



Cloud Infrastructure & Management

Microsoft Practice Development Playbook
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



About this Playbook

This playbook is intended for the business and technical leadership for new and existing Microsoft partners that are adding a new practice to their business focused on Cloud Infrastructure and Hybrid.

Objectives

The goal of this playbook is to help you understand what you need to do for accelerating or optimizing your Azure focused practice and why you should perform the recommendations. Our goal is to not to re-write the existing body of detailed guidance on how to perform any given recommendation—we instead point you to resources that you should be aware of that will help you in this regard.

For the business side, the intent is to provide valuable resources for some of the key aspects of the business including driving new revenue opportunities, strategies for marketing, selling, and lead capture, as well as building deeper and longer team engagements with your customers through potential new service offerings such as managed services.

For the technical side, the intent is to offer guidance on a number of topics that range from the technical skills your team will need, to resources that you can use to accelerate learning as well as explaining some of the key opportunities for technical delivery that you can focus on as you get started and grow your practice.

How this playbook was made

This playbook is one of four that was written by two Microsoft Partners ([Opsgility](#) and [Solliance](#)) while working in conjunction with the Microsoft Worldwide partner group and 21 other successful Azure partners that have volunteered time and information to provide input and best practices to share with the rest of the partner community.

To validate the guidance provided in these playbooks, we conducted a survey of 1,136 Azure partners from around the world with MDC. In this survey, we gathered insights on a range of topics from how they hire, compensate and train resources; their business model, revenue and profitability; what practices and services they offer and what skillsets they have in place to support their offers. The results of this survey are provided in-line with the guidance found within this playbook.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

Artis Consulting	Mirabeau
Atea	OpenSistemas
AwareComm	PC Solutions
Blue Meteorite	Perficient
DEFTeam Solutions	PlainConcepts
Dimension Data	Slalom
Empired	Softjam
Equinix	SpanishPoint
Fragma Data Systems	SQL Services Ltd.
Hanu Software	Theta
Kloud Solutions	



Using the playbook effectively

Quickly read through the playbook to understand its layout and the available content. Each section has an executive summary and key actions to take with the information provided within. Review these summaries to decide on which areas to focus on. Go over content several times, if needed, then share with your team. Here are some suggested actions you can take to use the content effectively:

- Get your team together and discuss which pieces of the strategy they are responsible for
- Share the playbook with your sales, marketing, support, technical, and managed services teams
- Leverage the resources available from Microsoft to help maximize your profitability
- Share feedback on how we can improve this and other playbooks by emailing playbookfeedback@microsoft.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

About this Playbook.....	2
Objectives.....	2
How this playbook was made	2
Table of Contents	4
The Booming Cloud Opportunity.....	17
Why choose Microsoft?	19
36 Regions and Counting	19
Why Choose the Microsoft Cloud?	20
The Only Cloud: Enterprise Level, Hyper Scale, and True Hybrid.....	20
Complete set of integrated Cloud offerings	20
Native SSO among services and on-premises	20
Broadest partner ecosystem.....	20
Best and most innovative enterprise cloud productivity solution	20
One Azure Ecosystem.....	20
Microsoft Cloud Compliance Certifications & AttestatioNS Sept 2016.....	21
Commitment to Open Source	21
Committed to Partners	21
Case Studies.....	22
Port Authority of New South Wales.....	22
Understanding the Cloud Infrastructure Opportunity.....	24
Public Cloud Infrastructure as a Service.....	24
Customers are moving to a hybrid IT infrastructure	24
Cloud is the New Way to Think About Your Datacenter.....	26
Traditional Model.....	26
Cloud Model.....	26
Partner Practice Development Framework.....	27
Define Your Strategy.....	27
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	27
Go to Market.....	27
Close & Execute Deals	27
Optimize & Grow Your Practice.....	27
Define Your Strategy.....	28
Define Your Strategy.....	29
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Executive Summary.....	29
Understand the Cloud Business Models.....	30
Revenue Opportunities	30
Define Your Strategy.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Go to Market.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Close & Execute Deals	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Optimize & Grow Your Practice.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Define Your Strategy.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Cloud Profitability Benchmark Assessment	31
Benchmark your business.....	31
Benchmark your cloud business now across the four pillars of the Modern Partner	31
Develop a Business Plan	32
Starting Your Business Plan	32
Cloud Opportunity.....	32
Company Overview.....	32
Target Market.....	32
Competitive Overview	32
Offerings	32
Differentiation.....	32
Executive Team.....	32
Creating the Marketing & Sales Plan	33
Marketing	33
Sales	33
Delivery.....	33
Financial Projections.....	33
Capital Requirements.....	33
Differentiation.....	33
Develop a Financial Plan.....	34
Financial Projections.....	34
Anticipated Valuation Impact.....	34
Risks and Mitigation	34
Define & Design the Solution Offer	35
Defining Your Value Proposition.....	35
Defining Your Solution Offer	37
Project Based Services	38
Revenue Percentage Estimate	39

Cloud Readiness Assessment	40
Assessing for Readiness.....	40
Key customer challenges	40
Key services for this offering:.....	40
Cloud Adoption Framework Workshop.....	41
Cloud Migration and Deployment.....	42
Migrating Workloads.....	42
Key customer challenges	42
Key services for this offering:.....	42
Migration Planning.....	43
Cloud practice accelerators	44
Azure Governance	45
Making the Cloud Enterprise Ready.....	45
Key customer challenges	45
Key services for this offering.....	45
Setup PowerBI for Azure EA Monitoring	45
Azure Usage and Billing Portal	45
Hybrid Cloud Networking.....	46
Hybrid and Globally Connected	46
key customer challenges.....	46
Key services for this offering.....	46
Automation and DevOps	47
Continuous Innovation through DevOps.....	47
key customer challenges.....	47
Key services for this offering.....	47
Backup and Disaster Recovery	48
Business Continuity is Key	48
Key customer challenges	48
Key services for this offering.....	48
Enable Identity and Access Management	49
Enabling Hybrid Identity.....	49
Key customer challenges	49
Executing a Proof of Concept.....	50
Why perform a proof of concept?.....	50
Define scope	50
POC Execution	50
.....	50

Next steps	50
Cloud Solution Provider	53
Program Overview	53
CSP Direct	53
CSP Direct requirement checklist	53
Key services for this offering.....	53
CSP Indirect	53
Managed Support.....	54
Taking Care of your Customers.....	54
Key customer challenges	54
Key services for this offering.....	54
Hybrid Cloud Monitoring and Management.....	55
Cloud Monitoring Services	55
Key customer challenges	55
Key services for this offering.....	55
Additional Managed Services Offerings	55
Intellectual Property.....	57
Vertical Offerings	59
Consider Verticalizing your Solution Offer.....	59
Define & Design the Solution Offer	60
Defining Your Pricing Strategy.....	60
Standard Pricing.....	60
Virtuous Pricing	60
Flat Rating Pricing.....	61
Upfront fees	62
Payment terms.....	63
Defining Sales Incentives	64
Reward a sales action	64
The level of incentive versus required selling effort orients the sales	64
Simple enough to be understood and drive actions.....	64
Sales Compensation Variables.....	64
Positioning the Offer via Incentives.....	64
Identify Partnership Opportunities	65
Partner to Partner.....	65
Make connections with Dynasource.com	65
Transform through collaboration.....	65
Increase demand for your resources.....	65
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Get started now	65
Define Engagement Process	66
Pre-and Post-Sales	66
Pre-Sales.....	66
Post Sales	66
Implementation Process.....	67
Implementation	67
Scrum.....	67
Agile.....	67
CMMI.....	67
Join the Microsoft Partner Network.....	68
Partnering with Microsoft	68
To become an Azure Partner.....	68
Take the next step with a competency.....	68
Cloud Enablement Desk.....	68
MPN to Resource Alignment	69
Align individuals to MPN requirements	69
Join the Azure Mentor Program.....	70
Successful completion of this program would look like 3 key things:.....	70
Eligible Partners will.....	70
Identity Equipment Services and Tools.....	71
Identify Equipment, Services and Tools	71
For an Enterprise Mobility + Security practice the following tools are recommended:.....	71
Practice Cost Calculation.....	72
Estimating your Azure Spend	72
Identify Potential Customers/Pilots	73
Build your prospect hit list	73
Webinars and Podcasts	73
Referrals.....	73
White Papers	73
News Articles	73
Social Media.....	73
Case Study:.....	73
Identify Opportunities to Co-Sell with Microsoft	74
Closing the Sale Together	74
Define Customer Support Program and Process	75
Support Overview.....	75
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

The items you will need to work through include.....	75
We cover each of these topics in the pages that follow	75
Define Customer Support Program and Process	76
Supporting Your Customers.....	76
Support Model.....	76
Escalation Process.....	76
CSP Support Requirements	77
Support Options from Microsoft	77
Signature Cloud Support.....	77
Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners	77
Microsoft Premier Support for Partners.....	77
Submitting Azure Support Requests.....	77
Partner Advisory Hours	78
Technical presales assistance	79
Deployment services	79
Support.....	79
Summary of Support Options	80
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	81
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	82
Executive Summary.....	82
Creating a hiring plan.....	83
Should you Hire New Resources or Train Existing Resources?.....	83
Hire Resources.....	84
Sales Resources.....	84
Marketing Resources.....	84
Technical Resources (Architecture, Infrastructure, and Development)	85
Job Descriptions	88
Job Descriptions for your Technical Team	88
Recruiting Resources.....	92
Top 10 Sources to Find Skilled Labor and What to Look For	92
Build staff on-boarding and mentoring plan	94
Preparing and Training IT Staff for the Cloud	94
Azure Onboarding Guide for IT Organizations	94
Technical Training	95
Cloud Platform University	95
MPN Learning Paths	95
Microsoft Inspire Conference Recordings	95
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Partner Community Events, Calls & Webinars	95
Smart Partner Marketing	95
Training Options.....	96
Finding the Right Training Resource.....	96
Increase Readiness and Marketability with Certifications	97
MCSA Cloud Platform	97
MCSA Linux on Azure.....	97
MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure	97
MCSE Data Management and Analytics	97
MCSD App Builder.....	98
MCSD Azure Solutions Architect	98
MCP Planning for and Measuring Devices in the Enterprise	98
Setup Azure for Internal Use.....	99
Azure Credits	99
Flexibility with Azure Credits	99
Visual Studio	99
Primary Way to Purchase	100
Ways to Purchase Azure.....	100
EA Agreements	100
Pay as you go and Trial Accounts	100
Open License	100
CSP Sandbox.....	100
Identify and apply for Azure Investment Programs.....	101
Cloud and Enterprise (C+E) Investment Programs.....	101
Objectives	101
Identify and apply for Azure Sell Incentives.....	102
Digital Partner of Record	102
DPOR allows partners to:	102
How does it work?	102
Multiple Partner Support.....	102
CSP Incentives Overview	103
CSP Incentives Overview.....	103
Mobility Enterprise Agreement	104
Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA).....	104
Build materials to support sales and marketing efforts.....	105
Understanding Push vs. Pull Marketing	105
Sales and Marketing Resources.....	107
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Create key contracts.....	108
Key Contracts for your Practice.....	108
Service Level Agreement.....	108
Master Services Agreement.....	108
Statement of Work.....	108
Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreement.....	108
Setup Tools and Systems.....	109
Project Tools.....	109
Microsoft Project Online.....	109
Visual Studio Team Services	109
Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Project Service Automation	109
SharePoint Online for Document Management.....	109
GitHub.....	109
Setup Tools and Systems.....	110
Collaboration Tools & File Sharing	110
Microsoft Teams.....	110
Yammer	110
OneDrive for Business	110
Skype for Business	110
Surface Hub.....	110
Using CRM to grow your business.....	111
Using CRM to grow your business	111
The fundamentals of customer relationship management.....	111
Support Ticket Setup and Tracking.....	112
Customer Support.....	112
Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Customer Service	112
Create Consistency and Loyalty	112
Make your agents' jobs easier.....	112
Get an Adaptive Engine.....	112
Decide on a Solution Marketplace	113
Azure Marketplace.....	113
Certify Applications and Services.....	113
Develop Your Sales Channel	114
Develop your sales channel.....	114
Operationalize	114
Microsoft Partner Network Pinpoint.....	114
AppSource	114

Increase your visibility.....	115
Define and Implement Intellectual Property.....	116
Implementing IP in your Cloud Offerings.....	116
Grow Technical Skills by Contributing to the Community.....	117
Blogging, Meetups and More!.....	117
Blogging.....	117
Meetups and User Groups.....	117
Global Azure Bootcamp.....	117
Microsoft MVP Community.....	117
Go to Market.....	118
Create Engagement Checklists & Templates.....	119
Standardize Customer Engagement.....	119
Executive Summary	120
Go to Market	120
Define your sales Process	121
Resources.....	121
Plan your customer's journey to buying.....	121
Launch Digital Marketing Activities	122
Your website is all-important.....	122
Digital Marketing Services	123
DigitalStride	123
DigitalStride Benefits.....	123
Digital Transformation with Azure	124
Leading with Digital Transformation	124
The four pillars of digital transformation include:.....	124
How Enterprises Make this Work	125
Account Based Marketing (ABM).....	127
Account Based Marketing (ABM).....	127
Self-Evaluate.....	127
Get to know your existing customers.....	128
Use predictive analytics	128
Dig deeper.....	128
Engage with Customers & Prospects.....	129
Getting in Front of the Customer.....	129
Maximizing Your Time at Conferences	129
The written word still matters.....	129
Content is King	130
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Bill of Material (BOM)	131
Define Technical Community Strategy	132
Engage with Workshops.....	132
Workshops.....	132
Microsoft Technology Centers (Where available).....	132
Execute Nurture Marketing Efforts.....	133
Creating Long Term Customer Relationships.....	133
Why Nurture?	133
Invest in relationships	133
Authenticity	134
Relevance.....	134
Variety	134
Follow-up.....	134
Automation.....	134
Engage Technical Pre-Sales in Sales Conversations.....	135
Selling is Technical	135
Find Your Customers.....	136
Find Your First Customer	136
Find Your Next Customer	137
Successfully drive your sales and marketing efforts	137
DigitalStride	137
Web syndication	137
Case Study:.....	137
Measure Customer Adoption & Engagement.....	139
Measure & Track	139
Intellectual Property.....	140
Vertical or Horizontal IP	140
Distribution	140
Close & Execute Deals	141
Close & Execute Deals	142
Executive Summary.....	142
Plan Your Customers Journey.....	143
Plan for people, process and technology.....	143
People.....	143
Process	143
Technology	143
Develop Proposal	144
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Write winning proposals.....	144
Negotiate and Close Deals	145
Be on point with Azure Sales Training	145
Training Recommendations	145
Pitch Perfect Conversation Checklist	146
Selling Azure Solutions.....	146
Instructions for partners.....	146
Deploy/Implement Solutions	147
Execute Efficiently	147
Architecture Design Session (ADS)	148
Primary Audience	148
Before the architecture design session.....	148
During the architecture design session.....	149
Discovery.....	149
Envisioning	149
Planning	149
After the architecture design session.....	149
Implement Proof of Concepts.....	150
Proof of Concepts.....	150
Establish Evaluation Criteria	150
Common Proof of Concepts for Infrastructure and Management.....	150
Best practices for running an Azure project.....	151
Test Solutions.....	152
Available Services	152
Azure Site Recovery Failover Testing	152
Chaos Test Service for Service Fabric	152
Performance Testing	152
Azure Web Apps.....	153
Staged Publishing with Web Apps.....	153
Web Apps Testing in Production.....	153
Penetration Testing.....	153
Transition to Managed Services	154
Managed Services Transition	154
Expectations.....	154
Opportunity	154
Digital Partner of Record	154
Support Resources	155

Azure Security Center.....	155
Azure Advisor (Preview)	155
OMS Log Analytics	155
Engaging Microsoft Support.....	155
Azure Trouble Shooting	156
Trouble Shooting Resources	156
MSDN Support Forums	156
Stack Overflow.....	156
Server Fault.....	156
Leverage Investment Resources	157
Consumption Investment Funds (CIF)	157
Deal Support (Pre-Sales)	157
Driving Consumption & Adoption (Post Sales)	157
Deployment Planning Services for Cloud Infrastructure and Management.....	157
Safe Passage Opportunities	158
Safe Passage	158
Migration	158
Leverage Investment Resources	159
Azure Everywhere.....	159
Azure Everywhere	159
Delivery Format	159
Azure Access.....	159
Optimize & Grow Your Practice.....	160
Executive Summary	161
Optimize & Grow Your Practice	161
Collect Feedback	162
The Basics	162
Optimize and Grow from Feedback.....	163
Use Feedback to Optimize and Grow	163
Performing a Post Mortem.....	164
What is a post mortem?	164
Land & Expand	165
Growing Scope	165
Land	165
Expand	165
Refine Customer Value Proposition.....	166
Refine Customer Value Proposition and Offer	166

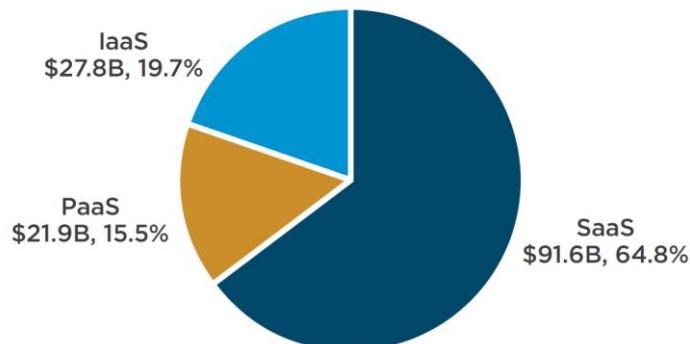
The Four Magic Questions	166
Expand to Similar Customers.....	167
Vertical Customer Play	167
Optimize Costs	168
Efficiency, Profit and Growth	168
Metrics that matter in a cloud business.....	169
Revisit Partnerships.....	170
Grow Partnerships	170
Cloud Infrastructure & Management Playbook Summary.....	172

The Booming Cloud Opportunity

IDC forecasts that worldwide public IT cloud services revenue (i.e. SaaS, PaaS, and IaaS) will reach \$141.2B USD by 2019, a 19.4% compounded annual growth rate (CAGR): almost six times the rate of overall IT spending growth! SaaS still makes up the majority of spending, though PaaS and IaaS are expected to grow at almost twice the rate of SaaS over the next five years.



PUBLIC IT CLOUD SERVICES, 2019

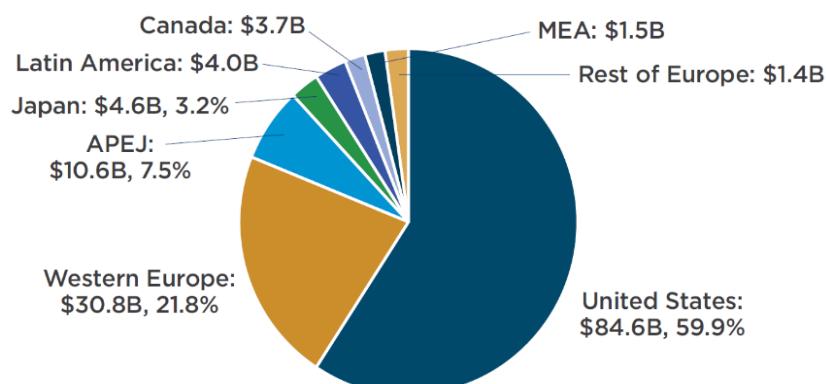


#US40709515 - Worldwide and Regional Public IT Cloud Services Forecast, 2015–2019

IDC predicts double digit cloud services growth across all geographies. The US accounted for 64% of revenue in 2015, but will drop to 60% by 2019. Latin America (31.4% CAGR) and Asia Pacific excluding Japan (24.1% CAGR) will see the highest growth rates for public cloud over the next 5 years.



PUBLIC IT CLOUD SERVICES SPENDING, 2019



#US40709515 - Worldwide and Regional Public IT Cloud Services Forecast, 2015–2019

Read the E-Book





Define Technical Practice Focus and Area of Expertise

This playbook focuses on the Cloud Infrastructure and Management practice. By building a Cloud Infrastructure and Management practice you can deliver faster innovation with optimal control and security with new hybrid cloud capabilities that cut across infrastructure, applications, data and users.



INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION



HYBRID CLOUD MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY



HYBRID CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

Accelerate and modernize your infrastructure practice. Enterprise Modernization is a collection of offerings to help accelerate application assessments, modernize customer's infrastructure, and drive innovation with Hybrid Cloud.

[Area Home](#)

Build a practice to help customers gain visibility and control across their Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure with simplified operations management and security. Grow your business by managing your customer's infrastructure on any cloud.

[Area Home](#)

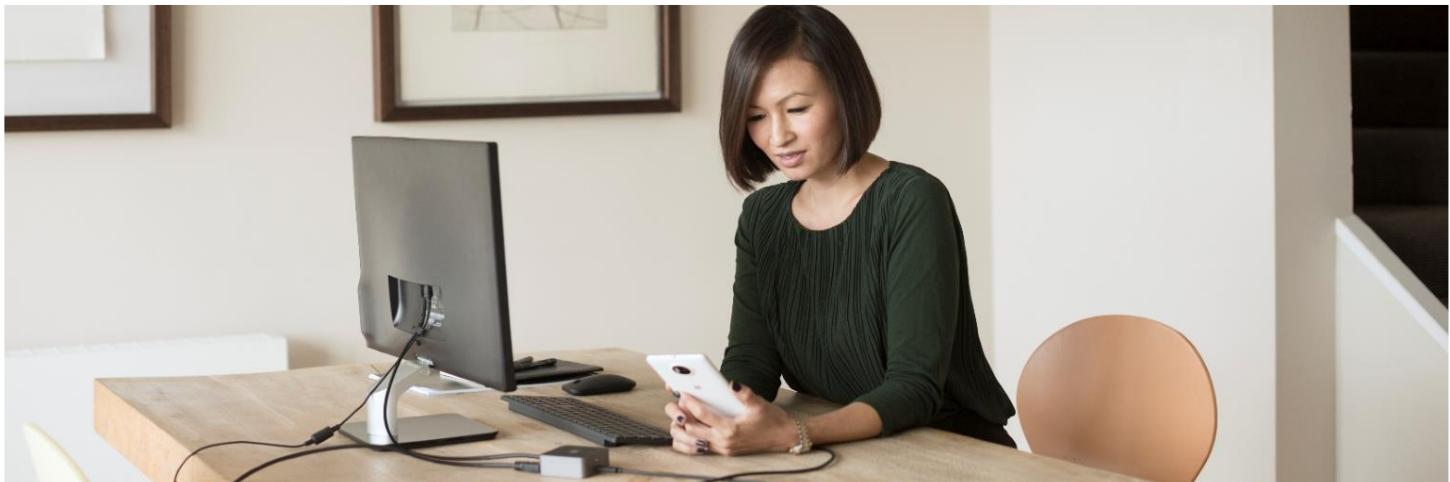
The cloud is a model, not just a place. Hybrid cloud lets you seamlessly extend applications and data to the cloud, control IT resources no matter where they are, and write applications consistently and deploy from anywhere.

[Area Home](#)

Why choose Microsoft?

