertise in custom coding and API management.

Complex integration tasks: From creating opportunities and accepting referrals to viewing all opportunities, each step requires meticulous custom coding to create seamless workflows.

While AWS provides a comprehensive repository of use cases and code samples to simplify the process, the integration remains engineering-heavy. Whether it's building the basic connection between AWS

Partner Central API and your CRM or managing custom workflows, each step demands significant engineering effort.



Automating ACE Pipeline Management for Effective Co-selling

Automation is being considered a game changer by ISVs who wish to simplify and streamline the ACE pipeline management process and maximize the benefits reaped from the program. Essentially, automating ACE pipeline management takes out the friction faced by ISVs by reducing the manual effort that goes in excelling with the ACE program. The major caveat of automation lies in automating data exchange between the AWS Partner Central portal and the preferred CRM. Here's how it works:

Create and Submit Opportunities on ACE

As a first step, automation of ACE pipeline management enables ISVs to easily map their CRM fields to AWS fields, which allows them to directly convert their leads, opportunities or objects into AWS opportunities, without leaving the system of record (e.g. Salesforce, HubSpot, Zoho CRM). It is a one-time process to set up any custom fields needed and map the objects, post which all opportunities can follow through.

Managed Inbound Lead or Opportunity Referrals from AWS

Next, any leads or referrals that are sourced or validated by AWS reps can also be received within your preferred CRM by leveraging automation. Invariably, the referrals or leads sent through on APN are directly synced with ISV's CRM and are reflected

there. ISVs can set up custom filters or settings within their CRM to filter our leads or referrals based on some pre-set criteria. This means that ISVs no longer have to undertake the multiple additional steps needed to log into APN for every referral notification they receive.

View Lead and Opportunity Status in Real Time

In addition to enabling ISVs to submit and accept referral opportunities or leads, automation also facilitates the ability to keep a track of the status for each lead in real time. ISVs can easily monitor deal status from within their system of record or CRM and stay on the same page. This also prevents multiple follow up between different ISV teams on the status update. Bi-directional sync ensures that there is a single source of truth for each offer/ deal, irrespective of the platform that ISVs team look at.

SaaSify AWS-ACE CRM Connector: Automating ACE Pipeline Management Efficiently and Simplifying AWS Partner Central API-CRM Integration

There are a few ways to achieve this automation and seamlessly leverage the AWS Partner Central API. With SaaSify, ISVs can skip the technical hurdles of custom coding while still harnessing the full power of the AWS Partner Central API. In addition to simplifying the selling process, SaaSify unlocks valuable features that go beyond what traditional integrations offer, providing ISVs with:

Bi-Directional Opportunity Sync: Create, update, view, and assign opportunities, as well as accept invitations to engage on AWS referrals within their CRM, with near real time sync to AWS ACE, ensuring that every opportunity is up-to-date.

Effortless Opportunity Creation: Easily convert CRM opportunities into AWS ACE co-sell deals and retrieve a list of their solutions on AWS Partner Central, and associate specific solutions, AWS products, or AWS Marketplace offers with opportunities as needed.

Real-Time Collaboration with AWS Sellers: ISVs can engage with AWS field sellers in real time, ensuring quick and efficient co-sell collaboration without toggling between platforms.

Instant Updates and Notifications: Receive real-time status updates and alerts via Slack, Email, or preferred communication channels to keep teams aligned and responsive.

Dynamic Insights Dashboard: Gain valuable insights into your co-sell performance with an intuitive, customizable dashboard, empowering strategic decision-making and fostering deeper AWS partnerships.

Cost Optimization and Impact: Enhance co-selling potential without additional resources, optimize expenses and accelerate processes to reduce missed opportunities and increase revenue.

