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Better Together – How a Solution-Minded Partner Ecosystem Drives Retail Modernization

BlueStar & Intel Accelerate Innovation by Enabling Software Companies in the Reseller Channel

Written by BlueStar Team

The retail market continues to face headwinds as economic challenges pile up, competition between online and big-box stores grows, and consumers increasingly demand better experiences, faster access to products, and have more insights at their fingertips (now powered by AI!) than ever.

For retailers to modernize in-store or online, they require solutions that address all aspects of the potential customer journey and utilize a variety of existing and emerging technologies together. A [recent IHL Group study](#) found that sales winners in retail were spending **four times more on IT projects** than laggards.

That same study also found that retailers are prioritizing customer experience, inventory visibility, and empowering store associates with their tech purchases heading into 2026. While the latest and greatest hardware is more powerful than ever, a barcode scanner, touchscreen monitor, or mobile device alone doesn't address those needs. Retailers want a solution, not a collection of technologies to piece together.

"There's no such thing as a transactional buy," says Rob Risany, Director of Edge AI & Solution Aggregation for Intel, on the [BlueStar Nation Podcast](#). "There's a transactional sale, but never a transactional buy." He elaborates that even when a store or a company requests a single product, like a new printer ribbon, it's more than just the physical item. "That is a solution purchase. They are solving a problem in their world. You might have to service it in a high-speed, high-volume manner, but customers always buy a solution."

Solving the next generation of retail challenges requires a focus on what organizations want to accomplish and an understanding that a singular technology provider may not have all the technologies and expertise in-house, but can still win by fostering critical partnerships with other providers.

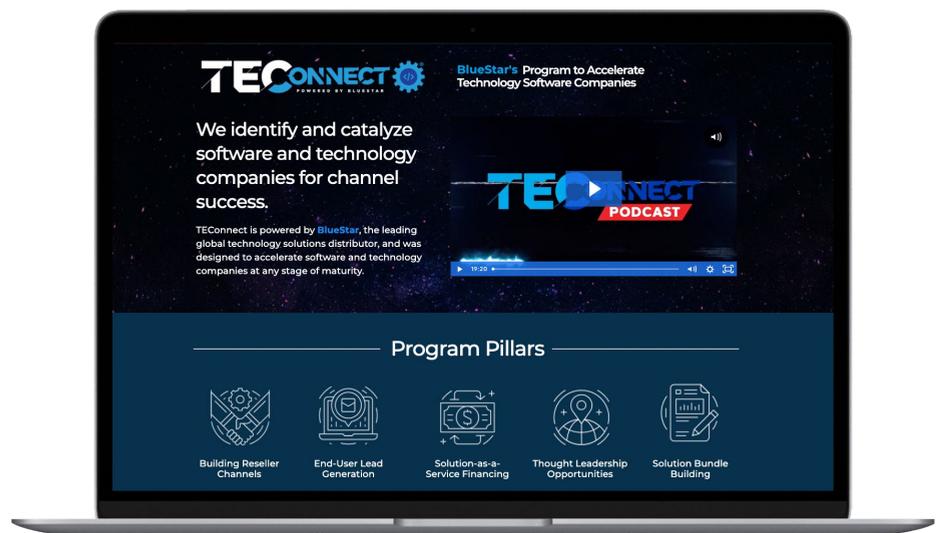
Building out a partner ecosystem is at the heart of the relationship between Intel and [BlueStar](#), a global distributor of specialty B2B electronics hardware. BlueStar sells exclusively to value-added resellers (VARs), managed service providers, and integrators who own the boots-on-the-ground relationships with retailers from international chains down to local mom-and-pop stores.

Recognizing the need for VARs to differentiate their offerings, BlueStar created the TEConnect Program to help software companies with unique solutions enter the reseller channel and establish lasting, mutually beneficial connections with resellers and hardware manufacturers. That aligns with Intel's practice of identifying and promoting outcomes-based solutions developed by software providers who aim to address industry-specific challenges using edge technologies such as machine learning, computer vision, and AI.

One such company is WaitTime, inspired by CEO Zack Klima's frustration with waiting in long lines and missing a big play during a hockey game. They designed software to track how people move in spaces like arenas, stadiums, and conference centers, often using existing cameras, to create better crowd management. But this has a place in other retail as well. Most retailers spend a lot of time thinking about how stores are laid out, where to place items they want to move, and what draws customers to specific areas. Computer vision can help identify patterns, "hot spots," and understand what happens as people navigate a store.

Another example is VSBLTY, who also utilizes machine learning and computer vision to process real-time analytics and anonymous customer data to deliver more meaningful and interactive advertising and promotions on in-store digital displays. This solution taps into the idea of the "[Store as a Medium](#)" and drives customer experience in a meaningful and memorable way.

Both companies provide hardware and services providers with opportunities to offer broader solutions, thereby improving their positions with retail customers as trusted technology experts.



For BlueStar and Intel, it expands a go-to-market strategy that emphasizes partnerships and collaboration up and down the channel to deliver retail modernization for the next generation of sellers and consumers.

Learn more about BlueStar and their partnership with Intel at bluestarinc.com

Are you a software company interested in partnering with resellers and hardware vendors? Register for TEConnect, the Channel's #1 Partner Ecosystem: teconnect.bluestarinc.com/

Partner Name

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