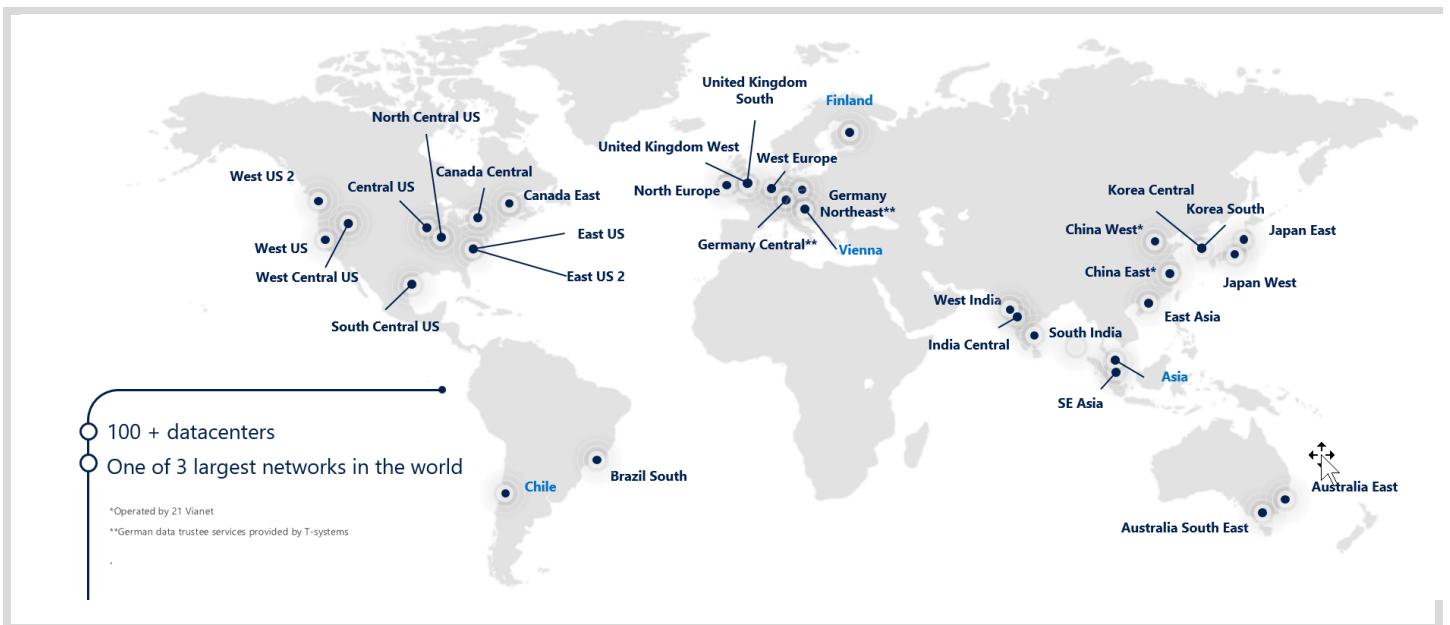
A trusted global leader, committed to partners, a leading enterprise mobility and security platform.

More than 86% of Fortune 500 companies have the Microsoft Cloud (source: Microsoft), which offers companies a fully integrated stack for any kind of data from on-premises, hybrid or fully in the cloud, with an open cloud platform that supports a wide variety of Operating Systems and programming languages.



36 REGIONS AND COUNTING

In order to help organizations meet data residency, sovereignty and compliance requirements, Microsoft has a worldwide network of more than 30 announced Microsoft-managed datacenter regions, and continues to make significant investments in geo-expansion through our local and sovereign offerings in more than 10 unique geographic regions worldwide.



WHY CHOOSE THE MICROSOFT CLOUD?

No other company has such a complete portfolio, from IaaS to PaaS and SaaS, from productivity and social solutions to ERP, from smartphones to APIs. Microsoft offers the most connected, comprehensive set of cloud solutions (Azure, Office 365, Microsoft Dynamics), with an unmatched breadth and depth of capabilities from platform to productivity apps to business solutions. Our integrated portfolio of cloud services works across devices and is supported by one of world's largest developer and partner ecosystem. From a customer perspective, this means a lower cost and complexity associated with the product/services integration, IT provider management and support.

THE ONLY CLOUD: ENTERPRISE LEVEL, HYPER SCALE, AND TRUE HYBRID

Microsoft is the only Cloud provider that combines a Hyper Scale cloud offering, a truly hybrid platform and an Enterprise Level Support for your cloud workloads with enterprise level service level agreements (SLAs).

COMPLETE SET OF INTEGRATED CLOUD OFFERINGS

Microsoft has a complete set of integrated cloud offerings, from infrastructure as a service (IaaS), to Platform as a Service (PaaS) and all its Software as a Service (SaaS) offerings. As an example, a PaaS development can easily integrate with a VM on Azure IaaS and easily integrate with app services like SharePoint and CRM Online.

NATIVE SSO AMONG SERVICES AND ON-PREMISES

Being able to offer Single Sign On is key among multiple cloud services and on-premises apps is key for employee productivity and IT management. Microsoft natively offers SSO among its cloud services, offers REST API for custom apps and federation and directory sync services with AD and other directories.

BROADEST PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

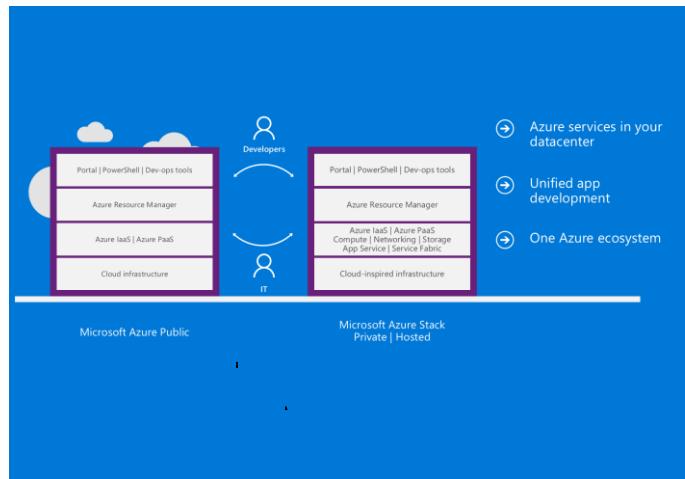
Microsoft Partner Network includes over 430,000 organizations worldwide. By working with this broad partner ecosystem we can offer better solutions and better services to our customers.

BEST AND MOST INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISE CLOUD PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTION

No other cloud provider offers such a complete suite of productivity services. Office 365 is recognized as the leading cloud productivity platform. Our customers can access the productivity platform through the browser or through the Office application, used by 1B users worldwide.

ONE AZURE ECOSYSTEM

With [Azure Stack](#), you will be able to deploy workloads to Azure whether it is hosted in the public cloud or in your own datacenter. A cloud app or deployment resource such as templates or scripts will work with either environment.



MICROSOFT CLOUD COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATIONS & ATTESTATIONS SEPT 2016

All of Microsoft's services are independently verified to meet legal and compliance requirements, are financially backed, and offer transparent information on their availability. Microsoft was the first cloud provider that adhere to ISO 27018 and ISO 22301.

	Regulatory and Compliance Domain	Office 365	Microsoft Azure	Microsoft Dynamics CRM	Microsoft Intune
Broadly Applicable	ISO 27018:2014	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ISO 27001:2013	✓	✓	✓	✓
	SOC 1 Type 2 (SSAE 16/ISAE 3402)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	SOC 2 Type 2 (AT Section 101)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	CSA STAR 1	✓	✓	✓	No
United States Government	FedRAMP Moderate	✓	✓	✓	No
	CJIS Security Policy, Version 5.3	✓	✓	✓	No
	DISA SRG Level 2 P-ATO	✓	✓	✓	No
	FDA 21 CFR Part 11	✓	✓	✓	No
	ITAR	✓	✓	No	No
	IRS 1075	✓	✓	No	No
	HIPAA BAA	✓	✓	✓	✓
Industry Specific	PCI DSS Level 1	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A
	FERPA	✓	✓	✓	N/A
	CDSA	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A
	EU Model Clauses	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region/Country Specific	UK G-Cloud v6	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Australia Gov ASD	✓	✓	✓	No
	Singapore MTCS	✓	✓	✓	No
	Japan FISC	✓	✓	No	No
	New Zealand GCIO	✓	✓	✓	✓
	EU-US Privacy Shield	✓	✓	✓	✓
	China (MLPS, TRUCS, GB 18030)	✓	No	No	No

COMMITMENT TO OPEN SOURCE

With Azure, you have choices. [Choices that help you maximize your existing investments](#). Get support for infrastructure as a service (IaaS) on Linux and Java and PHP Web application platforms. Develop and test your Linux and open source components in Azure. You bring the tools you love and skills you already have, and run virtually any application, using your data source, with your operating system, on your device. [Much of the Azure tooling and frameworks your technical teams use is open source and hosted in GitHub](#).

COMMITTED TO PARTNERS

From the diverse range of partner focused training Microsoft produces on sales, marketing and technical topics, to the business investment funds it makes available to help partners succeed in their customer engagements, to unique programs like the Cloud Solution Provider program that enable partners to own the complete customer relationship and to marketplaces and digital show cases that highlight partners to new customers

and give partners broad exposure, Microsoft is committed to enabling partner success in Data Platform and Analytics.

Research shows this commitment to partners also shows up in the partner revenue, as the average partner sells over \$4 of their own offering for every \$1 of Microsoft cloud solution that they sell or influence the sale of. For partners who focus on cloud (e.g., where cloud revenue is more than 50% of their revenue), that number jumps closer to \$6.

\$ ATTACH PER DOLLAR OF MICROSOFT CLOUD SOLUTION SOLD



Source: IDC, 2016. n=79 cloud partners, 326 rest

Case Studies

One important avenue Microsoft provides is a track record of successful partner engagements. A track record of customer success is an easy way to build confidence in the solutions your practice recommends and helps win over customers. Microsoft provides a collection of case studies highlighting how partners make their customers successful through [Cloud Infrastructure and Management](#), including artifacts like case study PDFs, PowerPoint slides summarizing the key learnings and videos. The Cloud Infrastructure and Management section of the [Partner Stories](#) website also provides a curated collection of case studies. Use these case studies to help you position your offering to customers and to identify potential solution partners whose practices may complement yours.

The following is a selection of case studies available from the [Microsoft Customer Stories](#) website. It is recommended you check back periodically for new case studies that empower your efforts as a partner.

CUSTOMER	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	RESULT
PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES See the full case study here	<p>Providing a solid disaster recovery solution and development environment and managing 200 servers and large amounts of data from different organizations after merging with three new locations</p>	<p>Using Azure Infrastructure as a Service to for disaster recovery and development and test environment.</p> <p>Creating a new disaster recovery solution that is based on Microsoft Operations Management Suite, Azure Site Recovery, and Azure Backup services.</p> <p>Using Azure ExpressRoute to connect the on-premises production datacenter to Azure for rapid and secure replication and recovery.</p>	<p>By moving to the cloud, the Port Authority can take on current and future challenges more easily.</p> <p>"We have a flexible platform now," says Chilton "If we had to upgrade some infrastructure to accommodate a new business requirement, we can do it without actually having to procure, install, and integrate infrastructure. It makes provision of services to our customers sleeker and smoother."</p>
HARPER COLLINS UK See the full case study here	<p>Cost savings and flexibility over their existing infrastructure</p> <p>Enterprise connectivity to cloud applications</p>	<p>HarperCollins realized that it needed a fast, secure, reliable link between employee computers in the London area and the Azure datacenter in Dublin to deliver acceptable application response times.</p> <p>It decided to use Microsoft Azure ExpressRoute—a private, high-speed connection between Azure and customer datacenters or colocation environments such as the Equinix Cloud Exchange.</p> <p>HarperCollins UK began moving four of its main business applications to Azure: a large-scale 25-terabyte digital asset system, a reprographics system, a procurement system, and an application that tracks contract rights and royalties.</p>	<p>Deliver Fast, Reliable Access to Cloud-Based Applications</p> <p>Without ExpressRoute, HarperCollins UK could not have made Azure hosting practical for its London employees.</p> <p>Better Match IT Costs to Business Needs</p> <p>A cloud strategy helps HarperCollins recategorize IT spending from a capital expense to an operating expense and deliver IT as a monthly expenditure. This better aligns IT costs with changes in the business cycle. When it ran applications in its own datacenter, HarperCollins UK built in 25 to 30 percent of overcapacity (known as headroom) so that it would have extra processing power if needed.</p>

		<p>To host its applications, HarperCollins UK uses a range of Azure infrastructure-as-a-service offerings, including Azure Virtual Machines, Azure Virtual Network, and Azure Storage, and some platform-as-a-service offerings such as Azure Cloud Services and Azure SQL Database.</p>	
CLOUDRUNNER.IO See the full case study here	<p>A flexible platform that embraces open source software (OSS) to run their DevOps platform on</p> <p>Customer feedback on CloudRunner tools has been positive, and consequently the company wanted to push for greater business growth. With this in mind, it began looking for a cloud provider that not only had extensive reach, but could also support its open source tools.</p>	<p>CloudRunner added Linux distribution and open source tools on top of Azure virtual machines, so its DevOps teams could use their own choice of scripts, including Bash, Python, Ruby, Chef-Solo recipes, Ansible, and Powershell. This allowed for configuration, deployment, and monitoring of nodes across any kind of infrastructure, including Azure Infrastructure-as-a-Service.</p> <p>CloudRunner also deployed Aerospike as a NoSQL database and Postgre/MySQL as an open source transactional database.</p> <p>CloudRunner uses Docker for application deployment automation into the core operating system and the CloudRunner framework for managing the infrastructure. Secure communication is based on SSL certificates and a fast, reliable transport backend is provided via ZeroMQ, although a different backend can be used as plugins.</p>	<p>These developments illustrate Azure's flexibility and its extensive support for a wide variety of open source technologies. This support has underpinned CloudRunner's accelerated growth in line with company business plans.</p> <p>The company also benefits from faster development and deployment processes for DevOps, given that it can now accelerate processes by re-using templates and legacy code and combining Powershell and Linux scripts.</p> <p>Microsoft's support and investment in open source was an eye-opener for CloudRunner, and Microsoft's attentiveness to partner needs and requirements surprised the company.</p>





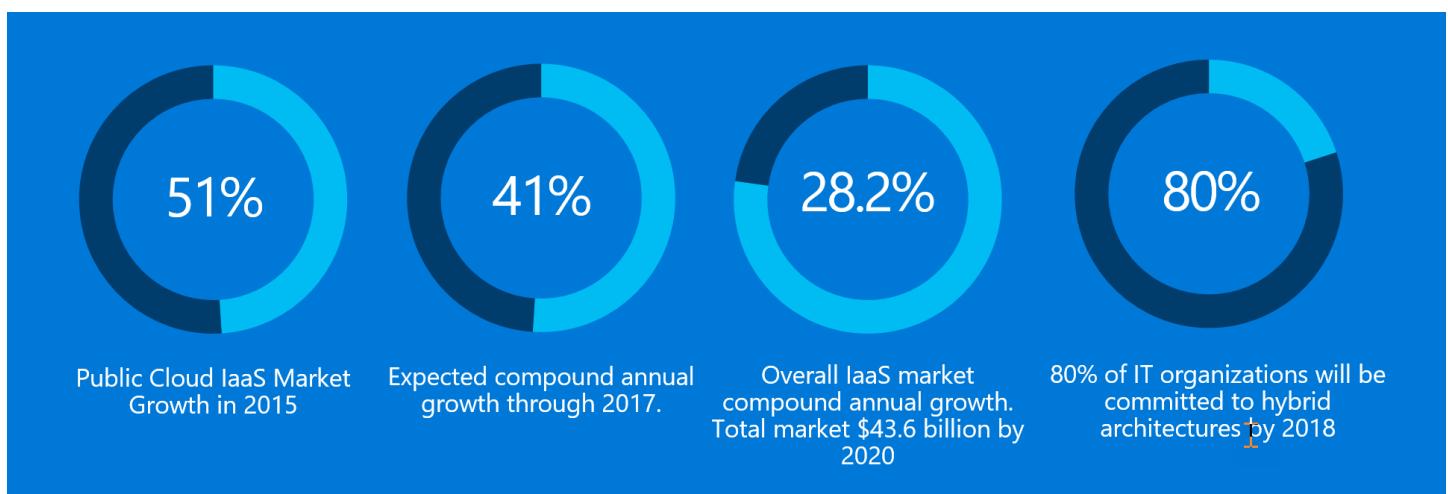
Understanding the Cloud Infrastructure Opportunity

Public Cloud Infrastructure as a Service

The opportunity for the Cloud Infrastructure as a Service and Management opportunity is incredible. The public cloud infrastructure as a service (IaaS) market grew over 51% in 2015, with IDC predicting compound annual growth (CAG) of 41% at least through 2017.

CUSTOMERS ARE MOVING TO A HYBRID IT INFRASTRUCTURE

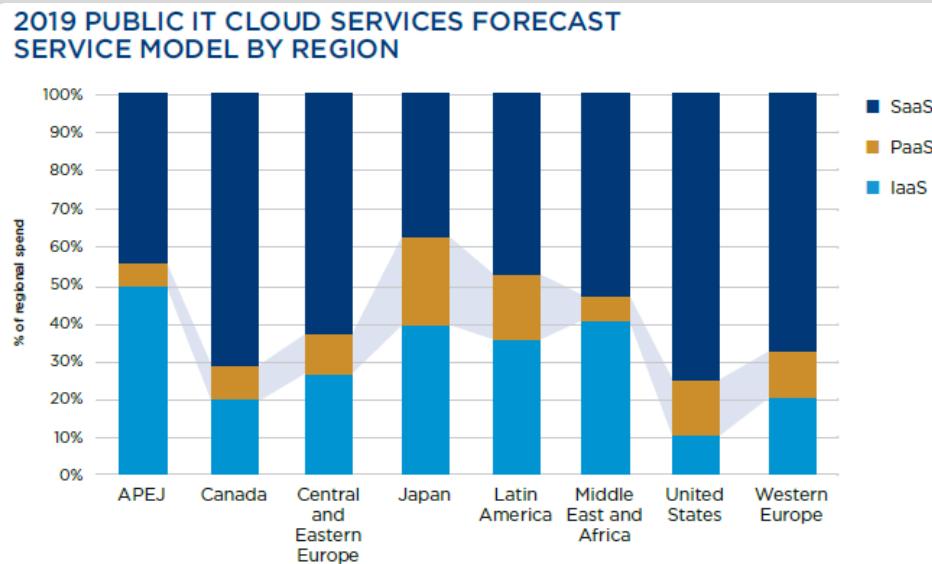
The world of traditional IT is under pressure to add agility, cut costs and all-in-all do more with their limited resources. Organizations need flexible infrastructure that can scale on demand. Hybrid cloud provides additional IT resources whenever needed. Allows IT teams to keep pace with changing business requirements. IDC predicts that the overall public cloud IaaS market to shift towards optimization and hybrid cloud in 2017. By 2018 80% of organizations will have a commitment to hybrid architectures.



Source: IDC, Enterprise Adoption Driving Strong Growth of Public Cloud Infrastructure as a Service 2016

PUBLIC IT CLOUD SERVICES FORECAST BY REGION

According to IDC, there are expected to be large differences between SaaS, PaaS, and IaaS spending by geography.



Source: #US40709515 - Worldwide and Regional Public IT Cloud Services Forecast, 2015–2019

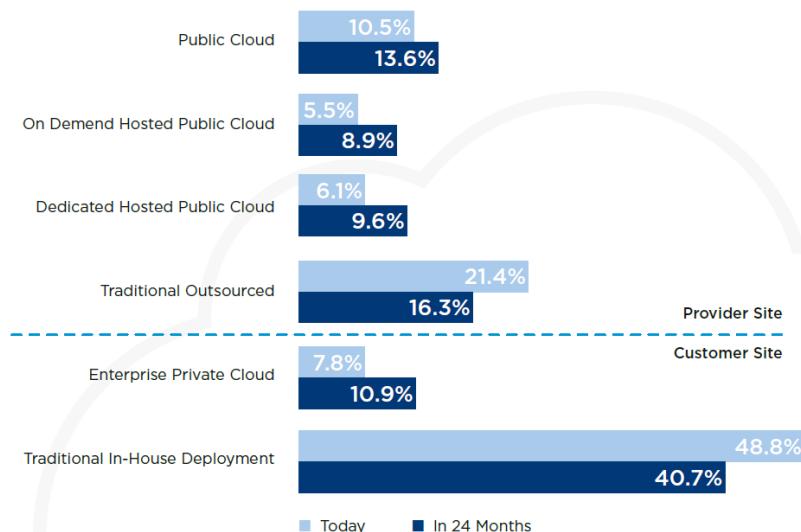
CLOUD BUDGETS ARE GROWING

According to IDC, there are two major shifts in budgets:

1. A 44% growth in the move from non-cloud to cloud delivery (i.e. on-demand, elastic, self-service, resource pooling, measured service, etc.)
2. An 11% growth in the move from customer-site to provider-site. (i.e. traditional outsourced, hosting provider and public cloud)

This is great news for cloud partners.

AVERAGE IT BUDGET DISTRIBUTION OVER THE NEXT 2 YEARS



Source: IDC CloudView Survey, 2016, n=11350

Cloud is the New Way to Think About Your Datacenter

Traditional Model

Most companies are running custom applications that are stitched together, they have purpose-built hardware to think about, and have specialized teams, and everything has been carefully customized (over many years in some cases!).

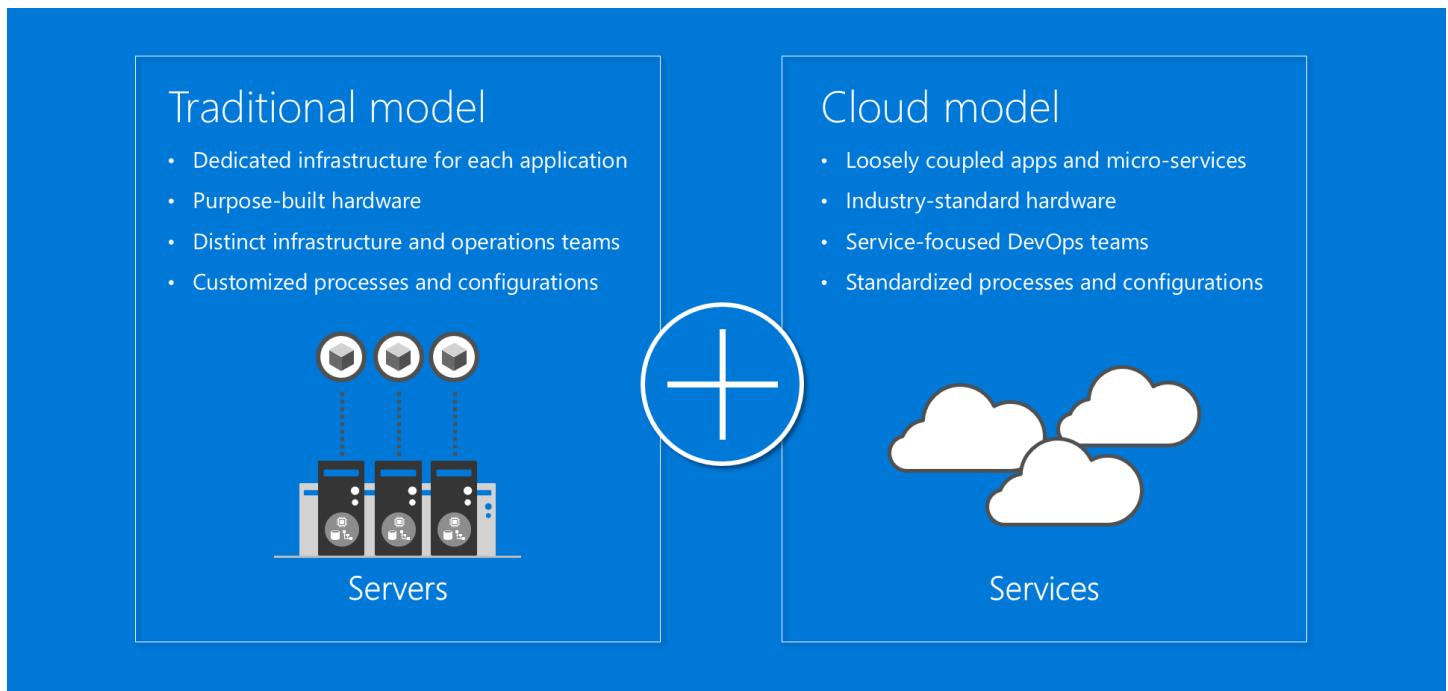
This is of course done for all the right reasons, but you might consider that it might be holding your customers (and their business) back in many ways given that the business context has changed fundamentally. In this new age of apps, the traditional model causes friction because IT isn't moving as fast as business wants it to.