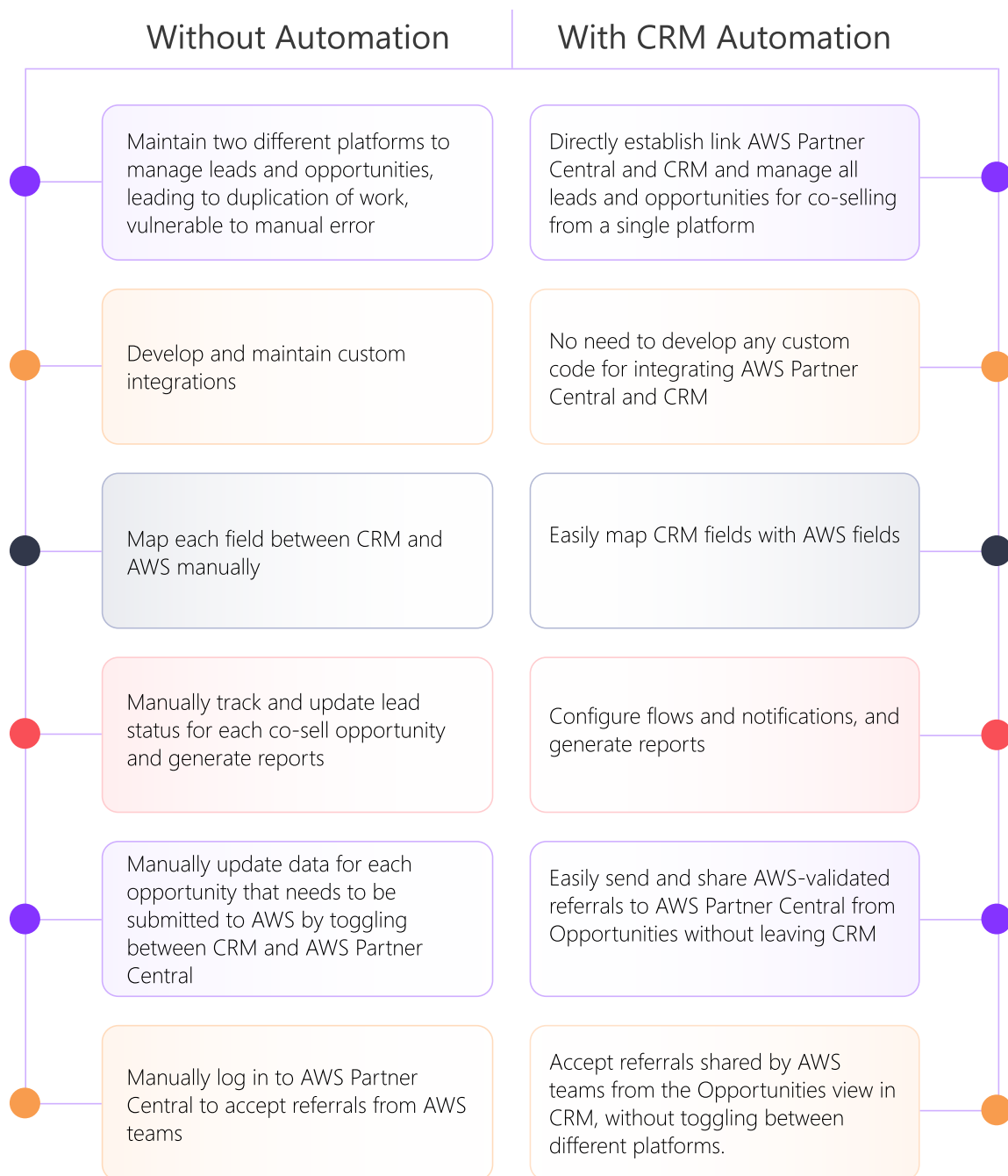
Decentralized ACE Pipeline Management: Teams can easily view lead statuses regardless of their AWS Partner Central training, improving transparency and reporting.

By offering a fully automated integration with no technical hurdles, SaaSify makes the process of leveraging the AWS Partner Central API more efficient and scalable, driving greater business outcomes.

