



India Isn't Your Next Market. It's a Different Operating System.

There's a familiar pattern I keep seeing.

A global SaaS company decides it's time to enter India. The logic is sound: large market, rapid digitization, strong enterprise base, and cost advantage.

The execution? Often completely flawed.

Because India is not just another geography you expand into.

India is a different operating system.

And if you try to run your existing GTM playbook here without adapting it, the system doesn't just slow down—it crashes.

The First Misconception: "India is a cheaper version of the US market."

It isn't.

Indian enterprises are:

- More **value-conscious**, not just price-sensitive
- More **risk-aware**, especially with new vendors
- More **relationship-driven** in decision-making

You're not selling into a transactional environment. You're entering a **trust economy**.

And trust in India is not built through email sequences or product demos.

It is built through:

- **Who introduces you**
- **Who has used you before**
- **Who is willing to vouch for you internally**

The Buying Process Isn't Linear. It's Layered.

In many markets, enterprise buying is structured:

- Problem → Evaluation → Decision → Purchase

In India, it looks more like:

- Interest → Internal alignment → External validation → Risk evaluation → Re-alignment → Decision → Re-validation → Purchase

Multiple stakeholders. Multiple power centers. Multiple informal conversations that matter more than formal presentations.

And often, **the real decision happens outside the meeting room.**

Why Product-Led Growth Alone Rarely Works in Enterprise India

PLG works beautifully in markets where:

- Buying authority is decentralized
- Risk tolerance is higher
- Adoption can start bottom-up

India's enterprise reality is different:

- **Hierarchy matters**
- **Budgets are controlled at the top**
- **Decisions are scrutinized across functions**

A great product can get you interest.

But it won't get you a deal without:

- Executive alignment
- Internal champions
- External validation

The Unspoken Role of Partners: India's Real GTM Engine

If there's one thing global SaaS companies consistently underestimate, it's this:

In India, partners are not a channel. They are the market.

System integrators, consultants, and local advisors play a critical role because they:

- Carry **trusted relationships** into accounts
- Understand **internal dynamics** of customers
- Help **position your solution in a local context**

Large GSIs like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro are important.

But equally critical are:

- Boutique consulting firms
- Domain specialists
- Independent advisors who influence decisions early

In many cases, **your first 10 enterprise deals in India will come through partners—not your sales team.**

Speed is Different Here

Global companies often come in expecting velocity.

But in India:

- Sales cycles may start slow
- Then accelerate suddenly once trust is established

What looks like “no movement” is often:

- Internal discussions
- Stakeholder alignment
- Risk assessment

If you misread this phase and push aggressively, you don’t accelerate the deal.

You lose it.

Localization is Not Just About Pricing

Yes, pricing matters.

But localization in India goes far beyond that:

- **Use-case alignment** to Indian business realities
- **Commercial flexibility** (phased deployments, outcome-based discussions)
- **Support expectations** (high-touch matters)

India rewards companies that show:

“We understand your context” not just “We have a global product”

What Actually Works in India

From experience, the companies that succeed here do a few things differently:

1. **They invest early in relationships, not just pipeline**
2. **They build a partner-first GTM motion**
3. **They hire for credibility, not just capacity**
4. **They adapt messaging to local business priorities**
5. **They stay patient—but not passive**

Final Thought

India is one of the most exciting markets for SaaS companies today.

But it doesn’t reward speed alone. It rewards **understanding**.

If you approach India as:

“Our next market”

You will struggle.

If you approach it as:

“A different operating system we need to learn”

You have a real chance to win.

Because in India, deals are not just sold.

They are built—through trust, timing, and the right relationships.