This is manifested in developers not getting the speed and freedom they need to create the best end-user experiences. That leads to lost productivity on their side, which results in 'Shadow IT'. In 2015, 42% of the technology budget resides outside IT; this will grow to 50% by 2020 (Gartner).

Cloud Model

Now let's look at the cloud. Everyone knows that the cloud offers agility and innovation. It's proving itself to be the way forward for the modern enterprise and we'll talk more about that in a bit. But for some of our IT customers, the cloud might seem a little daunting. They might be asking, "Is this something I want to lead the charge on? How does it help my career? The tension some of them experience is because you're not sure if things are consistent with what you're doing on-premises and it seems like it will be hard to manage."

There's also a tension between developers who want speed and freedom (represented by business demands), and the IT folks who have to worry about things like security and compliance.



Partner Practice Development Framework

The partner practice development framework provides five stages that define how to take a practice from concept through to growth. It is the foundation of this playbook, and each phase of the framework is covered in a dedicated chapter





Define Your Strategy

Cloud Infrastructure & Management
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



Define Your Strategy

Executive Summary

Now that you understand the opportunity before you in building a Enterprise Mobility and Security Practice, we will begin by helping your thoroughly define the strategy upon which your practice will be built. Like the foundation of the house, thinking though your strategy is critical to the long-term success of your practice and it is worth it to take the time to think this strategy through.

We begin with the decision tree you can use to make the go/no-go decision on defining and launching your practice based on increasing levels planning. If you successfully make it through the key evaluation phases, you can rest assured you've established a solid base.

Upon that we will guide you through the process of defining your offer and the value proposition your offer encloses. This is a critical piece of your strategy- it is literally the definition of what you will sell and why customers will want to buy it. Along the way we will review the four cloud business models (reselling, project services, managed services, and intellectual property), their respective profitability and how you can assess the profitability of your own practice. We will help you drill into how you should price your offer based—what pricing strategy to use to drive adoption of your offer, and how to minimize your risk by establishing upfront fees and payment terms. In addition, we will cover how you can estimate the Azure related costs you should account for in launching your practice. The ultimate goal here is



to help you build a solid business plan that address your team, marketing, sales and financial aspects.

Then we dive deeper into sales, to define your pre-sales and post-sales engagement process, and how you should compensate your sales executives.

If you are not yet a Microsoft Partner, we will provide you the walking tour of all the key things you need to about the Microsoft Partner Network, the programs you should be leveraging to grow your practice, how you earn competencies that yield you additional benefits and what you should be planning to maximize the benefits you get from the program.

After that, we'll give you a head start planning how you can identify potential customers with which to start your practice and what services you could offer to them.

We conclude this section helping you understand support—how you should plan to support your customers, how Microsoft can provide you with Azure related support, and the support related benefits you get from establishing your competencies in the Microsoft Partner Network

Let's get on to defining your practice strategy.

Top 5 things to do

Measure twice and cut once. Here are the top 5 things you should absolutely do to build, grow or optimize your practice.

- Identify your unique value proposition
- Define and price your offer
- Build your business plan
- Leverage the Microsoft Partner Network
- Plan your support options

Understand the Cloud Business Models

Revenue Opportunities

It's key to understand that not all revenue streams are equal.

There are four ways to make money selling cloud:

- Resale
- Project Services
- Managed Services
- Packaged IP

Partners that focus almost entirely on product revenue have the biggest barrier and typically see margins in the range of 5-20%. This is due to the margins for this revenue line being tied to vendor incentives. These partners are subject to changes in strategy and desire to fund programs and have the least control over their own destiny.

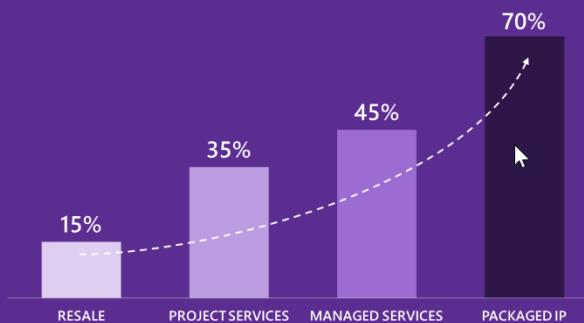
Project services typically drive a range of approximately 35% gross margin but this has been under pressure for some time. This is a result of little differentiation in the channel which has caused billable price points to hold steady over the past 5+ years, while increasing salary and benefit costs of consultants and inflation have eroded profitability.

As a result, the aggressive and entrepreneurial members of the channel have adapted and gone after the higher margin opportunities of managed services which generate on average 45% gross margin and packaged IP which often exceeds 70%.

It's these partners who are setting themselves up to be rewarded. The M&A space is quite active. The partners who have gravitated toward the recurring revenue lines and realizing healthy growth are being presented with much higher valuations. This can have a dramatic increase in the cash event of the company and overall shareholder value – far higher than what a traditional partner focused on product and billable services can realize.

Not all revenue streams
are created equal

AVERAGE GROSS MARGINS



Source: IDC eBook, sponsored by Microsoft, The Modern Microsoft Partner Series, Part 2: Differentiate to Stand Out, 2016

Cloud Profitability Benchmark Assessment

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Cloud Profitability Scenarios Overview](#)
- [Financial Models](#)
- [Customer Lifetime Value Model](#)
- [Microsoft Modern Partner](#)

Benchmark your business

Partners have requested help in identifying how they can build a profitable business driving Microsoft cloud services, devices, and other products. Through IDC research and discussions with thousands of partners around the world, we've identified four pillars of the modern partner that contribute to building a profitable, sustainable cloud business including:

- [Pillar #1: Differentiate to Stand Out](#)
- [Pillar #2: Modernize Sales & Marketing](#)
- [Pillar #3: Optimize your Operations](#)
- [Pillar #4: Deliver Customer Lifetime Value](#)

You can find the key findings of this research in the [Microsoft Modern Partner eBook series](#).

BENCHMARK YOUR CLOUD BUSINESS NOW ACROSS THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE MODERN PARTNER

Start by answering a series of questions about your business, including questions that cover firmographics, customer/market orientation, cloud business metrics, customer adoption and usage, and revenue generating activities. This step should only take about five minutes and will be the basis of your results, so take your time in entering the correct information.

Once complete, you will receive an overall maturity score of Start, Grow, or Optimize, along with an individual maturity score for each of the four pillars of the Modern Partner. In addition to your maturity score you will also be given some recommended next steps to increase your cloud maturity for each of those pillars. Be sure to follow those recommended steps and read the Microsoft Modern Partner eBook series.

Now that you understand your strengths and weaknesses across the Modern Partner pillars, share the results of the assessment with your team. We've made it easy to share – simply download and email the results, or click the "Share Results" button on the site.

Pull your team together to discuss the results, build an action plan and assign ownership of the tasks you determine are most important. If you have a Microsoft partner account executive, share the results with them to guide you to the best resources and support provided by Microsoft.

Develop a Business Plan

Resources



The cloud business plan template

RESOURCES

- [Cloud Business Plan Template](#)
- [Video: How to Create a Marketing Plan](#)
- [Marketing Plan Contents](#)
- [ROI Worksheet](#)
- [Competitive Overview Video](#)
- [Offerings Video](#)
- [Cloud Financial Models](#)

Starting Your Business Plan

A business plan is critical asset that help you envision and think through the details of your practice, identify gaps you will need to address and helps you explain the fundamentals of your practice to others.

In the pages that follow we provide a section by section walk thru of Cloud Business Plan, which is a template provided by Microsoft you can use to accelerate your business plan authoring.

CLOUD OPPORTUNITY

In this opening section describe the overall demand for Cloud Solutions, the reasons it is a significant business opportunity, and summarize the financial gains you could achieve from aggressively developing a Cloud practice. If you have data available for your specific market use it, but the sample text in the plan can be used almost verbatim in many cases.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

In this section briefly describe: How long your company has been in business. How large your company is, in terms of employees and revenue. What your company does.

TARGET MARKET

In this section describe: The specific market you will target. The rough number of firms in the target market. If possible, use databases to more precisely define how big your target market is, but the real key is to give the reader confidence your target market is large enough to support financial projections laid out in a later section.

COMPETITIVE OVERVIEW

In this section list who your main competitors are in the specific market(s) you will target.

OFFERINGS

In this section describe your specific offerings. In many cases, this can be taken directly from your website, although care should be taken to present a concise description of what your company does, and what business benefits the customer derives from that.

DIFFERENTIATION

In this section describe your core strengths relative to the competitors earlier described, and why they are inherently sustainable and cannot be easily replicated by competitors.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

In this section provide brief bios of your senior management team.

Develop a Business Plan

Resources



The cloud business plan template

RESOURCES

- [Marketing Infrastructure](#)
- [Video: How to Create a Marketing Plan](#)
- [Marketing Plan Contents](#)
- [Cloud SureStep Series V1](#)
- [Cloud SureStep Series V2](#)
- [Cloud Financial Models](#)
- [Sales Infrastructure Video](#)
- [Cloud SureStep Series](#)
- [IP Development](#)
- [Support Infrastructure](#)
- [Cloud SureStep Series](#)
- [Cloud Financial Models](#)
- [Financial Tutorial](#)
- [Capital](#)

Creating the Marketing & Sales Plan

A section by section walk thru for starting your Marketing and Sales Plan using the Cloud Business Plan template.

MARKETING

In this opening section summarize the overall demand for Cloud Solutions from your business plan. Describe the marketing strategy you intend to pursue in the Cloud and the investments you should make to execute this strategy.

SALES

In this section describe: The Cloud sales strategy you intend to pursue and the investments you must make to execute this strategy,

DELIVERY

In this section describe: The Cloud delivery strategy you intend to pursue and the investments you will make to execute.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Using the Cloud Financial Models available, outline your core anticipated financial impact from executing on your plans.

CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

Using the Cloud Financial models, indicate the capital you need and how you will spend it. Review the Financial Leverage video for guidance on sourcing options for the capital. .

DIFFERENTIATION

In this section describe your core strengths relative to the competitors earlier described, and why they are inherently sustainable and cannot be easily replicated by competitors..

Develop a Business Plan

Resources



The cloud business plan template

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Cloud Financial Models](#)
- ➔ [Cloud SureStep Series](#)
- ➔ [Cloud SureStep Series](#)
- ➔ [Financial Tutorial](#)
- ➔ [Capital](#)
- ➔ [Risks and Mitigation](#)

Develop a Financial Plan

A section by section walk thru for starting your Financial Plan using the Cloud Business Plan template

A business plan is very much conceptual and doesn't become real for the reader until the numbers get plugged in. Investors, customers, partners and others will ask to view this model during normal business transactions. It will benefit your cloud practice to develop this financial plan early in your business life. You will want to update them periodically so they are on hand as needed.

Microsoft provides you with support in building out these financial plans. You can find a walk-through video [here](#). You will not only learn more about the significance of your financial planning, but also pick up practical tips on building the model. Taking the time to think through these important numbers will prove to be beneficial per our most successful cloud partners. Some of the areas you will want to include in your financial plans include the following:

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Using the Cloud Financial Models available, outline your core anticipated financial impact from executing on your plans.

ANTICIPATED VALUATION IMPACT

Using the Cloud Financial models, indicate what the anticipated shareholder value creation will be.

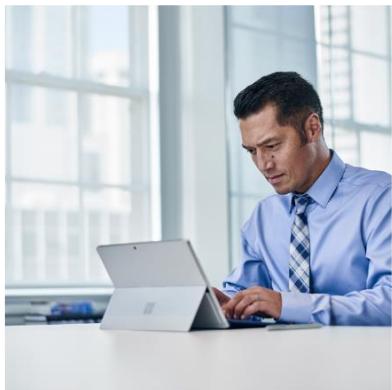
RISKS AND MITIGATION

List the key business risks that could affect the realization of the preceding financial projections and how you plan to reduce these risks. In your financial plan it is important to understand that most cloud business will not be profitable for 12-18 months. Based on a recent survey of 1,136 Azure partners, survey respondents reporting it taking from 6 months to 2 years to achieve profitability. It is critical that you plan for this timeframe and ensure you have enough cash to carry you through until your business is profitable. (Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016).



Define & Design the Solution Offer

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Value Proposition Video](#)
- [Partner Crossover Sessions at WPC](#)

Defining Your Value Proposition

Your value proposition is what gets customers excited to transact business with you and enables them to match their needs with your services, ideally in a way that differentiates you from the competition.

Microsoft has created a stream-lined process for defining your value proposition as a part of the Microsoft Partner Crossover program. In short, defining your value proposition amounts to building a single phrase from these components:

FOR...	Customers, Companies, Decisions makers
WHO...	Needs or problems to solve
OUR SOLUTION...	Short phrase that describes the solution
DOES/INCLUDES...	What is the solution (seen by the customer)
AND ENABLES TO...	Benefits for the customers
UNLIKE...	Direct and indirect competition
THANKS TO...	Killer feature / Company top strength

© 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

FOR: Define the target audience of your value proposition. Who would see the value? These are the profiles of your target customers, companies and the decision makers within those companies. Try to make these definitions succinct and precise, but avoid making them too generic. For example, you might say "Companies between 50 to 100 employees" instead of just "SMB". Also, note that the customer may have as many as three different roles- the customer can be the one who uses your service, the one who decides on selecting your services and the one who pays for your service. Sometimes all three roles are owned by one person, but sometimes the roles are spread across two or three people.

WHO: Describe the specific business process you want to help- this is the customer's need. Examples of this include "improve sales conversation rate" or "spend less time getting to sales insights".

OUR SOLUTION: Describe the solution you are offering to your customer. It is critical this be simple to understand and succinct. The easier it is for prospects to understand your solution, the faster you will sell it and the lower will be your cost of sales. For example, "A full dashboard service to provide your topmost business indicators in real-time". In defining your solution avoid being too generic (e.g., "a service to increase your productivity") or too feature centric (e.g., "an HTML5 dashboard powered by AJAX").

DOES/INCLUDES: Describe the features as they are viewed by the customer, not as you have designed them. For example, "A globally accessible solution with advanced collaboration features" as opposed to "a digital workplace that powers the experience with external compute in datacenters hosted in 23 regions". Focus on the most important features and use terms that your customers are familiar with from their particular industry.

AND ENABLES: Highlight the benefits of your solution. For emerging market, the benefit should highlight the process improvement, while for a mature market you should consider highlighting the competitive advantage it provides the customer. For example, "No upfront investment", "free up your IT resources to focus on your core business" and "flexible and scalable solution that grows with your business".

UNLIKE: Describe what the competition is doing and why your solution is the best one. For example, "undisputed leader in TPC-H performance" or "a fraction of the cost of most standard analytic solutions with the fastest learning curve".

THANKS TO: Describe the "killer feature", that one tangible argument a customer can use to justify the purchase of your product that does not apply to any of your competitors. Examples of such differentiators include: "delivered via a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner in Cloud" or "the only solution to operate 100% in country".

Here is an example of a completed value proposition phrase:

FOR...	Companies between 50-100 employees, Business services/ Fast growing, CEO/MD/CFO
WHO...	Make sure their team are equipped to the right IT equipment, Focus on their core business
OUR SOLUTION...	All-in Digital Workplace service for employee
DOES/INCLUDES...	IT device, O365, integration, training, support for 79\$/m/user
AND ENABLES TO...	No upfront charge, one-stop-shopping, evolution
UNLIKE...	Buying fragmented solutions with a big upfront fee to buy the equipment and fund integration services
THANKS TO...	Exclusive 24/7 services / Microsoft Gold Certification

© 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

Take the time to create your one phrase value proposition, it sits at the core for your solution offer.

Define & Design the Solution Offer

Defining Your Solution Offer

A solution offer is how you package your value proposition.

You determine what it is you think customers will buy and balance that with how selling that offer is good for your business. The key here is to think thru this offer in advance of a customer need.

Most service providers sell using a demand-based approach. That means they are like the clothes tailor who makes every clothing article on-demand and custom to each individual customer need. What you want to do is evolve this into an offer-based approach. In contrast to the tailor, in the offer based approach you have an inventory of jackets you can offer to customers that meet their needs directly or with minimal adjustment. To switch from a demand based approach to an offer based approach, it is critical to think of your services as a product. This solution offer includes the unique value you have defined in your value proposition, the services included, and the way you price the benefits made available to your customer. The key is that this solution offer is a stock offering- it is the same offer you can make to every customer.

Why is this packaging of a solution offer important? First, because most customers are now shopping for their solutions and making significant decisions before they even talk to a salesperson. A well-defined solution offer can turn a lead into a qualified prospect or even a customer without any active intervention on your part. A lack of a solution offer, wherein the lead needs to talk to a salesperson first, may mean the customer keeps searching and gravitates towards vendors that do provide a solution offer that meets the customer needs. Second, this packaging is important because the potential market for tailor-

made offers is significantly smaller (e.g., 10% of the market) than those for ready-made offers (which may represent 90% of the market). Third, by having your solution offer packaged in advance it means your pre-sale effort is done exactly once- you are not having to repeat it for every prospect. Fourth, because statistics show that the average gross margins for packaged IP (like that capture in a well-defined solution offer) can take project services margins from 15% to over 45%.

Read on to understand how you define the pricing for your offer as this turns out to be an integral piece of you define your offer. Be sure to review the content on [Project Services](#), [Managed Services](#) and [Intellectual property](#) within this playbook to help you define what goes into your offer

Services Offered

Project services lead IT revenue and are the most commonly offered solutions to customers across all four cloud-based practices.

IP Services are the least commonly offered to customers; nearly half do not offer IP services across all 4 practices.



Define & Design the Solution Offer

Project Based Services

Building a new practice is a daunting challenge. It is not that different from starting a business from scratch. Just like any business venture it's important to start with a vision of what your business will do, what problems it will solve, and ultimately how it will make money.

Let's start off with the premise that there are four categories of offerings that we'll work from: Project based services, managed services, intellectual property, and vertical solutions.

In the Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016, 486 partners that identified as having a Enterprise Mobility and Security practice were asked within your practice, which of the following project services do you offer? The results are below; this data should be considered when designing your project based offerings.

PROJECT BASED OFFERINGS

Backup & Storage Deployment	62%
Cloud Migration Planning	60%
Virtualization Migration & Deployment	56%
Proof of Concept	56%
Systems Integration	55%
Deployment Services	53%
Solution Configuration/Customization	47%
Disaster Recovery Deployment	47%
Solution Analysis, Scope, & Design	43%
Data Center Migration	40%
Cloud Readiness Assessment	39%
Solution Support & Training	38%
Simple File Server Migration	36%

Desktop Virtualization	35%
Cloud Solution Costing & Spend Optimization	35%
Health Checks	34%
Custom Application Development	33%
Training	29%
Network readiness assessment	27%
Security & Compliance Enablement	26%
Security & Compliance Assessment	25%
Scalability & Load Testing	23%
Mentoring	23%
Bandwidth Planning	21%
Network Remediation	19%
Security-Penetration Testing	14%
We do not offer any of these services	2%



REVENUE

Total Median (n=566)	\$150,000
SMB (n=407)	\$137,500
Enterprise (n=159)	\$300,000

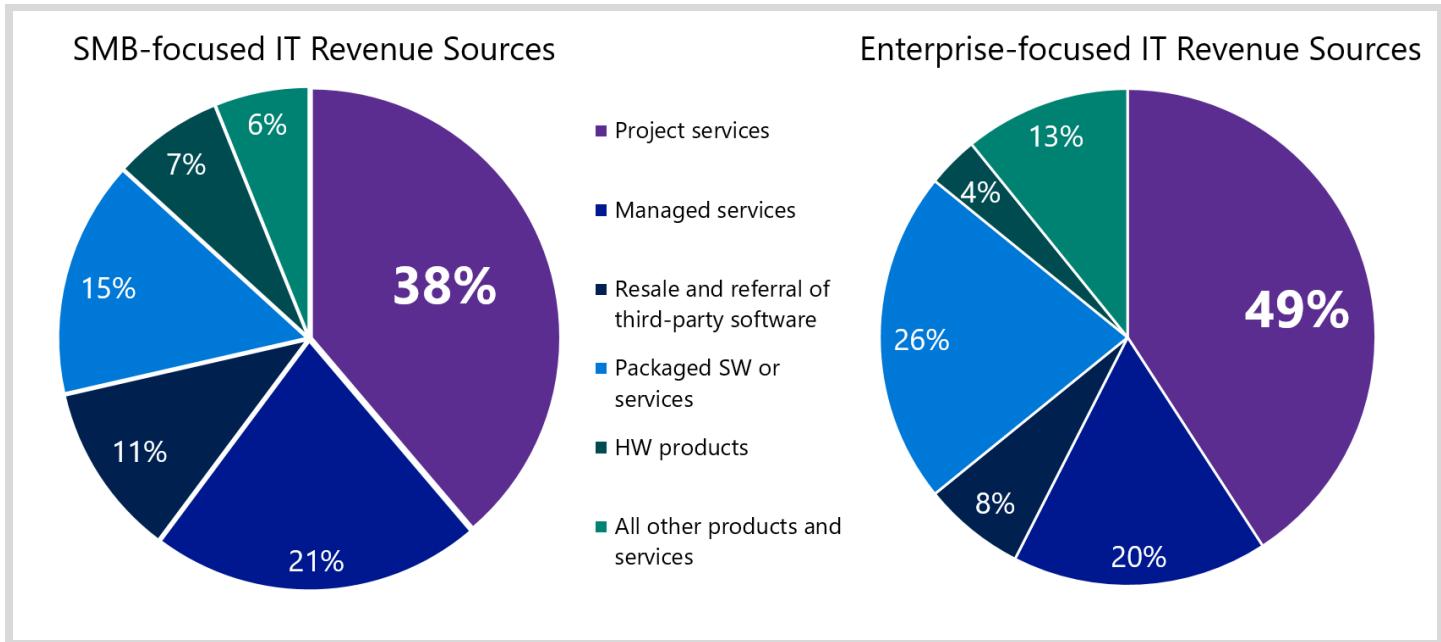
When targeting your project services, our research with partners emphasized the importance of targeting the enterprise customer to attain significantly higher per-project revenue.

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016.

Define & Design the Solution Offer

Revenue Percentage Estimate

Estimate of the percentage of revenue which comes from the above types of IT-related product and service offerings;



Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

The next set of pages will review some of these offerings in more detail.

Cloud Readiness Assessment

Resources



One of the most important first steps for any customer considering moving to the cloud is assessing their current infrastructure and building a strategy for cloud adoption. This offering is focused on using your skills to review your customer's environment and determine what their cloud strategy should be.

RESOURCES

- [Enterprise Cloud Strategy E-Book](#)
- [Azure Virtual Machines Readiness Assessment](#)
- [Azure Channel Pricing Calculator](#)
- [Azure IaaS Cost Estimator Tool](#)
- [Prioritization is key to a successful hybrid cloud strategy](#)
- [Cloud Adoption Framework Workshop](#)

Assessing for Readiness

2016 marks the inflection point for cloud adoption for both SMB and enterprise customers. Most customers today have already started taking cloud seriously. However, not every customer is savvy enough to build a robust cloud strategy. Many don't have granular visibility into their IT infrastructure – and are not able to quantify the benefits in cost, agility, speed, and time to market that cloud brings. Others, while aware of the benefits, don't know where to start from – and are unsure of how ready their staff, systems, tools, and processes are for public cloud.