“SaaSify’s integration of AWS ACE with Salesforce automated our Co-Sell processes, significantly reducing our Partnerships team’s workload. This seamless automation enhanced tracking, efficiency, and revenue growth, and allowed us to connect with AWS teams globally easily and quickly, thus accelerating our Co-Sell efforts, and AWS Partnership.”

Zoya Bronshteyn, Senior Strategic Cloud Alliances Manager, CAST AI

Managing ACE Pipeline



Invariably, ISVs that wish to unlock the full potential of the ACE Program must consider leveraging automation to facilitate direct and real time sync of data between their CRM and AWS Partner Central. Not only does it add efficiency to the entire process, helping ISVs save millions of dollars on

redundant manual data entry and financial losses due to manual error, it also accelerates the co-selling process, fostering greater sales opportunities. Thus, automating the ACE pipeline management with partners like SaaSify creates a direct business impact for ISVs.

Chapter 4

The New & Improved ACE Program

The ACE Program which has been the biggest enabler of co-selling on AWS Marketplace, donned a new Avatar. Introducing some exciting changes and developments, ACE will not only strengthen the program further, but will also provide greater opportunities for ISVs to unlock AWS Marketplace success and drive business impact.

New Changes with APN Customer Engagements (ACE)

While there have been significant functionalities that have been prevalent as a part of the original ACE program, this new avatar comes with some additional features. Most of the additions have been motivated by the need to streamline the entire co-selling process, leading to greater efficiency for ISVs as well as AWS reps. Some of the new functionalities that have been introduced include:

Data Model Updates for Integration:

Updates include new fields and modifications to existing ones to facilitate integration with AWS CRM. ACE provides default values for mandatory fields and assists with mapping old values to new ones, aiming to streamline co-selling opportunity management for ISVs and AWS reps.

Streamlined Opportunity Management:

The New & Improved ACE Program introduces custom objects for referral opportunities and leads within AWS CRM to enhance collaboration and visibility in the co-selling process. This change improves data tracking and reporting capabilities, facilitating higher closure rates and end-to-end connectivity for referrals from creation to closure in AWS Marketplace.

Workflow Automation:

The new ACE program automates repetitive tasks across the co-selling lifecycle, from opportunity creation to approval management and deal tracking. This automation aims to free up ISV time for building relationships and closing deals, enhancing bottom-line impact without additional overhead.

One-Click Automapping:

The New & Improved ACE Program introduces one-click automapping for custom objects, simplifying the mapping process for new opportunities and leads with a single click. This feature reduces manual data entry errors, improves efficiency, and contributes to higher deal closure rates and revenue.

Business Case for The New & Improved ACE Program

Frictionless Operations

One of the first advantages of enhanced ACE Program for ISVs has been the elimination or at least significant reduction in the friction points that were earlier observed in the co-selling process. The addition of new data models and simplified data management with custom objects, streamlining workflows with automation and opportunity management as well as functionalities like one-click automapping will all be extremely instrumental in redefining user experience, making it more intuitive, easy to navigate and overall seamless.

Strategic Co-selling

Second, the changes and developments are all set to reimagine the positioning of co-selling as an approach for ISVs. They are striving to put more focus on the unique value proposition for each co-selling opportunity, encouraging ISVs and AWS reps to adopt a more strategic approach. By automating a significant portion of co-selling work, both the parties can collaborate better to define how their partnership brings in significant value for the customer, which they may not be able to accomplish in silos.

This will allow them to work together strategically and create a winning co-selling narrative as well as create solutions that deliver tangible benefits for the customers (resulting from the co-selling set up). Overall, this program is built on the foundation that ISVs and AWS reps can focus more on building meaningful relationships to collaborate better in closing deals.

Greater Efficiency

Clearly, efficiency is a key business outcome that "The New & Improved ACE Program" brings along. Looking at each functionality that has been added or has been improved, it is evident that optimizing the overall efficiency of co-selling initiatives has been integral. Automating manual processes and

streamlining workflows significantly reduces the time that is spent on manual data entry work which is repetitive and can be replaced with more value additive tasks.