This is why most managed services engagements and significant cloud migration projects begin with a cloud assessment. A cloud assessment determines which workloads are ready to move to Azure, and in what fashion (lift-n-shift, re-platform, or replacement with a new deployment model). Customers require a partner who can provide the proper roadmap and guidance to optimizing their workloads in Microsoft Azure.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

- How do I get more speed, agility and performance for my IT assets?
- How do I decide between hosted private cloud vs public cloud deployments?
- How do I factor in both for my short to medium term IT strategy?
- How do I decide the first apps to take to cloud?
- Do I need to train my staff again after a cloud migration? What other changes do I need to make in my IT staffing?
- How do I control 'shadow IT', or 'zombie apps' or workloads that are consuming more resources than the value they are delivering?

A cloud assessment determines which workloads are ready to move to Azure, and in what fashion (lift-n-shift, re-platform, or replacement with a new deployment model). Customers require a partner who can provide the proper roadmap and guidance to optimizing their workloads in Microsoft Azure.

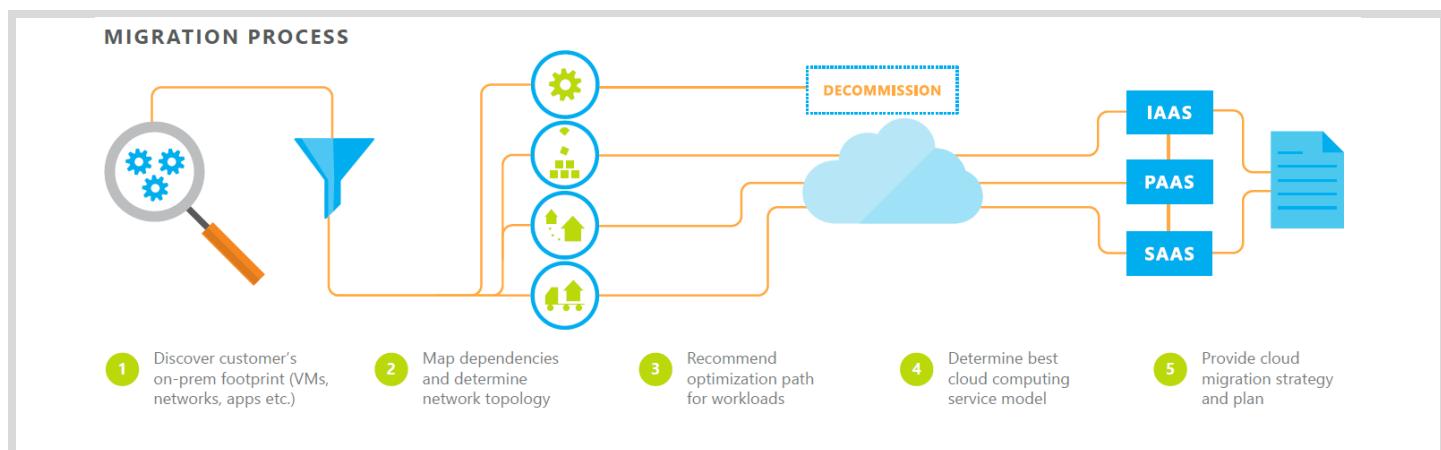
KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING:

- What the estimated ROI for migrating workloads to Azure would be
- The readiness needs of the customer to support the workload in Azure
- Which applications and workloads should stay on-premises
- Identify hybrid cloud connectivity requirements



CLOUD ADOPTION FRAMEWORK WORKSHOP

The Cloud Adoption Framework Workshop is designed to be ideal for pre-sales engagements where customer cloud opportunities need to be uncovered and adoption accelerated. Through a co-creation style workshop, we jointly develop the customer's cloud adoption goals, desired outcomes and create an adoption plan. This ideation exercise, accomplished in a co-creation fashion, provides the customer with ownership of the output and clearly positions Microsoft as a strategic partner



Cloud Migration and Deployment

Resources



You've assessed your customer's environment, workloads, applications (and their dependencies). You've painstakingly planned their cloud migration strategy. Now it's time to put that preparation into action.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure Site Recovery](#)
- ➔ [Azure Application Architectures](#)
- ➔ [Azure App Service Migration Assistant](#)
- ➔ [How to get moving in your migration to the cloud](#)
- ➔ [Using Azure AD Domain Services for Migration](#)
- ➔ [Azure Import/Export Service](#)

Migrating Workloads

After a successful cloud readiness assessment, the next logical opportunity is the cloud migration plan. There are several questions your customer will want answers for when planning a migration:

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

1. Will you build my entire application architecture on Azure, including 3rd party web services?
2. Will you stage and test my applications before they go live on Azure?
3. Will you migrate my workloads to Azure? Will you take care of architecture changes in order to meet the reliability, scalability, and availability requirements?
4. Will you help me with code changes required for my app to adopt to Azure? Will you help me facilitate self-healing, auto-scaling and a secure deployment on Azure (if my application demands that)?
5. Will you ensure that my data and processes respect the compliance and privacy requirements that my industry needs (e.g. HIPAA, PCI, SOX etc.)?
6. Will you provide me with sandbox environments with key tools to accelerate product development?

A migration offering would look holistically at a migration plan that works through everything from moving workloads to virtual machines to establishing connectivity using site-to-site VPN or ExpressRoute.

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING:

- Creating a plan for migrating servers or virtual machines to Azure (sizing, costs, moving data, project schedule)
- Migrating data
- Network capacity planning
- Architecting for availability
- Architecting for security

Migration Planning



Once you've determined what workloads will move to Azure, you need to come up with a migration plan. There are several key things to keep in mind while planning a migration:

1. What application components am I migrating? Are they storage data, web servers, Databases, single VMs, N-tier apps, or entire datacenters?
2. Will this be a lift-n-shift migration or will this involve any degree of re-platforming or code factoring? Which Azure region(s) will I migrate to?
3. What kind of availability, scalability, security, and auto scaling patterns should I introduce in the apps?
4. Will the entire migration process be automated or will it be a combination of manual and scripted effort? What automation tools will I use?
5. How will I test the apps in cloud for performance and availability before turning over?
6. How do I use my customer's existing software licenses when migrating to Azure? Can I make use of programs like Azure HUB or License Mobility?

Below are overviews of some of the key approaches to consider when migrating workloads to the cloud. Each approach has its pros and cons but may also offer additional opportunities.

DECOMMISSION	LIFT-AND-SHIFT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shut down inefficient or obsolete business applications• Retaining access to the historical data• Decommissioning has many steps that need to be followed for security and compliance purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As-is migration of applications and data from an on-premises datacenter to Azure• Often immediate benefits in cost, scalability, availability, elasticity, or management features

REARCHITECT	SUSTAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-sizing” resources running an application • Opportunity to consolidate various app tiers (when possible) or re-architect the app for platform as a service (PaaS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your customer’s app is integral and efficient enough to continue in its current on premises deployment • No migration necessary • Often most mission-critical, data sensitive apps are last to move to cloud
NEW DEPLOYMENTS	RE-PLATFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSPs provide deployment, POC and provisioning assistance for new apps that are written for Azure • Includes dev-test, staging and testing in the desired IDE • Architecture design and solution design assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor architect or code changes on an application to work on a different platform • Often minor code changes are required to remove performance bottlenecks and increase an app’s operability on Azure
DECOMMISSION	ORCHESTRATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shutting down inefficient or obsolete business applications • Retaining access to the historical data • Decommissioning has many steps that need to be followed for security and compliance purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchestrate how the various app components will interact and move in the migration process • Important for complex apps or for entire data center/rack migrations
NEW DEPLOYMENTS	APPLICATION LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSPs provide deployment, POC and provisioning assistance for new apps that are written for Azure • Includes dev-test, staging and testing in the desired IDE • Architecture design and solution design assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End to end management of application development lifecycle including governance, development, and maintenance of apps

CLOUD PRACTICE ACCELERATORS

To help with migration planning and modernization, the [Cloud Infrastructure and Management Practice Accelerators](#) are designed to help you build your Hybrid Cloud practice based on Microsoft Cloud Infrastructure Platform: Microsoft Azure, Microsoft Azure Stack, Windows Server, and System Center.

Azure Governance

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure EA Portal](#)
- [Configuring Azure Role Based Access Control \(RBAC\)](#)
- [Azure Resource Manager Policies](#)
- [Usage and Rate Card API](#)
- [Usage and Billing Portal](#)
- [Microsoft Azure Enterprise Content Pack for PowerBI](#)

Making the Cloud Enterprise Ready

A key service that your practice can offer as a partner as a project or through managed services is setting up your customer's subscriptions for governance.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

- Customer lacks technical expertise required to support all services that Azure offers
- Customers do not know how to enable charge back across departments internally
- Customers do not know how to identify where they are spending their money in Azure

Azure provides several built-in tools to help apply governance at scale. A resourceful Cloud Infrastructure and Hybrid practice can also build tooling, scripts, templates, and policies to accelerate customers to apply more control.

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- Configure and setup the Azure Enterprise Agreement (EA) portal
 - Implement charge back for departments and setup PowerBI for reporting
 - Implement custom reporting for your customers using the usage and rate card API or the usage and billing portal sample
 - Integrate 3rd party cloud pricing solutions
- Configure Role Based Access Control (RBAC)
- Creation and deployment of Azure Resource Manager policies
 - Create a supported service catalog
 - Control which regions are supported
 - Enforce Azure resource naming conventions
 - Enforce tag policies
 - Auditing of events in Azure subscriptions

SETUP POWERBI FOR AZURE EA MONITORING

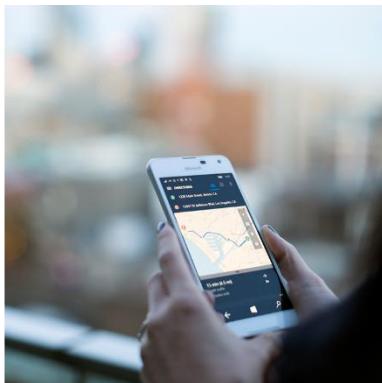
The Azure Enterprise Agreement makes it easier than ever for enterprises to use Azure. With the release of the Microsoft Azure Enterprise content pack for Power BI, you can now quickly import and analyze your Azure consumption data in Power BI. This data allows you to gain insights into which departments, accounts, or subscriptions are consuming the most. It also provides visibility into which service your organization used most and trends for spending and overall usage.

AZURE USAGE AND BILLING PORTAL

The Azure usage and billing portal is an open source project hosted in GitHub that you can use as-is or customize and extend to make your own usage and billing solutions.

Hybrid Cloud Networking

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure ExpressRoute](#)
- [ExpressRoute for Office 365 and Dynamics CRM](#)
- [Optimize ExpressRoute routing](#)
- [Apply to become an ExpressRoute Partner](#)
- [Site-to-Site VPN](#)
- [Protecting the Cloud Boundary with Azure](#)
- [Azure Traffic Manager](#)
- [Azure Point-to-Site Networking](#)
- [Protecting Data and Privacy in the Cloud Whitepaper](#)

Hybrid and Globally Connected

For companies with a hybrid cloud strategy cloud networking is a foundational technology for any migration or serious workload deployment. Opportunities could involve extending an existing wide area network to the cloud with Azure ExpressRoute or to providing connectivity services between virtual networks using site-to-site VPN or peering.

Many customers are developing a multi-cloud strategy, whether that is with other public cloud providers or their own private cloud and public cloud connectivity is still an integral part of that offering.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

- Unsure of how much bandwidth or capacity is needed
- Customers have compliance issues and are not sure how to protect their infrastructure to build compliant solutions
- Customer lacks technical expertise required to connect their existing data centers or sites to the cloud
- Customers want to build a disaster recovery solution between their location and Azure but lack the skills in networking to make a viable solution

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- Network design and bandwidth planning
- Enabling hybrid connectivity with ExpressRoute or Site-to-Site networking (or both)
- Building geo-redundant or multi-cloud solutions with Azure Traffic Manager
- Performing network readiness assessments for Office 365 customers that require ExpressRoute
- Deploy firewall virtual appliances and network security groups to secure the network and ensure compliance
- Implement secure connectivity for remote administration and development and test with point-to-site networking.

Automation and DevOps

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure Operations JumpStart](#)
- [DevOps Envisioning Workshop](#)
- [Azure Quick Start Templates](#)
- [Azure Automation](#)
- [Azure Automation DSC](#)
- [Azure PowerShell](#)
- [Script Center](#)
- [Azure CLI](#)
- [VSTS DevOps and ALM](#)
- [Chef, Puppet, Docker and Linux VMs](#)
- [Using Jenkins and Storage for Continuous Integration](#)
- [Tools for Managing VMs and Containers](#)

3RD PARTY RESOURCES

- [Chef](#)
- [Puppet](#)
- [Jenkins](#)
- [Ansible](#)
- [SaltStack](#)

Continuous Innovation through DevOps

Automation and orchestration are extremely important functions to a successful Azure practice. Your ability to automate routine tasks allows you to lower your delivery costs and offer superior SLAs – driving a virtuous cycle of efficiency and repeat business.

Automation is the key to creating the right balance between cost, reliability, speed, and time to market. Automation can also offer significant benefits to the customer as it can optimize Azure spending and increase reliability for workloads that have varying resource requirements.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

- Customer lacks technical expertise required to efficiently manage PCs, servers, software, user access, and policies
- Customer lacks a unified toolset for implementing an appropriate configuration management work stream
- Customer lacks a unified management plan and instead carries out changes on live equipment on an ad hoc basis
- Lack of resources and knowledge to maintain their own system and integrate automation capabilities
- Automation tools are perceived as too complicated and too expensive to implement
- Lack of familiarity with dev-ops approach to operations - or unable to bring the cultural change required to adopt dev-ops as a way of doing things
- Fear and uncertainty surrounding the loss of control associated with automation
- IT environments are not mature or well defined enough to warrant automation

For Dev-ops on Azure it is important to have a strong understanding of the command line tools and Azure Resource Manager templates as well as services like Chef or Azure Automation DSC to enable configuration management for a stronger offering. With these tools in your toolbelt you can automate tasks normally done through the Azure management portal and control large amounts of resources with fewer people.

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- Template and script authoring
- Automatic start and stop of virtual machines (cost optimization)
- Automatic scale down of services
- Continuous deployment and Integration
- Configuration management
- Container Management

Backup and Disaster Recovery

Resources



Enable business continuity for the enterprise with Azure.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [OMS Partner Site](#)
- ➔ [OMS Proof of Concept Guidance](#)
- ➔ [OMS Technical Resources](#)

Business Continuity is Key

Microsoft Azure offers a rich set of services to backup workloads and hybrid storage support. Azure Backup is one service that supports file and folder based workloads, virtual machine backup, as well as workload specific support such as Hyper-V, VMWare, SharePoint, and Active Directory straight to Azure removing the need for physical backups like tape. Azure StorSimple is an appliance (physical and virtual) that provides hybrid tiered storage to automatically offload data to the cloud:

Azure Site Recovery protects important applications by coordinating the replication and recovery of physical or virtual machines. You can replicate to your own datacenter, to a hosting service provider, or even to Azure to avoid the expense and complexity of building and managing your own secondary location. Azure Site Recovery continuously monitors service health and helps automate the orderly recovery of services in the event of a site outage at the primary datacenter. Virtual machines can be brought up in an orchestrated fashion to help restore service quickly, even for complex multi-tier workloads. Site Recovery works with existing technologies such as Hyper-V Replica, System Center, VMWare and SQL Server AlwaysOn.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

1. Will you help me restore my data when it is corrupt or lost? Will you take care of my data's long term retention compliance requirements?
2. Will you protect my mission critical applications? Will you make DR and recovery plans and run DR drills?
3. Will you ensure business continuity in case of any interruption? What kind of SLAs will you provide?

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- Enabling disaster recovery from on-premises to Azure or on-premises to on-premises with Azure Site Recovery with physical servers, VMWare or Hyper-V virtual machines.
- Azure Automation Runbook authoring for automated failover
- Backup deployment and configuration of virtual machines in Azure
- Backup deployment and configuration of file and folder based data
- Backup deployment and configuration of enterprise workloads such as VMWare, Hyper-V, Active Directory, SharePoint, and SQL Server
- Enabling hybrid storage and backup services with StorSimple

VALUE ADD SPECTRUM - DISASTER RECOVERY



DR and managed failover with 1-4 hours RTO and RPO

DR and auto failover with 15 -30 mins RTO and RPO

DR and auto failover; monthly/quarterly DR drills and custom recovery plan authoring

VALUE ADD SPECTRUM - BACKUP



Blob Snapshotting

Backup and point-in-time restore (30 days - 1 year)

Backup and point-in-time restore for long term data retention (1 - 99 years)

Enable Identity and Access Management Resources

Enabling Hybrid Identity



Enabling hybrid identity is a foundational step in for many organizations digital transformation.

RESOURCES

- [What is Azure AD?](#)
- [Deploying a Hybrid Identity Solution](#)
- [How to Deploy ADFS in Azure](#)
- [Azure AD Domain Services](#)
- [Azure Active Directory Proof of Concept Playbook](#)

Identity Management is another “Must-Have” service offering for Cloud MSPs. For MSPs focused on productivity and mobility solutions, ID management is a natural add-on.

- You can run Windows Server Active Directory (commonly called just AD) in the cloud using virtual machines created with Azure Virtual machines. This approach makes sense when you're using Azure to extend your on-premises datacenter into the cloud.
- You can use Azure Active Directory to give your users single sign-on to Software as a Service (SaaS) applications. Microsoft's Office 365 uses this technology, for example, and applications running on Azure or other cloud platforms can also use it.
- Applications running in the cloud or on-premises can use Azure Active Directory Access Control to let users log in using identities from Facebook, Google, Microsoft, and other identity providers.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

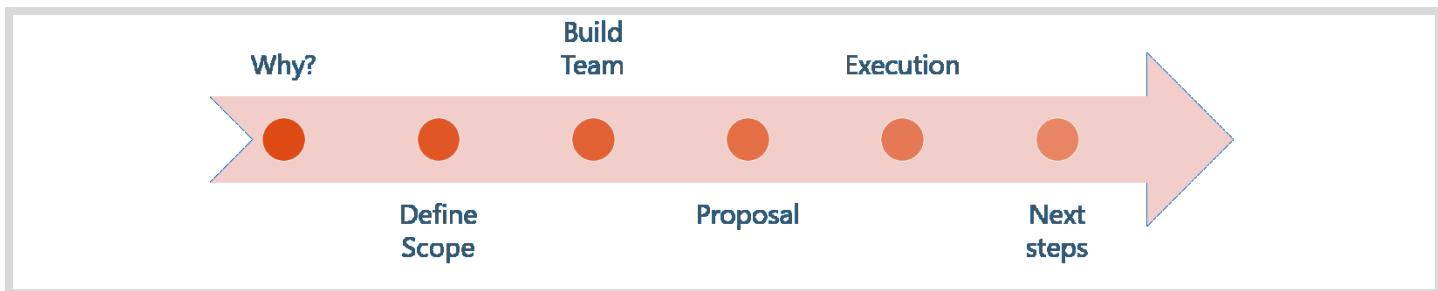
- Is Azure Active Directory secure?
- Is it safe to deploy Active Directory in an Azure Virtual Machine?
- How can I enable single-sign-on with my existing Windows Server Active Directory domains and my resources in Azure?
- Can I enable single-sign-on with other cloud based SaaS services?
- Do I need to deploy Active Directory Federation Services?

USER ACCESS MANAGEMENT	USER TAGGING AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT	SINGLE-SIGN-ON	MULTIFACTOR-AUTHENTICATION
A simple but important aspect of ID management that gives admins the power to identify and control the state of users logged in to the network. MSPs, on their customers' behalf, can add or delete users, query or filter users, set access policies and enforce strong authentication when users access resources. This can be done using CSP partner center and Azure portal.	Use Azure tags and manage the logging of all user activity on Azure. Maintain multiple Azure subscriptions as well as role based access for individual users for specific subscriptions and specific Azure resources.	Enabling your customer to have access to their resources by using a single set of user credentials and a unified authentication method across Azure, hosted infrastructure, on-prem infrastructure and other SaaS apps free your customers from multiple authentication processes for different apps access.	A method of ID authentication that requires more than one verification process (e.g. phone verification), adding a valuable second layer of security to signing-in and any transactions. MSPs can provide improved application security with Microsoft Azure Active Directory Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).

Executing a Proof of Concept

One of the key tools in your arsenal in an Azure practice is the Proof of Concept (PoC).

PROOF OF CONCEPT HIGH LEVEL FLOW



WHY PERFORM A PROOF OF CONCEPT?



Proof of concepts (PoC) serve several purposes. One of the primary aims is to overcome customer objections by demonstrating that the solution will solve the problem it's being designed for. The PoC also can serve as evidence that your practice can use for future engagements with the same customer or with new customers. Many times, the output of a PoC can be added to your practices intellectual property list for demonstrations or used to accelerate future solutions. Proof of concepts are one of your key tools when trying to displace the competition by rapidly showing value and hopefully a quick return on investment.

DEFINE SCOPE



A proper PoC is one that is defined with a clear and concrete scope. Conduct an application design session (ADS) to level set and align business and technical requirements and set clear goals. This should include:

- Identify workloads and features to demonstrate
- Determine what you want to prove and which objections need to be overcome
- Clearly demarcate responsibilities and setup organization
- Setup Azure subscriptions and define who pays Azure and perform cost estimates of the PoC
- Agree on the next step if success criteria are met

POC EXECUTION



The first step execution is to identify the technical resources needed for the PoC. This will include the technical implementation team as well as project management for tracking the progress of the engagement. Beyond identification of resources, you will need to ensure all members of your team and your customers technical team (if they are participating) are clear on responsibilities. During the PoC it is important that the initial design [follow best practices and is designed for production](#) (just scaled down) from the beginning. Communication is critical, so ensure that the progress of the PoC is communicated to all stakeholders on a regular basis.

NEXT STEPS



At the end of the PoC, a report should be created that explains the overall status of the PoC and any issues identified during the PoC. The report should elaborate on the pros and cons of the delivery and clearly explain the value prop of moving forward with a real implementation to the stakeholders along with expected production costs over time. Assuming the stakeholders agree to move forward a plan should be put into place to deploy the PoC into production, while ensuring that the PoC is designed for production usage

Managed Services

Managed services is not a new business model. For more than 20 years, large enterprises have relied on service providers to manage their IT assets. Whether you call them an Outsourcer, an RMM provider, or a Managed IT provider, service providers have been managing their customers' workloads—either in their own data centers or those operated by their customers. Cloud, however, requires a new method of management because of its focus on scale, elasticity, and automation. For CIOs, cloud represents a paradigm shift in the way they think about embracing IT. Dev-ops has completely changed the way applications are developed and maintained. The hyper-scale nature of cloud provides a completely new meaning to scalability, elasticity and resiliency – and has redefined how applications are architected and delivered. The pay-as-you-go model provides a fail-fast, agile method of app development. Device and data proliferation means customers want to—and can—do so much more with their IT assets, with cloud providing the computing resources to do so. Because of cloud, CIOs are demanding a new way to think about data governance and security. A cloud MSP is someone who helps their customer transition to (and embrace) this paradigm shift in technology—by guiding them in all aspects of their cloud journey. From consulting to migrations, to operations management, cloud MSPs show customers all the benefits that come with cloud adoption.

Managed services are services you offer to help your customers on a regular and recurring basis by offering white-glove support. As an Azure managed service provider, your offerings can span from planning, enablement to day-to-day operations and support.



PLANNING

- Assess customer's IT environment and determine the data and apps that are viable opportunities for Azure migration
- Offer customers a roadmap for Azure adoption and associated values
- Provide a TCO and ROI analysis for moving their applications to Azure



ENABLEMENT

- Migrate viable workloads to Azure
- Re-platform applications to run in the cloud
- Optimize workloads running in hybrid and public cloud environments
- Help your customers with staging, testing, and validation before moving their production environments to Azure.



OPERATIONS

- Offer support while delivering on SLAs and uptime guarantees
- Operate and monitor your customer's Azure and hybrid cloud Environments
- Provide your customers with governance over their cloud usage by managing their billing and Azure capacity planning.