Furthermore, it reduces the incidence of manual errors that can lead to missed opportunities, delays or even reputational damages. At the same time, reduced operational burden mitigate the need for hiring additional resources for managing administrative work in the co-selling lifecycle, minimizing any extra HR cost. All these factors together directly impact both the top and the bottom line for businesses and create a business case for focusing on co-selling as a strategic intervention to boost their software sales.

Better Customer Outcomes

Taking cue from the point on strategic co-selling, ACE is now slated to facilitate greater focus for both ISVs and AWS reps on driving greater value for customers. Invariably, when these two parties join forces, there are several benefits that customers can expect. However, stuck in the loop of manual data management, mismanaged workflows, etc., ISVs and AWS reps find it difficult to enhance customer outcomes. With automation and workflow streamlining, ISVs and AWS reps can ensure that co-selling efforts deliver impactful solutions that address specific customer needs.

AWS ACE with the SaaSify Advantage

Undoubtedly, the new and improved ACE program is a milestone step in the co-selling journey for ISVs selling through AWS Marketplace. However, keeping pace with the developments can, at times, be a bit challenging and having a partner on the side to navigate the way comes in handy. As AWS

continues to transform its ACE program, SaaSify is committed to delivering comprehensive support to ISVs, enabling and empowering them to capitalize on the new opportunities coming their way. With SaaSify, ISVs can:

Stay Updated on All Changes Without Making any Effort

SaaSify is backed by a team of dedicated cloud professionals with deep ties with AWS marketplace. Invariably, the platform is built on the foundation of being able to handle any and every change that AWS brings along. The SaaSify platform is engineered in a way that it quickly reflects and supports any changes that occur in the AWS landscape. This ensures that ISVs don't have to spend any time scouting through the changes to understand the impact. They can simply depend on SaaSify to keep them updated.

Automate the ACE Pipeline

SaaSify's AWS ACE-CRM Connector helps automate each part of the co-selling lifecycle right from co-sell planning, referral and opportunity sharing, pipeline management and managing offers automation. Invariably, it enables ISVs to automate the mapping of new data models and fields being added, ensuring that ISVs spend minimal time in managing the ACE pipeline, while focusing more on building relationships. Through this no-code AWS ACE-CRM connector, SaaSify eliminates the need to custom code AWS Partner Central API integration.

Leverage Expertise in AWS Co-Selling

Finally, SaaSify's long-term experience in driving AWS integration and co-selling for ISVs is extremely critical for ISVs to receive guidance on each step of the way. SaaSify experts possess all the knowledge needed to facilitate a smooth transition to the new avatar of ACE, guiding ISVs on what to expect, how to navigate the journey as well as the best practices to stay ahead of the curve.

Overall, enhancements in ACE will definitely be a gamechanger in the co-selling space fostering greater efficiency and making co-selling a part of the strategic priority for ISVs. It is slated to augment the

partner experience in multiple ways, empowering ISVs to unlock greater co-selling success and maximize their business growth within the AWS Marketplace.

Chapter 5

Key Takeaways: 5 Things to Keep in Mind about ACE Program

Throughout this book, we have covered everything an ISV or an AWS partner needs to know about AWS marketplace as well as the ACE program to augment the effectiveness of their co-sell strategy and approach. Here is a quick recap of the top five things that ISVs must keep in mind to get started and optimize their ACE journey, curated with insights from AWS marketplace experts and captures experiences of ISVs who have been accelerating success with the ACE program.

Be Clear on What You Want to Achieve

It is extremely important to have clarity on what the objectives and outcomes you wish to achieve. Enrolling in the ACE program just as a trend or a good to have will not lead to any tangible outcome. ISVs must internally align on the goals they seek to accomplish with the ACE program. Right from accelerated deal closure to receiving net new business referrals from AWS, there are several goals that can be set.