Read the MSP Playbook



“

Ensure you are solving a problem. Attach managed services wherever possible and make sure you have a very robust offering around it. This allows for a scalable high margin business.

”

Nick Sone, CEO of Ensyst

Cloud Solution Provider

Resources



Take your managed service provider model to the next level by becoming a Microsoft Azure Cloud Solution Provider

RESOURCES

- [Getting Started](#)
- [CSP in a Box](#)
- [Cloud Reseller FAQ](#)
- [Azure Managed Services Playbook for CSP Partners](#)
- [Empowering digital transformation with Microsoft cloud solutions for hosting, cloud and managed service providers](#)
- [View the CSP Infographic](#)
- [Learn about Incentives for CSPs](#)

Program Overview

The Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider program enables partners to directly manage their entire Microsoft cloud customer lifecycle.

Partners in this program utilize dedicated in-product tools to directly provision, manage, and support their customer subscriptions. Partners can easily package their own tools, products and services, and combine them into one monthly or annual customer bill.

CSP DIRECT

The CSP Direct model is great for partners who have the infrastructure in place to do it all. If your business meets these requirements and you are ready to go, [enroll today](#).

CSP DIRECT REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

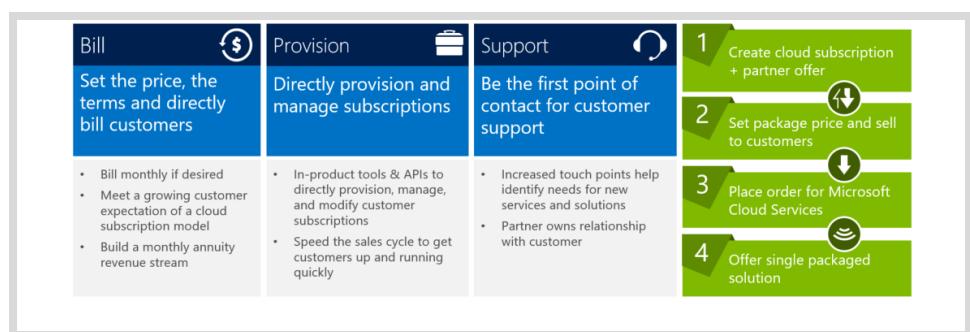
- Services business model
- Customer support infrastructure
- Customer billing and invoicing capabilities
- Ability to scale

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- You are the first point of contact for your customers' needs
- You own and control the billing cycle
- You sell integrated offers and services – one sales motion to drive services, attach, and upsell
- You receive in-product tools to directly provision, manage, and support your customers

CSP INDIRECT

Spend more time with your customers and provide specialized service offerings. If you're not interested in building an infrastructure to provide customer support and billing, [get connected with a Indirect Provider](#).



Managed Support

Resources



Adding managed support services to your offerings increases your value and profitability

RESOURCES

- [Four ways owning the customer life cycle makes you more profitable](#)

Taking Care of your Customers

It should go without saying that one of the most important functions for your MSP practice will be supporting your customer once their applications and data are firmly in the cloud or sitting in a hybrid deployment.

No matter how well a cloud or hybrid environment is planned, provisioned, operated or monitored, problems will arise, and those problems will need to be remediated. It's your job as an MSP to offer support to your customers to deal with outages, breaches, inefficiencies, and disaster scenarios. MSPs need to consider the level of support that makes sense for their practice—in terms of resources and revenue—as well as what makes sense to the customers they serve.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

1. Lack the expertise and resources to troubleshoot problems
2. Inability to determine the root cause of performance issues and glitches
3. No knowledge of how to remediate problems if they are able to correctly identify them
4. Do not want to spend time and resources fixing problems

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

- **USER SUPPORT:** provide support for frequently asked questions, set-up and usage, best practices, questions around billing and invoicing, break-fix support for developers, architecture design and solution design support for architects.
- **SYSTEM SUPPORT:** provide customers with information on any service interruption, relay expectations on when the system will be back online.
- **PRODUCT SUPPORT:** provide support when the Microsoft product is not working as expected or the service stops working. Escalate to Microsoft when the issue cannot be resolved with existing documentation and/or training.
- **EXTENDED SUPPORT HOURS:** Many customers need the ability for 24/7 365 support but cannot justify the overhead internally.
- **ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT:** Offering an account manager that is responsible for reporting service consumption and ultimately minimizing time to resolution is a service that can be offered at a premium.
- **DEDICATED SUPPORT:** The value add of a dedicated support team cannot be understated. Engineering resources that already know your customers environment, including the business and technical reasons for how a solution was implemented can add a tremendous value over the lifetime of an agreement.

Hybrid Cloud Monitoring and Management

Resources



RESOURCES

- [OMS Partner Opportunity](#)
- [OMS Log Analytics](#)
- [Why Choose System Center 2016?](#)
- [Azure Advisor](#)
- [Azure Application Insights](#)
- [Azure Diagnostics](#)
- [Log Analytics](#)
- [Automation](#)
- [Hybrid Workers](#)

Cloud Monitoring Services

Back in the 2000s, Managed Services was synonymous with Remote Management & Monitoring (RMM).

In the cloud world, the tools and requirements have evolved, but the problem statement hasn't fundamentally changed. How do I monitor the health and performance of my IT infrastructure? There is no easy answer to this and customers expect their service providers to solve it for them. Most mid-market and enterprise organizations simply do not have the time, resources, or dedicated staff required to monitor every aspect of IT, and this is where MSPs add the most value. While Azure offers many monitoring capabilities built within the platform – there is still a place for partners who (a) provide additional, deeper monitoring tooling (b) triage the false positives from the real alerts (c) proactively act upon the alerts before any measurable loss in performance.

KEY CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

1. I don't have the time or resources to monitor all my hosted and internal IT assets.
2. I need a single pane of glass view that tells me how all my apps and VMs are performing, at any point in time.
3. I find it challenging to diagnose the root cause of breakdowns or outages.
4. How do I respond to so many alerts? How do I differentiate the false positives from the concerning ones?
5. How do I manage virtual machines and services in a hybrid environment?

KEY SERVICES FOR THIS OFFERING

SYSTEM HEALTH MONITORING	LOG ANALYTICS AND ALERTING	DATABASE MONITORING	APPLICATION PERFORMANCE MONITORING
Complete monitoring of servers or VMs whether they are on-premises or in the cloud, CPU utilization, memory usage, storage IOPs, and OS performance. Includes monitoring of application performance and operation health, and dashboards and reports on system health.	Every client, device, and user accessing a network produces data that is logged. Analyzing those logs can offer deep insight into performance, security, resource consumption, and a number of other meaningful metrics.	A view into your customer's database that helps MSPs ensure high availability of database servers. The process involves keeping logs of size, connection time and users of databases, analyzing use trends, and leveraging data to proactively remediate issues.	End-to-end tracking of all aspects of an application (or webpage). App monitoring involves watching every part—from shopping carts to registration pages—of a customer's app(s) for performance issues in an effort to provide the best user experience possible.

ADDITIONAL MANAGED SERVICES OFFERINGS

The [project services discussed earlier](#) are all potential offerings in your managed services offering. Beyond those, as an MSP you can offer a much broader set of long term support and consulting offerings. In the Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016, 486 partners that identified as having a Cloud Infrastructure and Management practice were asked within your practice, which of the following managed services do you offer? The results are below; this data should be considered when designing your managed services based offerings.

MANAGED SERVICES OFFERINGS

Virtual Machine Management & Upgrading	55%
Configuration Management	44%
Microsoft support (interface between MSFT & customer)	43%
Domain Management	43%
Troubleshooting	43%
Update & Patch Management	42%
Hybrid Environment Support (Basic Infrastructure)	40%
User Rights & Account Management	40%
Azure Consumption Monitoring & Optimization	38%
Reactive Help Desk Support	37%
Disaster Recovery Monitoring & Testing	37%
Performance Monitoring and Reporting	36%
Proactive Backups & Anti-Virus Monitoring	36%
Virtualization Support & Efficiency Optimization	34%
PowerShell Script Automation	33%
Network Monitoring	33%
Reporting and Analytics	31%
Critical Response Support	30%
Anti-Virus Monitoring	29%
Reports and Dashboard Maintenance	28%
Security Management & Identity Protection	26%
Application Lifecycle Management & Support	25%
Virtual Database Administration	25%
Data Center Performance Monitoring & Optimization	25%
Regulatory Compliance via O365 Infrastructure	18%
Online Training and Self-Paced learning	13%
We do not offer any of these managed services	11%



REVENUE

Total Median (n=566)	\$100,000
SMB (n=407)	\$75,000
Enterprise (n=159)	\$150,000

When targeting your managed services, our research with partners emphasized the importance of targeting the enterprise customer to attain significantly higher managed revenues.

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016.

Intellectual Property

The idea of coming up with “productized” IP may sound daunting. But many partners have found that they already had IP, it just wasn’t packaged up as IP. If you did something custom that was successful for one client, there may be more customers that would benefit from solving the same problem.

Review your most successful projects to see if there are repeatable elements that you can productize. Repeatable elements can be about your own vertical or process best practices, or else they can focus on common customer pain points. Start small. Your IP can be a simple template or just a few lines of code that automates a particular function in a way your market typically needs. Productizing IP and creating repeatable processes has been a very successful strategy for many partners. Some partners are achieving gross margins in excess of 70% by productizing IP and selling it to their customers on a recurring revenue basis. Productizing IP helps you create stickiness with customers and opens up opportunities to sell your solutions through the partner channel. If you don’t want to create your own IP, you can also look to the partner ecosystem for incremental solutions that can be bundled with Microsoft’s offerings to round out your total solution. There are multiple opportunities for building intellectual property that can be used to expedite engagements, or even as an entire engagement. With the ability to create fully automated solutions partners can challenge their creative side to offer up solutions that can save their customers money as well as add a striking differentiator amongst your peers. In the Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016, 486 partners that identified as having a Cloud Infrastructure and Hybrid practice were asked within your practice, which of the following intellectual property offerings do you offer? The results are below; this data should be considered when designing your intellectual property offerings.:

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFERINGS

Automated Backups & Disaster Recovery	34%
Automated Monitoring, Alerting, & Logging	26%
Office Connectivity & Other Plug-Ins & Add-ons	21%
Customer Self-Serve Portals	20%
Pre-Configured Dashboards	19%
External Portals for End Customer Information	18%
Automated Load Balancing	18%
Automated Consumption Monitoring & Reporting	16%
Automated Disaster Recovery Testing	16%
Online Training & Self-paced Learning	13%
Middleware for Hybrid Synchronization	12%
We do not offer any of these intellectual property services	40%



REVENUE

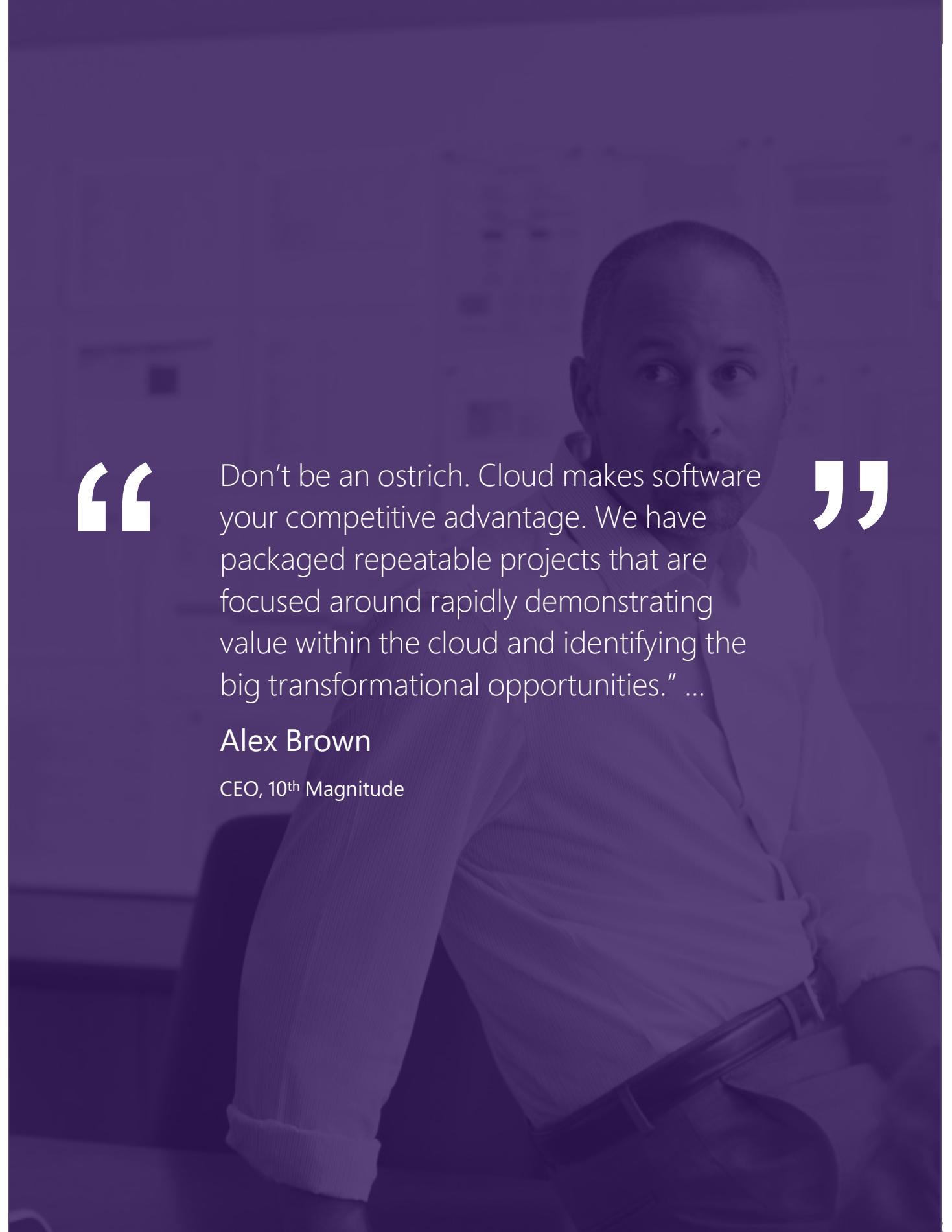
Total Median (n=467)	\$50,000
SMB (n=338)	\$40,000
Enterprise (n=129)	\$62,500

When targeting your intellectual property offerings, our research with partners emphasized the importance of targeting the enterprise customer to attain significantly higher managed revenues.

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016.

aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



A black and white photograph of a man with short hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a dark belt. He is seated, facing slightly to the right of the camera. The background is blurred.

“

Don't be an ostrich. Cloud makes software your competitive advantage. We have packaged repeatable projects that are focused around rapidly demonstrating value within the cloud and identifying the big transformational opportunities.” ...

”

Alex Brown

CEO, 10th Magnitude

Vertical Offerings

Resources



Delivering datacenter level networking expertise is critical to an enterprise hybrid cloud offering.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure Government](#)
- ➔ [Available Services by Region](#)
- ➔ [Contact Microsoft About Azure Government](#)
- ➔ [Azure Compliance](#)
- ➔ [Maximize your profitability with vertical solutions](#)
- ➔ [Cloud Partner Strategy 2.0: Going Vertical](#)

Consider Verticalizing your Solution Offer

It is recommended that you specialize by vertical, functional process, or by technology.

The following are examples of these types of specialization:

- Vertical specialization: manufacturing, banking, retail
- Functional process specialization: accounting, human resources, marketing campaign management
- Technology specialization: systems management, analytics, enterprise resource planning

Think about it this way, if there is lack of differentiation in the market owing to approaches like verticalization, then price becomes primary differentiator between you and your competition. This can erode your margins and trap you in a business they can't afford to invest in as prices race to the bottom in order to win customers.

Establish your company as an expert in your selected areas. You can also focus on a specific technology or be known as an early adopter and technology leader. But the real value comes from IP or expertise in an industry, vertical or business process. The combination of adding IP to a vertical or business process expertise makes that advantage even more powerful

2016 TOP 10 VERTICAL INDUSTRIES WORLDWIDE IT SPENDING (BILLIONS, USD)



Source: IDC #257386, Worldwide Vertical Markets IT Spending 2014-2019 Forecast.

Our research with partners suggest mastering one specialization before adding additional ones. We understand that it is easy to be distracted, by saying "yes" to every request, and by diversifying into too many offerings. But in the long run, it is better to say "no" to those projects that are outside of your focus. Partners have shown benefit from having a strict focus on one key solution and growing by expanding one vertical at a time.

Define & Design the Solution Offer

Defining Your Pricing Strategy

Pricing your offer is no longer determined simply by cost plus margin.

Pricing a product or offering is different in today's marketplace. Increasingly it is about return on value (ROV)—the added benefits (e.g., better per unit price, improved service characteristics) your customer gets by being a better customer of yours (e.g., buying contracts with longer durations, making upfront payments, etc.). Customers will only pay as much as the value they estimate they will get from the offering. Price is rarely mentioned on service provider web sites. The sales copy speaks of partnerships and bring out the price only after speaking to a sales representative. In an offer-based strategy this will not work. In the business of cloud price is always disclosed up-front. Because price is part of your value proposition, part of your solution offer, your pricing is something you can be proud of and share. Remember you are in a race – against yourself and competition. Be proud and show your price early removing any customer concerns. Pricing is now a result of the product and it begins with your value proposition. To understand how to price your offers let's review the pricing strategies to see the benefit they bring to your solution offer.

STANDARD PRICING

Pricing is the consequence of the product and aligns to accepted industry/application standard. Think of this as reference pricing, as in customers have seen similar products sold for this amount, so you price your offer so that it is close to

that accepted price. What's the standard price for a mobile phone app? \$0.99. If you charge more, you are breaking from the industry accepted, standard pricing. This is an old way to look at pricing. Buyers today will accept this model, but they do not prefer it and it provides minimal help in getting your offer purchased. © 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

Fixed pricing

49\$/user

Regardless of the number of users

More simple

VIRTUOUS PRICING

Virtuous pricing is about using the price as a sales weapon. The goal of virtuous pricing is to create a virtuous sales cycle within your customers, where each sale encourages the next sale within the customer organization. It fosters product adoption and proliferation. Let's begin with a counter example of what is not

virtuous pricing—a fixed price per user. Here, you have a simple pricing (which is important), but there is nothing to encourage more aggressive purchasing by the customer.

Digressive pricing

From 10 to 19 users	49\$/user
From 20 to 49 users	39\$/user
From 50 to 100 users	29\$/u

More attractive

Enter digressive pricing, which drops the per unit price with purchase of more units. Your customers get a discount per unit price the more they buy. This can help create a virtuous sales cycle within the customer because now the customer is looking for way to bring their cost per unit (e.g., user) down. © 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

For example, assume one line of business has already purchased 19 users from you at \$49 per user. Now, there are discussions within another line of business within the same customer organization to purchase a similar product from a competitor or to purchase yours. Your existing customer is incentivized to lobby on your behalf because if the other line of business purchases your product their cost per user will drop to \$39 per user. And the cycle can continue as each new group evaluates your solution offering.

There is a way to adjust digressive pricing slightly to make it significantly more profitable—this is called step pricing. This method sets the price for each step as the top number of users in the range. Building on the example from digressive pricing, let's say that the customer purchased 15 users. They would pay for the equivalent of 19 users since that is the price for this range of units. Why is this more profitable? Because your customer is effectively paying you for the 4 users they are not using (yet)—which goes straight into your profits. What's more is you have amplified the virtuous sales cycle, because the customer wants to get as close to the maximum number of users for the step as possible in order to get the lowest possible cost per unit within the step. © 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

Step pricing

From 10 to 19 users	$49 \times 19 = 931\$$
From 20 to 49 users	$39 \times 49 = 2\ 301\$$
From 50 to 100 users	$29 \times 100 = 2\ 900\$$

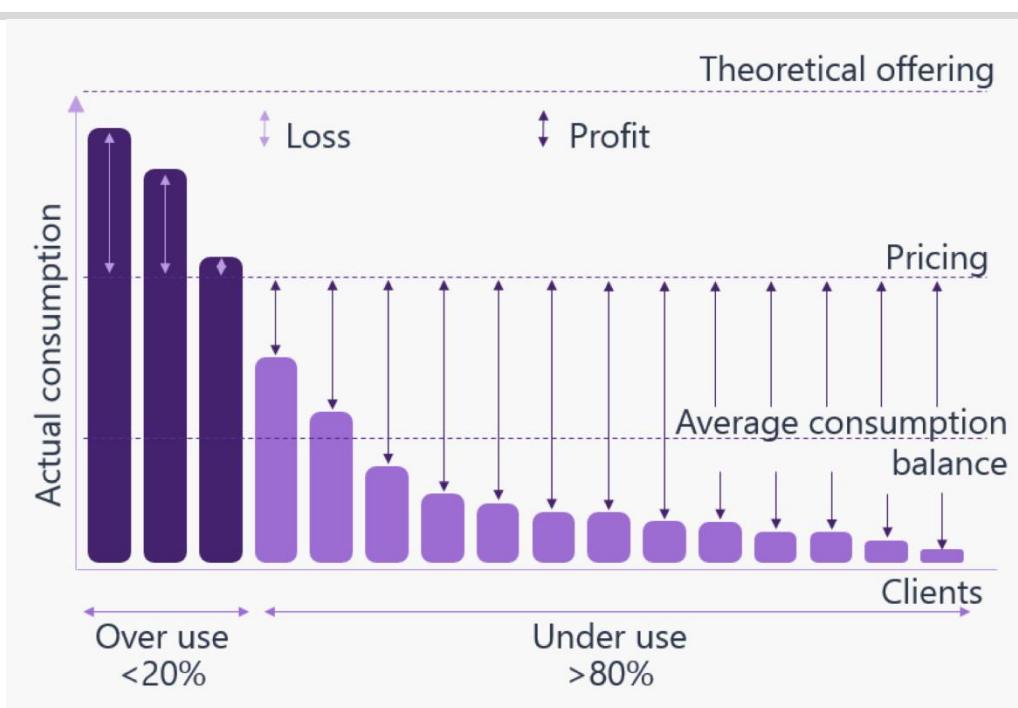
(*Theoretical User Price (T.U.P.)

More profitable

FLAT RATING PRICING

This is one of the most powerful business pricing strategies.

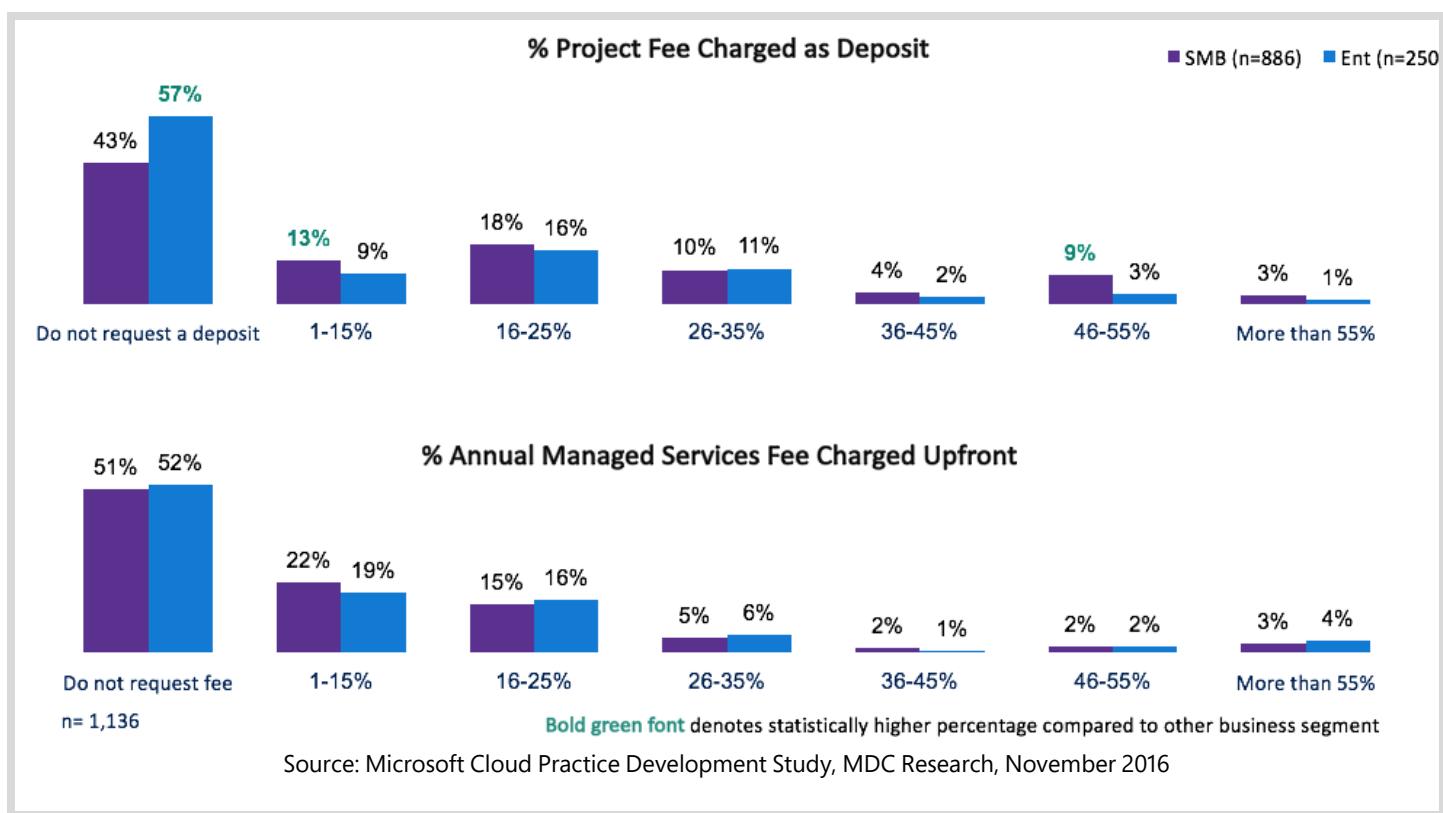
You have probably already experienced it although you may not have realized. It is leveraged by banks, insurance, etc. every time you pay premiums. While it can have varying levels of sophistication (banks and insurance firms use very sophisticated versions of this based on significant work by their actuaries), the model can be described and implemented in a simple fashion. The basic idea is you provide a certain quantity of value for a set cost that all customers pay. Some customers may come close to (or even exceed) using the full value of what they pay for, while the rest are nowhere close. A well-crafted model identifies the average consumption across all of your customers, and creates a situation where over 80% of the customers are using less than what they are paying for (and ideally less than the average consumption) and fewer than 20% are using more. You set your price to be above the average consumption. By doing so, clients in the 80% who use less than what they pay for generate your profit. The further they are below the average consumption, the more profit they generate. For the 20% who use more than they pay for, you might take a loss on them individually. However, in the aggregate the long tail represented by the 80% of customers who do not fully use what they pay for more than covers the cost of your heavy consumers, and these heavy consumers are likely to be your biggest champions so there are tangential benefits to supporting their cost. Pricing model built around Flat Rate Pricing have shown between 1.5 and 3 times as much profit as traditional models.



UPFRONT FEES

Another consideration of your pricing strategy is if you charge your customers an upfront fee. Reasons for doing so including providing some working capital to get resources going in the early days of your practice, mitigating the risk that a customer abandons a project without any payment and ensuring the customer is as invested in project as you are. It can also serve to minimize financial impact to your practice when the customer has requested longer payment terms (see next section).

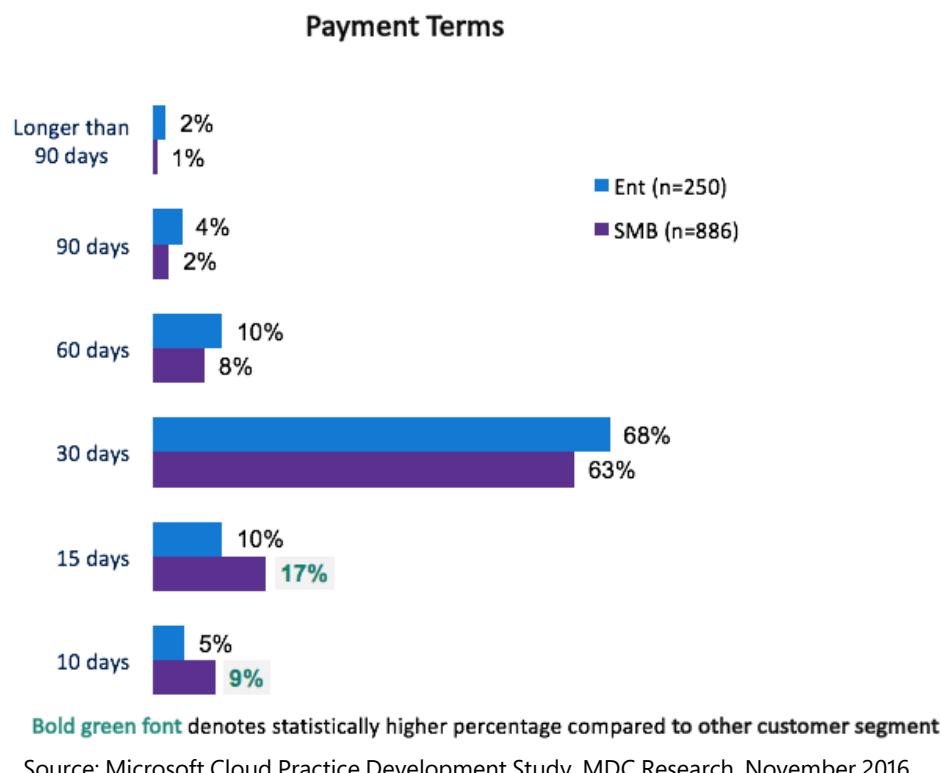
In our recent survey of 1,136 Azure partners, we found that only about half charged an upfront fee for project or managed services. When an upfront fee was requested it was typically less than 25% of the total project or managed services fee.



PAYMENT TERMS

The final consideration for your pricing strategy is the payment terms. This is defined as the duration of time between when you invoice the customer for service rendered and when you receive payment from the customer. Payment terms are measured in days, for example 10 days, 15 days, 30 days or 90 days. These are usually expressed as NET 10, NET 15, NET 30 or NET 90 payment terms. In addition, you might consider offering the customer a discount for prompt payment on your shortest payment. For example, NET 2/10/30 is used to describe terms where a 2% discount is provided for payment received within 10 days of invoicing, otherwise the full invoice amount is due in 30 days.

In the Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, we found that the most common payment terms used was NET 30, and that for SMB customers shorter payment terms were preferred.



Define & Design the Solution Offer

Defining Sales Incentives

Compensation for sales executives is an area all partners grapple with. Without the right mix in compensation, you won't attract and retain the best people and they won't drive the offers you intend. Our research revealed three core principles of sales compensation.

REWARD A SALES ACTION

This means you need to reward an array of sales activities not just the final close. Sometimes this can be challenging. The reward does not have to be big, but there must be something to reward the right sales behavior that will lead to the final sale.

THE LEVEL OF INCENTIVE VERSUS REQUIRED SELLING EFFORT ORIENTS THE SALES

Not all sales are created equal. Sometimes a renewal, for instance, can be much easier than acquiring a new customer. You need to consider effort put in when setting up your compensation model. Reward, reward, reward ... the right behavior that gets you to the result. Don't over-compensate for routine activities that require less effort and expertise. You should always consider how much of the sales process can be done by lower level sales staff versus the sales executive. This is also a way to keep sales compensation costs manageable.

SIMPLE ENOUGH TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND DRIVE ACTIONS

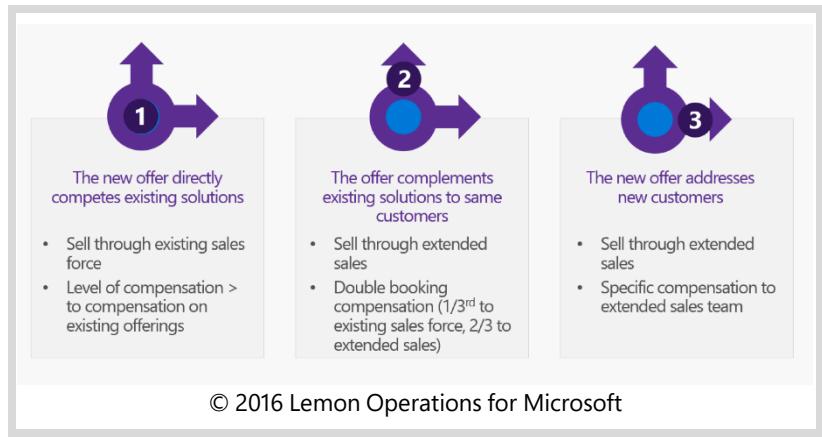
Always keep it simple. Sales people are brought on for their ability to communicate, engaging ways, skills in educating and the always important act of closing. Don't overly complicate sales actions required to be compensated. Drive the behavior that you know leads to closing business. Reward that behavior and get your reps to see it through to the close of business.

Remember that everyone is a seller in most companies. You should train all employees in appropriate sales techniques. Everyone should be on the lookout for existing customer opportunities as well as new ones. Teach them the signs and how to react. Reward everyone in the company for positive sales behavior.

SALES COMPENSATION VARIABLES

When deciding how to calculate the compensation for your sales incentives, consider the variables that help describe the magnitude of the benefit of the sale to the company and the effort required to close the sale. Examples of this include:

- Expected Duration: How long is the contract for? Longer contracts are more lucrative to the company, and should have higher valued incentives.
- Expected # of Units: How much of the service is purchased? Higher quantity purchases deliver more value to the company, and should have higher valued incentives.
- Feature options: Some offer features are more profitable to the company than others. Consider incentivizing the higher profit margin features with higher valued incentives to drive sales.



POSITIONING THE OFFER VIA INCENTIVES

Depending on the maturity of your practice, you may have to create different incentives to encourage the selling of the offer. The following diagram illustrates a decision-making process you can follow to tune your incentives based on how the offer's incentives compete with other company incentives.

Identify Partnership Opportunities

Partner to Partner

Build Smart Partner Relationships and focus on what you do best

It is tempting to want to do everything related to your business, but the fact remains you will never have enough time. This is a primary reason to seek out compatible partners that can help you to:

- Complete Your Solution
- Build Credibility
- Partners for Infrastructure
- Leverage Joint Marketing
- Add-on to Sales
- Broaden your Customer Base

Finding the right type of partnerships is key to finding success in today's incredibly competitive market. Some partner combinations meld together wonderfully to create truly satisfying success, and to help you find the right mix, here's an example of a partner recipe we know works:

ISV + channel-based MSP partners = international success
[Find out what's in it for the Partners and customer and the secret of success.](#)

Make connections with Dynasource.com

It's hard to beat the value of partner-to-partner conversations and networking. Luckily, there are communities to help you expand your network and make an even bigger impact on your business.

[Dynasource](#) is a global two-sided marketplace that allows partners to connect with other firms that have complementary expertise and capabilities. If you have excess capacity, increase your billability and profitability by finding partners that can drive

utilization of your staff. If you lack the capacity, Dynasource can help you connect with partners that have the expertise to enable and expand your solutions. If your customers are looking for a solution that is outside your particular expertise, you can use Dynasource to find an expert that can provide that solution. By connecting through Dynasource and agreeing to work together, you can meet customer demand for needs across the Microsoft portfolio and grow your business.

TRANSFORM THROUGH COLLABORATION

After you've created a profile on Dynasource, you can search the Dynasource Microsoft Partner Community for qualified resources that can collaborate with your team on an opportunity. This allows you to transform your cloud business and expand your offerings at a pace that works for you.

INCREASE DEMAND FOR YOUR RESOURCES

Business is not always predictable, but retaining your quality staff is essential to your success. With Dynasource, you are able to make your resources and capabilities available to partners who can utilize them today, making your workforce agile and billable.

GET STARTED NOW

In order to join Dynasource, all you'll need is general information about your business. Once you create a profile, you will be able to search for other resources and jobs, as well as create and post your own. You will be able to control the availability of your resources and what level of information you would like to share about your capabilities. With the Dynasource premium membership, you'll be able to request connections with other members and resources.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Smart Partner to Partner Relationships](#)
- ➔ [A Recipe for Global Success](#)
- ➔ [Dynasource](#)
- ➔ [Selling thru Partners](#)
- ➔ [The right ingredients for partner-to-partner success](#)
- ➔ [4 Ways to Increase Revenue through a Partner Channel - Entrepreneur.com](#)

Define Engagement Process

Resources



Pitch decks and preparing your technical pre-sales is a critical factor with any successful delivery.

RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Secure Pitch Perfect](#)
- [EMS Sales Play](#)
- [Microsoft Advanced Threat Analytics Pitch Deck](#)
- [Cloud App Security Pitch Deck](#)
- [Identity and Access Management Teleguide](#)
- [Identity Driven Security Teleguide](#)
- [Cloud Adoption Framework](#)
- [Technical presales and deployment services](#)
- [Azure Pre-Sales Resources](#)

Pre-and Post-Sales

For your practice, you should define the technical effort required before the sale (pre-sales) and required in support of a sale (post-sales). You will need to decide for your solution offer what are the technical pre-sales and post-sales requirements.

PRE-SALES

The technical effort required to make the sale typically involves:

- Discuss the customer requirements and address their objections.
- Develop technical pitch decks
- Technical demo: this demo may be generic or may need customization to the better meet the requirements of the customer. The goal of the technology demo is to inspire confidence in your ability to deliver the desired solution by demonstrating you have "already done something like it before".

POST SALES

- The technical effort required after the sale typically involves the following:
- Addressing follow-on customer concerns about the technology or implementation
- Providing training to increase awareness of the solution that will be implemented
- Providing a technical demo more customized for the customer to better understand their needs before moving on to the next phase of the project.
- Follow-up with the customer to ensure implementation is on track and meeting expectations

In the resources section, you will find a list of presentations that can be used for technical briefings or for a sales pitch that are designed for the Enterprise Mobility + Security. You should customize each presentation to explain how your unique offering makes the overall solution a true differentiator.

For guidance with these sales efforts, consider the Microsoft Partner University learning paths:

- [Training for Sales and Technical Resources](#)

Also, consider that Microsoft provides support for technical presales and deployment services. See the section [Supporting your Customer](#) to for more information on available resources using Partner Advisory Hours

Implementation Process

Resources



RESOURCES

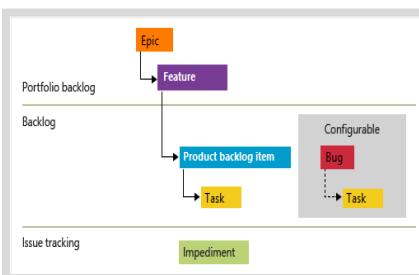
- [How to Choose a Process](#)
- [Agile Process](#)
- [Capability Maturity Model Process](#)
- [Scrum organization](#)
- [Agile Alliance](#)
- [CMMI](#)

Implementation

The process you follow in delivering your solution to your customer is just as important as the technologies you use to deliver it.

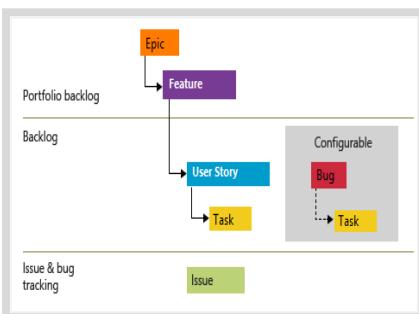
When it comes to delivering solutions for your Enterprise Mobility + Security Practice choose from among the following (or incorporate the aspects from the below) that best fit your needs and your team

SCRUM



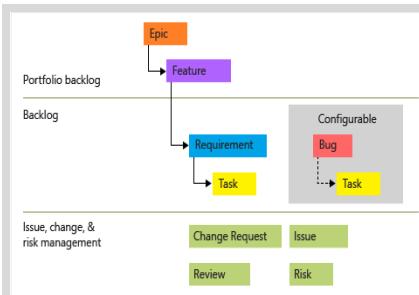
Choose [Scrum](#) when your team practices Scrum. This process works great if you want to track product backlog items (PBIs) and bugs on the Kanban board, or break PBIs and bugs down into tasks on the task board. This process supports the Scrum methodology as defined by the [Scrum organization](#). Tasks support tracking remaining work only.

AGILE



Choose [Agile](#) when your team uses Agile planning methods, including Scrum, and tracks development and test activities separately. This process works great if you want to track user stories and (optionally) bugs on the Kanban board, or track bugs and tasks on the task board. You can learn more about Agile methodologies at the [Agile Alliance](#). Tasks support tracking Original Estimate, Remaining Work, and Completed Work.

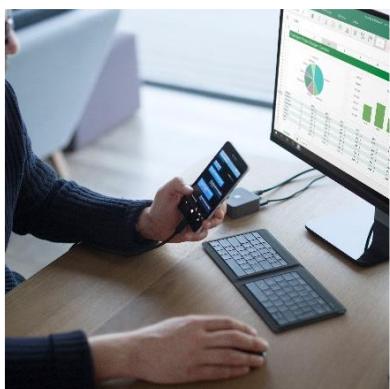
CMMI



Choose [CMMI](#) when your team follows more formal project methods that require a framework for process improvement and an auditable record of decisions. With this process, you can track requirements, change requests, risks, and reviews. This process supports [formal change management activities](#). Tasks support tracking Original Estimate, Remaining Work, and Completed Work.

Join the Microsoft Partner Network

Resources



RESOURCES

- [How does it work?](#)
- [Enroll as a Network Member](#)
- [Subscribe to Microsoft Action Pack](#)
- [Explore MPN Competencies](#)
- [Invite Users to Associate with your Company](#)
- [Channel Partner Profitability Whitepaper](#)
- [Cloud Enablement Desk Nomination](#)

Partnering with Microsoft

The Microsoft Partner Network is the start of your journey.

One of the first steps to partnering with Microsoft for your Azure practice is to join the Microsoft Partner network if you are not already a member. The Microsoft Partner Network is where you will gain access to many of the resources such as training, whitepapers and marketing material described in this playbook. It's also location you will setup your users to gain Microsoft Partner Competencies and access your partner benefits.

TO BECOME AN AZURE PARTNER

The Microsoft Partner Network provides three types of memberships. Each type provides a set of benefits to help your business grow. As you achieve your goals, participate in the program at the level that suits your unique needs to access more benefits and develop your relationship with us and other partners in the network.

- Network Member - Receive a set of no-cost introductory benefits to help you save time and money. Use our resources to help build your business as a new partner and discover your next step.
- Microsoft Action Pack (MAP) - This affordable yearly subscription is for businesses looking to begin, build, and grow their Microsoft practice in the cloud-first, mobile-first world through a wide range of software and benefits.
- Competency - Be rewarded for your success with increased support, software, and training.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH A COMPETENCY

As a competency partner, you can earn both gold and silver competencies in one or more areas. Earn a silver competency to help your business demonstrate its expertise or a gold competency to showcase your best-in-class capabilities within a Microsoft solution area. Later in this playbook we'll review the competencies relevant for launching a successful Microsoft Azure Practice.

CLOUD ENABLEMENT DESK

The goal of the Cloud Enablement Desk is to assist partners in obtaining their first Silver Cloud competency. Partners will be assigned a Cloud Program Specialist (CPS) for up to 6 months, with the goal of obtaining or on the path to obtaining your first silver cloud competency.

The Cloud Enablement Desk program requirements are listed below:

- Partner must have a MPN ID.
- Partner must agree to and sign Conditions of Satisfaction that state partner is actively trying to achieve Silver Cloud Competency status and include the name of the primary contact person.
- Partner cannot have an existing Microsoft account management relationship

MPN to Resource Alignment

Align individuals to MPN requirements

One of the next steps is to ensure you align the technical team to the MPN competency for your practice. The competency most applicable to the Cloud Infrastructure and Management Practice is the: [Cloud Platform Competency](#).

The following tables show the two options which summarize the skill requirements needed by people in your organization to achieve either a Gold or Silver Competency. Some competencies have alternative options your organization can elect to meet to achieve the competency, you only need to meet the requirements of one option in any given competency.

SILVER	GOLD
One person must pass one of the following assessments	Two people must pass one of the following
Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Datacenter Solutions	Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Datacenter Solutions
Technical Assessment for Using Azure Remote Desktop Service	Technical Assessment for Using Azure Remote Desktop Service
Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Data Analytics and Data Platform Solutions	Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Data Analytics and Data Platform Solutions
Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Application Development	Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Application Development
Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Internet of Things Solutions	Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Internet of Things Solutions

SILVER	GOLD
Or, one person must pass one of the following exams:	Or, two people must pass one of the following exams
Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions	Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions
Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions	Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions
Exam 70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions	Exam 70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions
Exam 70-473: Designing and Implementing Cloud Data Platform Solutions	Exam 70-473: Designing and Implementing Cloud Data Platform Solutions
Exam 70-475: Designing and Implementing Big Data Analytics Solutions	Exam 70-475: Designing and Implementing Big Data Analytics Solutions
MCSA: Linux on Azure	MCSA: Linux on Azure

Join the Azure Mentor Program

The Azure Mentor Program's goal is to help you build your Azure business as you go through up to 5 Azure deals and deployments.

The program is designed to provide partners with customized technical training, and pre-sales to deployment deal-specific support. The program provides free access to partner Technical Consultants (PTCs) with deep technical expertise to support a partner across enablement through deployment support.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD LOOK LIKE 3 KEY THINGS:

1. 5 Azure solutions successfully deployed within 6 months
2. You well on your way to achieving your Silver Cloud Platform Competency
3. And your ability to build a profitable Azure or EMS practice

ELIGIBLE PARTNERS WILL

1. Be relatively new to Azure
2. Have a valid MAPS or competency (but not yet Cloud Platform or EMM competency)
3. Have 3+ opportunities in Azure BU, ASR, VMs, Storage, Networking, Websites, or EMS
4. Dedicate a technical resource to work with the program
5. Commit to building an Azure or EMS practice within the next 12 months

Azure Mentor Program (AMP)

Program Goals

Kick start your Azure Practice with a customized technical plan, help with pre-sales and deployment, and post-deployment support using your MPN benefits

Accelerate the sales cycle with deal-specific, pre-sales technical support to confidently close and deploy your first several customer opportunities

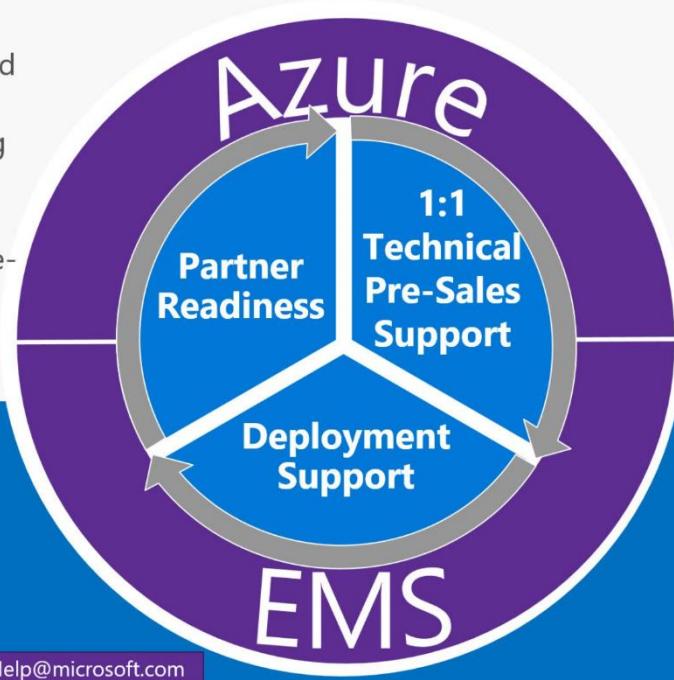
Success

Deploy up to 5 Azure solutions deployed within 6 months

Attain the Silver Cloud Platform Competency

Ability to build a profitable Azure and/or EMS practice

Interested? Contact your PSE and USCESMBHelp@microsoft.com



Identity Equipment Services and Tools

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Internal User Rights](#)
- [License Table for Competency Partners](#)

Identify Equipment, Services and Tools

Equip your team for success

FOR AN ENTERPRISE MOBILITY + SECURITY PRACTICE THE FOLLOWING TOOLS ARE RECOMMENDED:

- Azure Subscriptions
- Visual Studio Subscriptions
- Linux, Windows or Mac OSX workstations
- Broadband Internet connectivity
- Access to Enterprise Mobility + Security

One way you can acquire some of the above tooling is by leveraging your Microsoft Internal Use Rights that come as a benefit of your MPN Competency attainment. The complete list of cloud service or on-premises product licenses granted by your MPN core and competency benefits is available in the [License Table for Competency Partners](#).