In fact, as ISVs progress in their ACE journey as well as achieve business growth, in terms of revenue, customer base, etc., in all likelihood, the goals set for the ACE program will change. Thus, it is suggested to set up incremental goals which may change or expand on an annual basis. However, the bottom line is to have objectives which can help incorporate co-selling and ACE program as a business strategy for sales, rather than an opportunistic tactic.



Get Technical and Operational Understanding in Place

Once the goals are set, it is advised to go deep in the program and understand the technical and operational nuances to get going and optimize performance. Right from clarifying the technical requirements needed to be eligible for the ACE program to additional requirements to unlock top tier benefits and receive referrals from AWS, ISVs need to be on top of everything.

Having a clear understanding early on helps make efforts for ACE success in the right direction. It greatly reduces the need for trial and error and allows ISVs to leverage best practices to succeed. Furthermore, delving deeper into the program can also help gauge the benefits and requirements of other AWS partner programs that exist to identify synergies between them and create a holistic approach to AWS success.

Focus on Building Relationships

The biggest success enabler for the ACE program is building relationships, both with customers, and more importantly with AWS field representatives and sellers. When ISVs focus on going beyond a transactional connection with the AWS reps, chances of receiving AWS-originated referrals become higher. While providing the sellers with partner originated leads is one way, it is equally important to take out the time and make an effort to educate the AWS rep about one's product and benefits.

This involves not only stating the USP of one's software offering, but also entails illustrating how the ISV and the AWS rep can create a winning offering for the latter's customers. The relationship needs to focus on building a winning co-selling narrative, where the AWS reps must understand the shared value this relationship can unlock. Thus, ISV teams need to build this capability and not consider co-selling as just a selling channel, but rather consider AWS reps as external extensions of their teams.

Identify Partners to Automate ACE Pipeline Management

Undoubtedly, there are a myriad of tasks which need to be performed in order to close or 'win' each co-selling opportunity in the ACE pipeline. While the activities which require high order intellectual rigor like creating a value narrative or building relationships with AWS reps and customers, requires human intervention, many other tasks can be automated, optimizing resource allocation, while increasing productivity, accuracy and pace of ACE pipeline management.

This requires ISVs to identify and collaborate with partners like SaaSify, which can help automate

every step of the ACE pipeline management. For instance, SaaSify enables ISVs to directly create co-selling opportunities in the AWS Partner Central, without leaving their system of record (CRM). In addition, they can also receive and accept AWS-originated opportunities from within CRM and can even track the status of each opportunity from there. This automated workflow, with a single pane view or visibility across the pipeline from a single CRM dashboard, can be a deciding factor in ACE program success.

Keep Pace with Changes and Updates

Lastly, keeping pace with any changes to the program is pivotal for success. For instance, the changes accompanying the launch of the new and improved ACE program is revolutionary and will set forth a new era of the ACE program with updates in data models, workflow automation, one-click automapping, among others. However, it is only possible for ISVs to leverage these changes and advancements when they are aware about them.

However, while staying aware might be simpler, understanding the repercussions of the changes and how to capitalize on them can be a daunting task.

Here again, partnerships with cloud marketplace experts like SaaSify can help make a dent. Such partners come with comprehensive experience of navigating the changing AWS marketplace and other hyperscaler landscapes and are, thus, able to quickly understand and guide their customers on best practices to leverage the new developments. For instance, SaaSify updates all its ISVs in real-time, any new changes that may have an impact and the SaaSify platform is engineered to consistently reflect any program changes to benefit the ISVs.

In conclusion, the ACE Program presents a significant opportunity for ISVs to enhance their co-sell strategy and achieve business growth through the AWS marketplace. By integrating clear objectives, fostering strong relationships, understanding technical nuances, leveraging automation, and staying current with program updates, ISVs can unlock significant growth opportunities. The insights provided throughout this book seek to equip ISVs with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate their ACE journey successfully, especially focusing on the new and improved ACE. Embracing the ACE Program not only facilitates a structured approach to co-selling but also positions ISVs to achieve sustained business success in collaboration with AWS.

SaaSify

About our Sponsors

At SaaSify, we empower Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) to seamlessly navigate and thrive in the dynamic landscape of cloud marketplaces. Our comprehensive platform accelerates your go-to-market strategy, enabling you to list, sell, and manage your SaaS offerings across major platforms like AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud with unparalleled efficiency.

SaaSify come with proven experience of enabling hundreds of ISVs to succeed in working with cloud providers (Hyperscalers) in the most cost effective, customer-centric and flexible manner which best aligns with their business objectives. Here are some highlights and key offering from SaaSify.

Cloud Go-To-Market (GTM) Platform:

Simplify your marketplace journey with our unified interface, designed to streamline SaaS offer management, subscription lifecycle, and metering. Deploy transactable SaaS solutions with branded landing pages on Cloud marketplaces (AWS Marketplace, Azure Marketplace and GCP Marketplace) in days, not weeks, and manage the entire lifecycle effortlessly.

Private Offer Lifecycle Automation:

SaaSify platform automates the creation and management of private offers, integrating seamlessly with your CRM systems like Salesforce, Hubspot etc. This integration empowers your sales team to handle private offers within their existing workflows, enhancing efficiency and ensuring consistency.

Marketplace Product Led Growth:

Enable you to activate a new channel for Product-led Growth (PLG) that will increase revenue and self-service user acquisition within the marketplace customer base.

Co-Sell Lifecycle Automation:

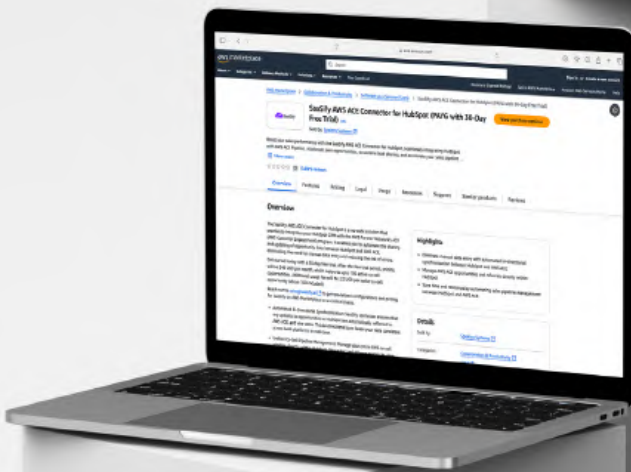
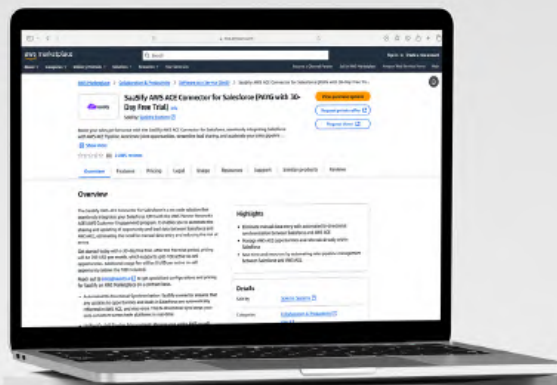
Elevate your collaborative sales efforts. SaaSify integrates with AWS's ACE program and CRM platforms, enabling automated, bi-directional synchronization of opportunity and lead data. Manage co-sell pipelines directly within your CRM, receive real-time updates, and accelerate joint sales initiatives, all while reducing manual data entry and errors.

AWS Marketplace

SaaSify AWS ACE CRM Connectors



AWS ACE Connector for Salesforce
<https://bit.ly/41HM6bL>



AWS ACE Connector for HubSpot
<https://bit.ly/3QGT7DE>

Start Your 30 Day Free Trial on AWS Marketplace

The SaaSify AWS ACE CRM Connector is a no-code solution that seamlessly integrates your CRM with the AWS Partner Network's ACE (AWS Customer Engagement) program. It enables you to automate the sharing and updating of opportunity and lead data between your CRM and AWS ACE, eliminating the need for manual data entry and reducing the risk of errors.