Total Internal Use Licenses	Action Pack	Cloud Productivity		Small & Midmarket Cloud Solutions		Cloud Platform		Cloud CRM		Enterprise Mobility Management	
Office 365 seats	5-10	50 (E3)	100(E3) 100 (E5)	35 (E3)	125 (E3)	25 (E3)	100 (E3)	25 (E3)	100 (E3)	25 (E3)	100 (E3)
Azure (monthly credit)	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100 + \$6k annual bulk credit	\$100 + \$12k annual bulk credit	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
CRM Online seats	0 - 5	15	60	15	60	15	60	35	100	15	60
Enterprise Mobility + Security	5	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100	75	200

Practice Cost Calculation

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure Pricing Calculator](#)
- [Enterprise Agreements](#)
- [Azure Cost Modeling](#)
- [Azure Hybrid Use Benefit](#)

Estimating your Azure Spend

Your practice relies on Azure services to deliver customer success, so understanding the Azure related expenses incurred in delivering a customer solution is critical. How do you calculate these Azure costs?

Use the Azure Pricing Calculator. You can build an estimate online and the export it to Excel for further refinement and analysis. This tool will give you the retail rates (also known as the Pay-As-You-Go option) for the Azure services, so treat it like the “high end” of your consumption estimate.

Become familiar with the discounted pricing and Azure credits:

- Graduated Pricing: Services like Azure Storage have tiered pricing based upon the volume used. For example, if you use less than 100 TB per month it costs \$0.024 per GB per month, but if you use significantly more it can drop to \$0.223 per GB per month).
- Enterprise Agreement: By making a 3-year monetary commitment, Azure services are available at a discount off retail rates. To learn more, see Enterprise Agreements.
- Azure Credits: Microsoft Partners can receive Azure credits as a part of their benefit. For example, Partners with the Silver Cloud Platform Competency receive \$350 USD per month in Azure credits; those with Gold Cloud Platform Competency receive \$600 USD per month in Azure credits.
- Azure Hybrid Use Benefit: With the Azure Hybrid Use Benefit, you can use on-premises Windows Server licenses that include Software Assurance to earn special pricing for new Windows Server virtual machines in Azure—whether you’re moving a few workloads or your entire datacenter

It can be helpful to identify items which are used elastically versus items that have a fixed monthly cost. Significant savings can be achieved via elastic use of resource because you can turn them off (or pause them) when they are not in use. For example,

- Virtual Machines can be stopped when they are not in use. When a virtual machine is in the deallocated state you do not pay for the compute time (just the underlying storage). Virtual Machines can be scheduled to stop and start using the portal or through Azure Automation
- Fixed: Azure App Service hosting your website in a Web App. This App Service needs to run 24x7 because your visitors will arrive at all hours.

Finally, if you don't understand how much of a given resource you will use, consider build a scaled down proof-of-concept to get a first estimate.

Identify Potential Customers/Pilots

Build your prospect hit list

Your goal is to build the list of prospects that could potentially turn into customers. To accomplish this you should create an awareness campaign to draw attention to your Azure practice, highlight your service offerings and use your success to earn additional business with your customers and the industry at large.

Some of the awareness activities you can conduct to generate new customers include:

WEBINARS AND PODCASTS

A great way to transfer knowledge, establish yourself as an expert and pique the interest of potential customers.

REFERRALS

Ask for referrals in email and phone calls – when talking with existing customers, partners and vendors who might know someone who is ready for your services.

WHITE PAPERS

These are a great way to build credibility to decision makers.

Technical staff often expect a white paper to understand underlying architecture and technology of your solutions.

NEWS ARTICLES

Leverage Public Relation efforts to have articles written about your technology, things your company is doing in the market and other topics of current interest.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. is a place to build awareness, reputation, customer satisfaction and gain new customers.

Also, consider offering your services as a pilot project to your prospects. With a pilot project, the customer receives two important values. First, they get to better understand how the project goals will be successful and second, they have a production-grade starting point for their larger efforts.

It is important to keep the distinction between Proof of Concept and Pilot clear—a PoC should never be considered for direct deployment into production, whereas a pilot should be constructed with a production release in mind

Case Study:

BRISTOW

For many enterprises, mobility is one of a number of strategies for creating a competitive business environment. For Bristow Group, the leading provider of industrial aviation services in the world, mobility is the whole point. More than half of the company's nearly 5,000 employees are either flying or maintaining helicopters on any given day.

[Read the case study](#)

Identify Opportunities to Co-Sell with Microsoft

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Go To Market](#)
- ➔ [Identify and Apply for Azure Investment Programs](#)

Closing the Sale Together

Microsoft is committed to helping your business grow. With a focus on co-selling and co-marketing opportunities, we can help your business reach new customers and markets worldwide

The foundation of co-selling success is our ability to scale business through a knowledgeable extended sales force, our partners. It is business critical to reinforce the importance and value-add of our partners in our sales efforts, therefore WW has decided to rebrand our program to use terms more relevant in a sales capacity.

P-Seller (Partner Seller) will be the new name for the extended V-TSP program, which now includes both P-TSP and P-SSP resources. The name V-TSP is now being retired.

The objective of the P-Seller program is to scale our Microsoft selling capability to our Enterprise and Corporate Account customers, through leverage of qualified Partner selling resources. The P-Seller name is now the umbrella term for two types of Partner resources:

- Partner Technology Solutions Professional (P-TSP), is akin to the V-TSP from the FY13 V-TSP Program and managed by SMSP (PTS) and EPG (TSP).
- Partner Solution Sales Professional (P-SSP) is a new role that has been added to the WW P-Seller program designed to aid deeper pro-active co-selling capability.

The Microsoft Virtual Technology Solution Program (V-TSP) is a select group chosen from the elite in Microsoft's partner community, whose focus is to augment Microsoft's internal Technology Specialist team. Their primary role is to communicate the value of Microsoft Solutions to customers and to provide architectural guidance for Enterprise Integration solutions. The Microsoft VTSP program was designed to create a deeper relationship with Microsoft Partners, the Product Teams at Microsoft Corporate, and Regional Microsoft Offices, in order to provide highly skilled solution specialists to Microsoft customers. It is designed to enable a high performance team of partner-based resources to deliver pre-sale activities and resources to empower customers and help them meet their solution and integration needs.

Define Customer Support Program and Process

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [Azure Support for Customers](#)

Support Overview

It has been said that an unhappy customer represents an opportunity to make a customer for life. Studies have found when a customer gets to the point of a complaint, they are very emotionally engaged. If you can turn that negative around to a positive, you may just have a customer for life.

When it comes to support, there are two perspectives you should consider. First, how will you support your customers when they have engaged you for project services, managed services or are utilizing your intellectual property. Second, where do you go for Azure support from Microsoft when you need for a solution you are building or because you need to assistance on behalf of your customer?

THE ITEMS YOU WILL NEED TO WORK THROUGH INCLUDE

- Defining your support model
- Provisioning your support infrastructure
- Defining and implementing your escalation process
- Selecting and enabling your support options for Azure

WE COVER EACH OF THESE TOPICS IN THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW

Define Customer Support Program and Process

Supporting Your Customers

Let's begin with the first scenario, where you are supporting your customers directly.

It should go without saying that one of the most important functions for your MSP practice will be supporting your customer once their applications and data are firmly in the cloud or sitting in a hybrid deployment. No matter how well a cloud or hybrid environment is planned, provisioned, operated or monitored, problems will arise, and those problems will need to be remediated. It's your job as an MSP to offer support to your customers to deal with outages, breaches, inefficiencies, and disaster scenarios. MSPs need to consider the level of support that makes sense for their practice—in terms of resources and revenue—as well as what makes sense to the customers they serve.

SUPPORT MODEL

How do you package and sell your support? The typical options are to provide support either on a retainer basis (where the customer pays a monthly fee for up to a certain number of use it or lose it support hours) or per incident (where the customer pays a fee every time they utilize your support). You must also define your support availability so your customers have a realistic expectation of when they can access your service.

SUPPORT AVAILABILITY

The more support you, as an MSP, offer, the more valuable your practice is to customers.



ESCALATION PROCESS

How does a customer get help at the right technical level? For your support process to make economic sense, you want to avoid having your most skilled and most expensive resources (e.g., your architects, senior developers, data scientists, etc.) answering every support call. For your particular solution offering, you should consider a tiered support offering that places junior level resources that are equipped to handle common issues. These resources should be equipped to escalate a customer support case to a more senior level resource once the common issues have been ruled out. You will need to decide how many levels of tiered support to offer, but it is common to see organization with between 2 and 3 tiers. When defining your escalation process, do not forget about the basics—how do customers get in touch with you for support in the first place: a dedicated support telephone number, a forum or chat room, a Twitter handle, email address, etc.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Determine what level of support expertise you provide in your service offerings.



Support Infrastructure: How will you manage your customer support requests and track them to closure? Many MSPs offer premium support offerings such as a Technical Account Manager who is responsible for tracking, reporting and the escalation of issue

RESOURCES

→ [Azure Support for Customers](#)

CSP Support Requirements

If you are a partner that will be a CSP you should also know that you are required to provide end customers with support that meets their expectations, and local business and legal requirement. Users in CSP created subscriptions will see the information you supply to contact your support center instead of options to contact Microsoft.

Support Options from Microsoft

How do you receive support for your implementation efforts or on behalf of your customer?

SIGNATURE CLOUD SUPPORT

Signature Cloud Support is provided as benefit to Silver and Gold Level MPN Partners. It is primarily for support with issues occurring in Azure subscriptions you own or on which you are a co-admin. It is not intended for use in supporting issues in subscriptions owned by your customers.

MICROSOFT ADVANCED SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS

Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners is the ideal solution for partners who are growing their cloud business. Not quite ready for Premier Support, but need a higher level of service than the Microsoft Partner Network core benefits provide? The Advanced Support program delivers the right level of support to meet you in the middle while your business grows. With Advanced Support for Partners, you get cloud support at an accessible price point, which helps you be a great ally to your customers and grow your business faster. The program includes valuable proactive and reactive services delivered by experienced Services Account Managers and Partner Technical Consultants. Advanced Support for Partners enables you to provide support on behalf of your end customers, in addition to providing support on subscription you own directly. Designed from the feedback of over 1,500 partners like you, Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners addresses the specific needs of Cloud Solutions

Providers (CSP), born-in-the-cloud partners and all other partners selling Microsoft cloud services.

MICROSOFT PREMIER SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS

Microsoft Premier Support for Partners delivers a managed support offering for you and your customers, proactive support services for developing, deploying, and supporting Microsoft technology whether on-premises, hybrid, or in the cloud. As the only partner program with complete, end-to-end managed support across the full Microsoft platform, Premier Support for Partners also provides a powerful marketing tool to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Microsoft offers a range of paid support options for customers from developers starting their journey in the cloud to enterprises deploying business critical, strategic applications on Microsoft Azure, these are available in tiers **Premier, Professional Direct, Standard and Developer Support Plans** that are available for purchase directly without having to be a Microsoft Partner. In addition to these paid plan, Azure provides **Core support** that is free and provides best effort support via forums and help with account billing or management question.

RESOURCES

- [Signature Cloud Support](#)
- [Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners](#)
- [Advanced Support Video](#)
- [Premier Support for Partners](#)
- [Azure Paid Support Plans](#)
- [Submit Azure Support Requests Step by Step](#)

Submitting Azure Support Requests

Support requests need to be submitted using the Azure Portal, when logged into the subscription for which you want to receive support.

Once a support request is submitted, you can manage the incident from the Azure Portal as well.

CSP Support Requirements

Resources



Many partners do not realize the incredibly valuable assets Microsoft provides them, such as partner advisory hours. Spend less time chasing new leads, overcoming technical issues, or figuring out the best way to deploy your product, by taking advantage of your available advisory hours today.

RESOURCES

- [Top 5 Ways to Use Your Partner Advisory Hours](#)
- [Buy Back Time by Spending Advisory Hours](#)
- [Partner Core Benefits](#)

Partner Advisory Hours

Partner advisory hours are used as currency for technical presales and advisory services offered by the Microsoft Partner Services team.

As part of your company's Microsoft Partner Network membership, your organization receives partner advisory hours for attaining a Microsoft competency, membership in Microsoft Cloud Accelerate, and subscribing to Microsoft Action Pack Develop and Design.

PARTNER LEVEL:	NETWORK MEMBER	ACTION PACK	SILVER	GOLD
	0 Hours	5 Hours (after first cloud sale)	20 hours	50 hours

[Partner advisory hours](#) are used as currency for technical presales and advisory services offered by the Microsoft Partner Services team, in other words it's how you "pay" for these services.

These hours can be used, for example, to:

- Deploy the latest Microsoft technologies internally
- Build skills and knowledge
- Close deals faster
- Get expert advice
- Chalk talks

Augment your sales, lead generation, training, and technical efforts by spending your available partner advisory hours. This benefit is especially impactful for small businesses with limited time and resources, who may not know where to start finding new customers, and need to focus more on their core business.

Here are some areas you can use the partner advisory hours benefit:



Technical presales assistance

Gain a competitive advantage to win more deals by connecting with Microsoft experts for personalized remote technical assistance during the presales phase to help you position Microsoft solutions, overcome customer objections, demonstrate the value of solutions, and present solutions to your prospective customers.



Deployment services

Develop better solutions, accelerate deployment, and increase consumption by connecting with Microsoft experts for personalized remote technical assistance during the design, development, and deployment phases of your projects to help you expand your capabilities, be more efficient, and apply best practices as you build and deploy Microsoft products and solutions.



Support

Grow and develop your practice by leveraging competitive sales support, one-on-one advisory sessions, and learn how to save time and money. You also have access to product support and signature cloud support, depending upon your partnership membership level.

Summary of Support Options

In the previous pages, we covered the multiple support options available. One factor in deciding on which support option to utilize is the service level agreement (SLA) for the response time on a support request. The following table summarize the SLA for each option. Note that these are subject to change—you should always confirm the latest support response times for customer facing options, and partner facing options from the locations hyperlinked in the table below.

PARTNER FACING OPTIONS	RESPONSE TIME
Signature Cloud Support	LESS THAN 2 HOURS
Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
Microsoft Premier Support for Partners	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
Partner Advisory Hours	N/A

CUSTOMER FACING OPTIONS	
Premier	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
Professional-Direct	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
Standard	LESS THAN 2 HOURS
Developer	LESS THAN 8 HOURS
Core	N/A



Operationalize & Get Trained

Cloud Infrastructure and Management

aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



Operationalize & Get Trained

Executive Summary

In the previous section, you evaluated the various services your business can pursue in Azure, as you set up or build your Cloud Infrastructure and Management practice. Now that you've identified some avenues of success, you may be wondering how to build and train your team.

We begin this section helping you define the members of your team and the skills they should bring to the table. If you need to hire to fill gaps, we provide you with detailed job descriptions you can use, as well as provide you with where to look for resources, the factors you should look for in candidate new hire skillset, and what you should expect to pay by role and region.

A big focus of this section is the critical piece of ensuring all of your practice resources are trained and continue to receive ongoing training. We cover not just the technical training, but the training your sales and marketing resources should be receiving. Additionally, we provide you with the details on the specific Microsoft certifications your technical resources should be working towards, both for their own professional development to earn your organization Microsoft Partner Network competencies.

If Azure is new to your organization, we guide you thru the options for acquiring Azure for internal use within your



organization, as well as you how can deepen relationships with your customer by re-selling it as an overall package deal along with your custom software to your customers, creating a new revenue stream for your business.

This section also provides guidance that helps you with the important artifacts you need to operate your business, from how to build materials to support your sales and marketing efforts to the key contracts you will want to put in place.

Whether you're building products, providing managed services, or performing project work for customers, your success may be impacted by your ability to manage your customer records, your projects, and your support trouble tickets. We provide guidance on what tools and systems you should consider implementing.

Finally, we cover how you can increase visibility for your practice by reviewing the marketplaces Microsoft offers and how you get listed on them.

Top 5 things to do

You're crafting your gameplan to build your team and form partnerships. To create your product or market your services. Whatever your strategy, make sure you nail down these 5 tasks before you move to the next section.

- Hire, train and certify your team
- Setup Azure for your practice use and become the Digital Partner of Record on your customer's Azure Subscriptions
- Setup your CRM, project management, collaboration and support tools
- Build your sales , marketing and legal materials
- Evaluate your marketplace options

Creating a hiring plan

Should you Hire New Resources or Train Existing Resources?

Human resources are a critical asset to any services based practice.



Starting a new practice requires you to start with an evaluation of your existing team members (if any) and then make the decision of whether to hire new employees or bring your existing team up to speed. You will need to make a plan that describes your resource gaps and the requirements of the resources you will use to fill those gaps.

The following sections describe the recommended resources across Sales, Technical and Support functions that you will likely need. In many practices that are just getting started you may not be able to fill all roles with individual professionals. In this situation one person will likely be required to fulfill the duties of multiple roles.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Should you hire or Train \(adp.com\)](#)
- ➔ [Grow your own or hire outside \(inc.com\)?](#)

Hire Resources

Before you can hire a resource, you need a job description for roles to be hired. Microsoft has several examples to share with you. You can leverage them as a start to your job description.

The best potential employees are the ones who are not actively looking for work. Therefore, it's important for you to write a short description of your company, and other interesting facts, like the ground-breaking work you do, or the interesting clients you attract. The following sections describe the recommended resources across Sales, Management, Technical, and Support functions.

Sales Resources

You have a vision for developing the next great Azure solution, but even the best products need a sales strategy to gain maximum market traction. Depending on the size of your company, the following sales positions are recommended for broad reach.

The **Solution Sales Manager** (SSM) is a senior leader within our enterprise sales organization. The Data Platform SSM leads, develops and manages a team of high performing sales and technical pre-sales/post-sales resources to drive solution opportunity revenue and market share by leveraging the Microsoft Data Platform and Cloud offerings to meet their customers Mission Critical Tier1/OLTP and Business Analytics solution needs. Ten or more years of sales experience is required for this position. Qualifications include people management, business development, competitive selling and ability to thrive in complex, ambiguous and dynamic environments.

The **Cloud Infrastructure Solutions Sales Manager** is a Solution Sales Leadership Role that is responsible for delivering sustainable new business growth across segments; providing thought-leadership; and driving customer acceleration to cloud and mobility across the enterprise sales and marketing teams. The Solution Sales Manager is a great sales coach and leader, has a challenger mentality, is savvy in sales-leadership practice and contributes with vision and flawless execution of solution sales across workloads and solution areas.

The **Technical Sales Manager** is a senior leader within our enterprise sales organization. An Azure TSM drives revenue and market share by leading a team of technical sellers who are providing customers with insights and solutions leveraging Microsoft Azure. The Technical Sales Manager will manage, coach and lead a team of Solution Architects and Tech Sales professionals to uncover and support the business & IT goals of our customers, by driving the technical decision at the customer and provide Business value with the Microsoft Platform, thus securing long-term sustainable Growth. A computer science degree or related field is required for this role. Additional qualifications include strategic insight, project management, analytical problem solving, customer/partner relationship building and exceptional product and technical expertise.

Marketing Resources

Marketing is a key function of the successful practice, and partners who invest in marketing resources succeed to a greater degree than those who do not. The following is a key marketing position you should consider for your practice.

The **Product Marketing Manager** complements the Product Manager, executing on key campaigns and customer outreach. This role will create the brand and messaging to accompany it. They will own social media as well as traditional marketing vehicles such as web sites, demos and data sheets. Product Marketing Managers create the go-to-market strategy for the company and help set pricing. Launch activities are orchestrated through this role as well as technical and industry trade show attendance. Public relations may be handled directly by the Product Marketing Manager or the role may work with an agency or centralized group on this.

Technical Resources (Architecture, Infrastructure, and Development)

These roles form the heart of your Azure solution. Hiring the right people can turn your vision into reality.

A **Cloud Architect** (CA) drives Azure based customer initiatives in collaboration with customers, and participates in both pre and post-sales (e.g., deployment) efforts. The CA is a technical, customer facing role that is accountable for the end-to-end customer cloud deployment experience. CAs own the Azure technical customer engagement including: architectural design sessions, specific implementation projects and/or Proofs of Concepts, and deployment. The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and success leading deep technical architecture and application design discussions with senior customer executives to drive cloud deployment. A computer science or related engineering degree is required.

A **Data Architect** (DA) drives customer initiatives leveraging Azure data and analytics services (e.g., ranging from SQL Server to SQL Database and SQL Data Warehouse to Cortana Intelligence Suite) to solve the biggest and most complex data challenges faced by enterprise customers. The DA is a technical, customer facing role, accountable for the end-to-end customer deployment and usage experience for Azure data services. DAs own the Azure technical customer engagement including: architectural design sessions, implementation projects and/or proofs of concept and pilots. The Data Architect is proficient in distributed computing principles and familiar with key architectures including Lambda and Kappa architectures, and has a broad experience designing solutions using a broad set of data stores (e.g., HDFS, Azure Data Lake Store, Azure Blob Storage, Azure SQL Data Warehouse, Apache HBase, Azure DocumentDB), messaging systems (e.g., Apache Kafka, Azure Event Hubs, Azure IoT Hub) and data processing engines (e.g., Apache Hadoop, Apache Spark, Azure Data Lake Analytics, Apache Storm, Azure HDInsight). The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and success leading deep technical architecture and design discussions with senior executives. Five plus years of experience with deep understanding of databases and analytics, including relational databases, data warehousing, big data, business intelligence and analytics. Five plus years of success in consultative/complex technical sales and deployment projects. Technical BS degree in Computer Science or Math background desirable.

A **Data Scientist** is responsible for identifying the insight opportunities present in the customer's data, and helping shape the data pipeline that deliver the insights by applying advanced analytics (e.g., machine learning) in collaboration with the customer. The Data Scientist is a technical, customer facing role, who along with the Big Data Engineer is accountable for the end-to-end data pipeline envisioning and development that starts with addressing issues of data acquisition and data sampling, data exploration and data quality assessment, data wrangling to massage the data so it is better suited to applying advanced analytics, and visualizing or reporting on such data to make the insights available to the customer's business. The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and has a cross-disciplinary background consisting of statistics and software development. A technical BS degree in Computer Science or Math background is highly desirable. Three or more years customer facing experience desired.

A **Big Data Engineer** is responsible for helping to select and implement the tools and processes required of a data processing pipeline in support of the customer requirements. The Big Data Engineer may be a customer facing role, but the primary responsibilities include implementing ETL (extract, transform and load) pipelines, monitoring/maintaining data pipeline performance. The Big Data Engineer is proficient in distributed computing principles and familiar with key architectures including Lambda and Kappa architectures, and has a broad experience across a set of data stores (e.g., HDFS, Azure Data Lake Store, Azure Blob Storage, Azure SQL Data Warehouse, Apache HBase, Azure DocumentDB), messaging systems (e.g., Apache Kafka, Azure Event Hubs, Azure IoT Hub) and data processing engines (e.g., Apache Hadoop, Apache Spark, Azure Data Lake Analytics, Apache Storm, Azure HDInsight). The ideal candidate has three or more years experience working on solutions that collect, process, store and analyze huge volume of data, fast moving data or data that has significant schema variability.