Eliminate manual data entry with automated bi-directional synchronization between your CRM and AWS ACE

Manage AWS ACE opportunities and referrals directly within your CRM

Save time and resources by automating sales pipeline management between your CRM and AWS ACE

Glossary

APN Customer Engagements Program (ACE)

A co-selling program by AWS to facilitate collaboration between AWS partners and AWS teams, enabling joint management of customer engagements and opportunities.

ACE Automation

Tools and processes to automate the workflows and activities within the ACE program, improving efficiency and reducing manual efforts, from within the system of record (e.g. Salesforce CRM)

ACE Pipeline Manager

A feature within the ACE program that allows partners to manage their sales pipeline, track opportunities, and collaborate with AWS teams.

APN Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Reviews

Customer satisfaction reviews collected by AWS from partners' customers, providing feedback on the services provided by AWS partners.

AWS Channel Partner Private Offers (CPPO)

A program allowing AWS Channel Partners to receive wholesale pricing on their software and professional services.

AWS Competency

A designation awarded to AWS partners who have demonstrated technical proficiency and proven customer success in specialized solution areas.

AWS Data Exchange

A service by AWS that allows customers to easily find, subscribe to, and use third-party data in the cloud.

AWS Marketplace

An online store where customers can find, buy, and deploy software and services that run on AWS.

AWS Managed Service Provider (MSP) Program

A program that recognizes and validates AWS partners with expertise in cloud infrastructure and application migration, providing end-to-end AWS solutions to customers.

AWS Partner Network (APN)

A global community of partners who leverage AWS to build solutions and services for customers, offering a range of programs to help partners grow their business.

AWS Service Delivery

A designation for APN partners that have a deep understanding of specific AWS services and have demonstrated success in delivering these services to customers.

AWS Solution Provider Private Offers (SPPO)

A program designed for APN Consulting Partners to resell authorized ISV products listed in AWS Marketplace through a simplified engagement model.

AWS-Validated Opportunities

Net-new AWS business and has been thoroughly prospected by ISVs to clearly define the end-customer's needs, pain points, and what your firm is proposing to solve.

Cloud Marketplace / Hyperscaler

An online store operated by a cloud provider (hyperscaler) where customers can buy, sell, and manage software solutions and services.

Co-Selling

A collaborative sales approach where AWS partners and AWS teams jointly engage in sales efforts to drive customer success and business growth.

Committed Cloud Consumption

A purchasing model where customers commit to a certain level of cloud usage over a period, often in exchange for discounted pricing.

Enterprise Discount Program

A program offering discounted pricing for large-scale enterprise customers based on their committed cloud consumption.

Google Cloud Marketplace

An online store where customers can find, buy, and deploy software and services that run on Google Cloud.

ISVs (Independent Software Vendors)

Companies that develop, market, and sell software solutions that run on cloud platforms, often available through cloud marketplaces.

Marketing Development Funds

Funds provided by cloud providers to partners to support marketing activities that promote the partners' solutions and drive customer acquisition.

Microsoft Commercial Marketplace

An online store where customers can find, buy, and deploy software and services that run on Microsoft Azure.

Partner Solutions Finder (PSF) Directory Listing

A directory where AWS partners can list their solutions and services, making it easier for customers to find and engage with them.

SaaSify

SaaSify is a leading provider of cloud integration and co-selling solutions for ISVs.

Transactable Listing

A listing in a cloud marketplace that allows customers to directly purchase and deploy the software or service through the marketplace interface.



The ISV's Guide to Successful Co-Selling on AWS Marketplace

Explore APN Customer Engagements (ACE) Program, co-sell frameworks, and best practices for accelerating growth on AWS Marketplace

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Unlock Success on Cloud Marketplaces with SaaSify

Get in Touch

Visit: www.saasify.ai

Email: sales@saasify.com