A **Senior Software Developer** has a history of designing, owning and shipping software, as well as excellent communication and collaboration skills. With a focus on cloud-based application development, the candidate must have demonstrable experience architecting and deploying applications to cloud platforms, the ability to effectively integrate disparate services as needed, and decide when to implement IaaS, SaaS, and PaaS components. As a mentor to junior developers, the senior software developer should have a solid understanding of the software development cycle, from architecture to testing. They should have a passion for quality and be a creative thinker. A senior developer will write secure, reliable, scalable, and maintainable code, and then effectively debug it, test it and support it live. This person should also be comfortable owning a feature and making decisions independently, and should have leadership experience with agile

methodologies, such as the Scrum approach to agile software development.

Another aspect of a senior software developer, is that they can effectively gather customer requirements, and ask clarifying questions when needed. This person must be able to translate these requirements to actionable tasks they will perform, or delegate to members of the team.

A **Software Developer** enjoys the challenge of building applications that solve today's business needs. This person must be willing to keep up to date with the fast-moving cloud services landscape to remain an effective member of the development team. A software developer should work equally well on a team or independently, given a set of project requirements or tasks. This requires the developer to possess excellent communication and collaboration skills. The developer should understand the aspects of the software development cycle, from architecture to testing. This person will design, build, and maintain efficient, reusable, and reliable code. This person should have experience with participating in projects using agile methodologies, such as the Scrum approach to agile software development.

Management

Consider the following management positions if your development effort will involve eight or more technical staff. However, in smaller teams, senior-level employees sometimes take on management duties along with their other responsibilities, obviating the need for dedicated managers.

The **Product Manager** (or Product Management team) establishes and sustains the business case for the project, and plays a key role in identifying and setting priorities across the target audience. This includes ensuring that business expectations are clearly articulated and understood by the project team, and that the functional specifications respond to business priorities.

Product Management owns the vision statement for the project. The vision statement is an informal document that communicates the expectations and assumptions on which the project is based.

Product Management is also responsible for high-level project communications such as business projections, project costing, aka.ms/practiceplaybooks

and contract negotiation. Product Management communicates the high-level milestones to the target audience and other team members.

The **Program Manager** or Program Management team "owns" the specification for an application's features and functionality and coordinates the day-to-day communication required to develop and deliver the application effectively and consistently within organizational standards.

Program Management has a key communication and coordination role. With input from other team leads, Program Management assists Product Management in articulating the vision for the project. Using this vision, Program Management drafts the initial version of the functional specification and is considered the keeper of the functional specification. Program Management is responsible for all activities associated with analysis, specification, and architecture.

Program Management is also responsible for defining how the project will interoperate with external standards, maintaining external technical coordination and communication, and managing the master schedule.

Support Resources

A lot of effort goes on behind the scenes, or in positions that involve post-sales customer engagement. To ensure long-term success of your projects, consider hiring some of these support roles.

The **Customer Success Manager** is passionate about engaging your customers and helping them expand their use cases. They have excellent relational skills, and can create win/win environments for all parties they work with. In their day-to-day responsibilities, they own the overall relationship with assigned clients, by increasing adoption and ensuring retention and satisfaction. They make a large impact on your cloud application development business by establishing a trusted and strategic advisor relationship with each assigned client, driving continued value of your products and services. The Customer Success Manager will help drive sales by working to identify or develop upsell opportunities. Additionally, they will advocate customer needs and issues cross-departmentally, and program manage account escalations. Qualifications include prior experience in Customer Success, or equivalent history of increasing customer satisfaction, adoption, and retention.

A **Quality Assurance (QA) / Test Technician** is extremely thorough and detail-oriented, and should work well with established processes. The primary goal of this role is to help avoid defects in your final product or solution. This person will be involved throughout the development process, and use their intuition to problem solve and identify technical, procedural, and ease of use concerns. They must take meticulous notes, be organized about recording process steps, and work well with others, since they will be coordinating with your technical and management teams to ensure that the correct measures are put into place to align the final product with the initial goal.

An **Information Security Analyst** assesses and provides security advice on your cloud infrastructure, including network, service, and application components. This role conducts risk assessments, architectural reviews, provides cyber security subject matter expertise, and assists in the building and design of secure solutions. Additional duties may include network and

application penetration testing, and support for cyber security investigations as well as on-call response for cyber security incidents. A computer science or related engineering degree is required, or the equivalent combination of education, professional training, or work experience.

A **User Support Specialist** assists your customers who are having technical issues with your product, or who need help realizing the full benefit of your solution to help them deliver their cloud-based workloads. They will likely be in a position to help customers navigate the operational challenges of cloud computing, so thoroughly training them on both your product and the infrastructure on which it is built is paramount to their success, and ultimately, your customers' satisfaction. Qualifications include technical support experience and great communication and interpersonal skills (soft skills). Experience with cloud technologies is a major plus.



Job Descriptions

Job Descriptions for your Technical Team

The following tables provides detailed job descriptions you can utilize to hire the key technical resources. All technical skills, non-technical skills, certifications and technologies listed are potential items a candidate should have, but no candidate will have all the items listed.

CLOUD ARCHITECT

A CA drives high priority customer initiatives on Azure in collaboration with customers and your sales team. The CA is a technical, customer facing role that is accountable for the end-to-end customer cloud deployment experience. CAs own the Azure technical customer engagement including: architectural design sessions, specific implementation projects and/or Proofs of Concepts. The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and success leading deep technical architecture and application design discussions with senior customer executives to drive cloud deployment. Bachelor's degree in computer science or related field preferred.

Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deep understanding of cloud computing technologies, business drivers, and emerging computing trends• Deep technical experience in infrastructure design including private and public cloud, networking, virtualization, identity, security and storage.• Understanding of how to build resilient multi-site architectures• Experience with Windows, Linux and OSS technologies• Experience with configuration management and automation technologies such as PowerShell DSC, Chef, ARM Templates, and Puppet• Working knowledge with AGILE development, SCRUM and Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) with one or more of the following programming languages: PowerShell, Bash, .NET, C++, Java, JSON, PHP, Perl, Python, Ruby on Rails
Non-Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proven track record of building deep technical relationships with senior executives and growing cloud consumption share in large or highly strategic accounts• Proven track record of driving decisions collaboratively, resolving conflicts and ensuring follow through• Presentation skills with a high degree of comfort with both large and small audiences• Prior work experience in a Consulting/Architecture position within a software and/or services company• Problem-solving mentality leveraging internal and/or external resources• Exceptional verbal and written communication
Certifications	MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, AWS Certified Solution Architect Exam priorities: Architecting Azure Solutions 70-534 , 70-533 Implementing Azure Infrastructure Solutions

Project Experience Types/Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5+ years senior (Tier 3) level support with cloud infrastructure as part of responsibilities • 5+ years of architecture, design, implementation, and/or support of highly distributed applications (i.e. having an architectural sense for ensuring availability, reliability, etc.) • 2+ years of experience in migrating on premise workloads to the cloud • 5+ years of success in consultative/complex technical sales and deployment projects (where necessary, managing various stakeholder relationships to get consensus on solution/projects • Oversight experience on major transformation projects and successful transitions to implementation support teams
Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Azure Virtual Machines, Virtual Networks, ExpressRoute, Azure Active Directory, Operations Management Suite, Azure Site Recovery, Azure Backup, Azure App Services, Azure Storage, Azure Import/Export, Azure SQL Database, Azure Web Jobs, Azure ExpressRoute, MySQL, SQL Server, SQL Server IaaS, SharePoint on Azure, AWS EC2, S3, DirectConnect, Hyper-V, VMWare, System Center, Citrix, StorSimple, SAN, firewalls, web app proxies, PowerShell, Bash, JSON, ARM Templates, BGP, Site-to-Site VPN, Chef, Puppet, Ansible, SaltStack, Windows Server, Linux, OSS Technologies

CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE CONSULTANT

The Cloud Infrastructure Consultant delivers technical solutions and support to customers allowing them to maximize their investment in cloud technology. The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and success implementing cloud based solutions, migrating workloads to the cloud, and experience with connecting and managing hybrid cloud environments.

Building upon solid IT project experience relative to their level, consultants will work with customers in:

- The delivery of high quality engagements around Microsoft's solution areas, technologies and products in diverse client environments.
- Stabilizing developed solutions using Microsoft methodologies in complex customer environments.
- The design and development of integrated solutions using the latest Microsoft products and technologies.
- Understanding the relevant application development, infrastructure and operations implications of the developed solution.

Bachelor's degree in computer science or related field preferred.

Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep understanding of cloud computing technologies, business drivers, and emerging computing trends • Deep technical experience in infrastructure design including private and public cloud, networking, virtualization, identity, security and storage. • Understanding of how to build resilient multi-site architectures • Experience with Windows, Linux and OSS technologies • Experience with configuration management and automation technologies such as PowerShell DSC, Chef, ARM Templates, and Puppet • Working knowledge with AGILE development, SCRUM and Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) with one or more of the following programming languages: PowerShell, Bash, .NET, C++, Java, JSON, PHP, Perl, Python, Ruby on Rails
------------------	---

Non-Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services project management • Building Customer/Partner Relationships • Proven track record of driving decisions collaboratively, resolving conflicts and ensuring follow through • Presentation skills with a high degree of comfort with both large and small audiences • Prior work experience in a Consulting/Architecture position within a software and/or services company • Problem-solving mentality leveraging internal and/or external resources • Exceptional verbal and written communication
Certifications	<p>MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, AWS Certified Solution Architect</p> <p>Exam priorities: 70-533 Implementing Azure Infrastructure Solutions, Architecting Azure Solutions 70-534</p>
Project Experience Types/Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5+ years senior (Tier 3) level support with cloud infrastructure as part of responsibilities • 5+ years of architecture, design, implementation, and/or support of highly distributed applications (i.e. having an architectural sense for ensuring availability, reliability, etc.) • 2+ years of experience in “migrating” on-premise workloads to the cloud • 5+ years of success in consultative/complex technical sales and deployment projects (where necessary, managing various stakeholder relationships to get consensus on solution/projects) • Oversight experience on major transformation projects and successful transitions to implementation support teams
Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Azure Virtual Machines, Virtual Networks, ExpressRoute, Azure Active Directory, Operations Management Suite, Azure Site Recovery, Azure Backup, Azure App Services, Azure Storage, Azure Import/Export, Azure SQL Database, Azure Web Jobs, Azure ExpressRoute, MySQL, SQL Server, SQL Server IaaS, SharePoint on Azure, AWS EC2, S3, DirectConnect, Hyper-V, VMWare, System Center, Citrix, StorSimple, SAN, firewalls, web app proxies, PowerShell, Bash, JSON, ARM Templates, BGP, Site-to-Site VPN, Chef, Puppet, Ansible, SaltStack, Windows Server, Linux, OSS Technologies

IDENTITY SOLUTION ENGINEER

The Identity Solution Engineer is responsible for the design, implementation, integration, support and monitoring of enterprise identity and access control solutions. The ideal candidate should have a diverse understanding of the current state of security best practices including identity and access control, mobile technology, best practices throughout a variety of industries. In addition, this individual must have a strong knowledge of identity standards and protocols as well as a deep skillet with Windows Server Active Directory and industry security solutions. The candidate must have prior experience formulating, planning, and implementing an identity and access control strategy including formulating policies for bring your own device (BYOD) policy and remote access. The ideal candidate will have a strong understanding of network infrastructure, such as firewalls, proxies, and cross site connectivity options. Bachelor's degree in computer science or related field preferred

Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solid understanding of modern authentication protocols and a background in cyber security• Deep understanding of cloud computing technologies, business drivers, and emerging computing trends• Experience with Windows Server Active Directory and other LDAP based directory services• Experience with Azure AD and Azure Infrastructure as a Service (Virtual Machines, Virtual Networks)• Integration and migration experience with Skype for Business, Exchange, SharePoint and Office 365• Experience with Windows, Linux, iOS, Android, Blackberry• Experienced troubleshooter, analyzing log files, network traffic, permissions issues, identifying problems with performance and scale• Developer experience with .NET, Java, HTML, CSS, JavaScript
Non-Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proven track record of driving decisions collaboratively, resolving conflicts and ensuring follow through• Presentation skills with a high degree of comfort with both large and small audiences• Problem-solving mentality leveraging internal and/or external resources• Exceptional verbal and written communication• Basic understanding and knowledge of PCI and SOX regulatory standards.
Certifications	<p>MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, CompTIA Security+, CISSP, AWS Certified Solution Architect,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exam priorities: Identity with Window Server 2016, 70-533 Implementing Azure Infrastructure Solutions, 70-398: Planning for and Measuring Devices in the Enterprise.
Project Experience Types/Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3-5+ years senior (Tier 3) level support with identity management as part of responsibilities• 5-8 years of experience with identity architecture and management• 3-5 years deploying, migrating or managing an Office 365 environment
Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Azure Active Directory, Office 365, Windows Server Active Directory Domain Services, AD LDS, Rights Management Server, Microsoft Identity Manager (FIM/MIM), Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS), Active Directory Certificate Services (ADCS), Web App Proxy, Site Minder, Octa, Auth0, WebSphere, Enterprise Mobility Suite, Intune, Azure Information Protection, Azure Active Directory, OAuth, SAML, Cloud App Security, Citrix XenMobile, MobileIron, Airwatch, BlackBerry, Firewalls, Office 365, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android, System Center Configuration Manager, Exchange, Skype for Business, SharePoint

Recruiting Resources

Top 10 Sources to Find Skilled Labor and What to Look For

Sourcing skilled labor can be a challenge. In our recent survey with MDC of 1,132 Azure partners, we found that referrals and LinkedIn rank among the top source of candidates.

See the table below for the top 10 sources to identify skilled labor:

	Total (n=1136)	SMB (n=886)	Enterprise (n=250)
Referrals from employees or partnerships	70%	69%	73%
LinkedIn	59%	57%	66%
Posting on website	47%	45%	54%
Local Universities	38%	36%	46%
Local Technical Communities	36%	35%	43%
Recruit from competitors	30%	29%	36%
Meet ups	29%	29%	30%
GitHub	8%	8%	7%
Stack Overflow	8%	8%	7%
Other job posting sites	6%	6%	4%

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

Now that you have an understanding of where to look, what are the most important factors you should be examining about your potential hire's skillset? In the Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, we asked the Azure partners this question. What they told us was the top three most important factors were work history, cultural fit and years of experience.

	Total (n=1136)	SMB (n=886)	Enterprise (n=250)
Work history	69%	68%	74%
Cultural fit	43%	40%	53%
Years of experience	42%	41%	47%
Professional certifications	32%	34%	22%
Referrals	28%	29%	26%

Professional training received	20%	21%	16%
Reputation through community	16%	15%	19%
Formal education	13%	14%	11%
Contract to hire or other means to test skills "hands-on"	13%	13%	13%
Publications	3%	3%	2%
Awards received	2%	2%	2%
Attitude	0%	0%	1%
Other	4%	4%	4%

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

Resource Compensation

Beyond sourced skilled labor, it's important to know the "going rates"—what should you pay a given resource in a region.

In our recent survey of 1,136 Azure partners, we found the following annual media cost for each resource by region:

	Total (n=1136)	US (n=246)	Canada (n=40)	LATAM (n=64)	UK (n=90)	WE (n=276)	Germany (n=42)	CEE (n=108)	India (n=35)	APAC (n=119)	MEA (n=49)	Brazil (n=39)
Architect	\$80,000	\$125,000	\$87,500	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$45,000	\$40,000	\$100,000	\$30,000	\$10,000
Developer	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$25,000	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$30,000	\$16,250	\$70,000	\$13,000	\$10,000
Managed services delivery resource/employee	\$50,000	\$77,500	\$72,500	\$29,500	\$42,500	\$50,000	\$55,000	\$30,000	\$11,000	\$50,000	\$22,000	\$1,500
Project services delivery resource/employee	\$65,000	\$90,000	\$80,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$68,000	\$66,000	\$38,000	\$15,000	\$67,500	\$26,000	\$750
Sales and Marketing resource/employee	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$90,000	\$41,500	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$26,500	\$14,500	\$90,000	\$45,850	\$2,000
Tester/QA	\$40,000	\$75,000	\$60,000	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$22,500	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$11,000	\$32,000	\$10,000	\$40
UI/UX designer	\$40,000	\$82,500	\$67,500	\$14,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$3,600	\$0

Highest median cost by country

*Minimum 30 responses required to be included in table

Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

Build staff on-boarding and mentoring plan

Resources



Preparing and Training IT Staff for the Cloud

For IT staff to function as change agents supporting current and emerging cloud technologies, their buy-in for the use and integration of these technologies is needed. For this, staff need three things:

- An understanding of their roles and of any changes to their current position
- Time and resources to explore the technologies
- An understanding of the business case for the technologies

AZURE ONBOARDING GUIDE FOR IT ORGANIZATIONS

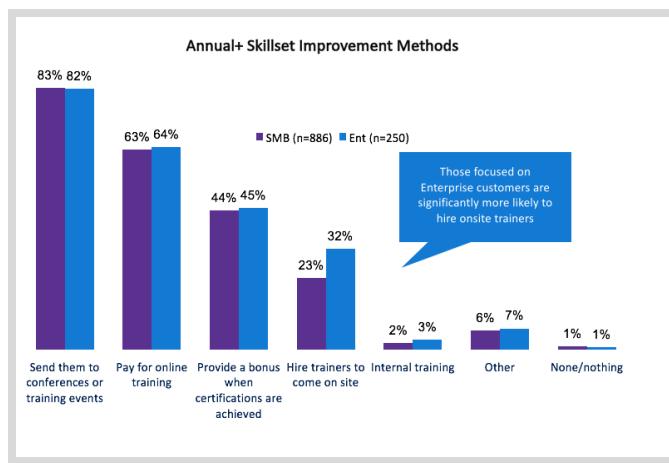
- [Azure Skills](#) provides a free online training option and great deals on certification, including significant discounts for Microsoft Exam vouchers for Azure certifications. Microsoft and partners offer a variety of options for all audiences to develop their skills with Microsoft Azure services. The [Microsoft Learning MOOC Catalog](#), a component of Azure Skills, provide in-depth courses with labs, office hours and tests. After taking a MOOC (massive open online course), IT staff should have the hands-on skills they need to be able to deploy, build and architect solutions on Azure.
- Microsoft Virtual Academy (<https://mva.microsoft.com/product-training/microsoft-azure>) offers training from the people who helped to build Microsoft Azure. From the basic overview to deep technical training, IT staff will learn how to leverage Microsoft Azure for their business.
- Microsoft IT Pro Cloud Essentials (<https://www.itprocloudessentials.com>) is a free annual subscription that includes cloud services, education, and support benefits.
- IT Pro Cloud Essentials provides IT implementers with hands-on experience, targeted educational opportunities, and access to experts in areas that matter most to increase knowledge and create a path to career advancement.
- The Microsoft IT Pro Career Center (<https://www.itprocareercenter.com>) is a free online resource to help map your cloud career path. Learn what industry experts suggest for your cloud role and the skills to get you there.
- Follow a learning curriculum at your own pace to build the skills you need most to stay relevant. [In the next section](#), you will see a list of suggested resources to help onboard your team for training success.

Complete Training

Technical Training

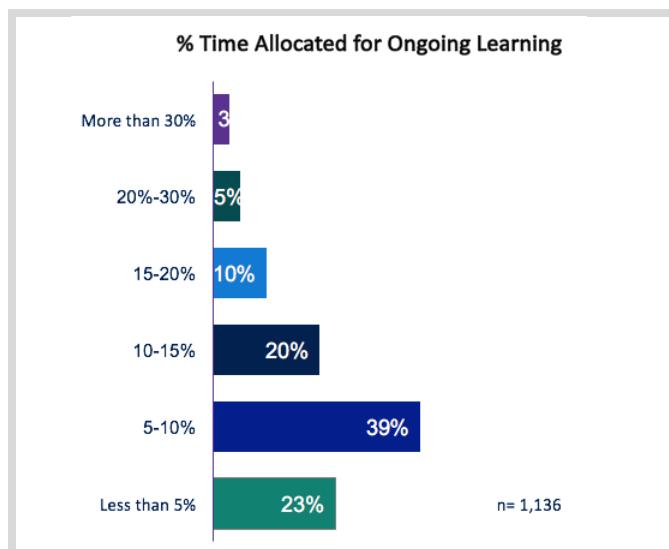
Whether you need to fill a skills gap or are looking to constantly improve your teams skill surface area, technical training is critical to your success.

In our research, we found conferences and paid online training are the most common learning mechanisms.



Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

Moreover, in this study we found that partners spend a median of 8.5% of technical resource time on training.



Source: Microsoft Cloud Practice Development Study, MDC Research, November 2016

CLOUD PLATFORM UNIVERSITY

[Cloud Platform University Online](#) is an interactive, scenario-based training resource to equip you with the foundational elements of selling and supporting Microsoft cloud and enterprise technologies.

MPN LEARNING PATHS

[Microsoft Partner Network \(MPN\) Learning Paths](#) provide step by step guides displaying training opportunities and certification options, organized by products, competencies, exams/accreditations and business focus.

MICROSOFT INSPIRE CONFERENCE RECORDINGS

Even if you missed the annual live event, the [Microsoft Inspire Conference](#) provides many of its sessions as recordings you can view at anytime—no WPC conference pass required.

PARTNER COMMUNITY EVENTS, CALLS & WEBINARS

The [Microsoft Partner Enablement Blog](#) maintains a schedule of trainings available to partners, visit often and plan your training calendar.

SMART PARTNER MARKETING

Leverage the [Microsoft Smart Partner Marketing](#) site as your starting point for training your marketing resources. For guidance on training your sales team on selling Azure, see [Azure Sales Training](#) within this playbook

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure Partner Site](#)
- ➔ [OMS Partner Site](#)
- ➔ [Hybrid Cloud Practice Accelerators](#)
- ➔ [Optimize your operations eBook](#)
- ➔ [Successful Cloud Partners](#)
- ➔ [Cloud Platform University Online](#)
- ➔ [Partner Learning Paths](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft Inspire Conference Recordings](#)
- ➔ [edX Courses from Microsoft](#)
- ➔ [Sales Training Resources](#)
- ➔ [Technical Training Resources](#)

Training Options

Resources



RESOURCES

- [H2 CY 2016 Partner Curriculum Guide](#)
- [Azure Skills](#)
- [Azure Skills Announcement](#)
- [Microsoft Official Curriculum - On-Demand](#)
- [Find a Microsoft Learning Partner](#)
- [Microsoft MOOC Azure Courses](#)
- [Microsoft Virtual Academy](#)
- [Pluralsight Azure Courses](#)
- [Opsgility On-Demand Azure Courses](#)
- [Opsgility Instructor-Led Azure Courses](#)

Finding the Right Training Resource

The [C+E Partner Curriculum Guide](#) provides you with sales and technical curriculums for each of the Specialization areas that you may consider focusing on. It describes the Readiness Programs and Engines and resources available to you in order to build your skills around selling, deploying and architecting Cloud Infrastructure and Management, Cloud App Dev, Data Platform and Data Analytics, Security and Mobility solutions.

Whether you're new to Azure or already a cloud professional, training is one of the best investments you can make in your career. [Azure Skills](#) provides a free online training option and great deals on certification, including significant discounts for Microsoft Exam vouchers for Azure certifications.

For the Enterprise Mobility + Security practice consider the following sections in the [guide](#) for training for your sales and technical teams:

- Application/Data Access Management
- Mobility Management
- Threat Protection and Prevention

Below are several additional training resources to consider for your organization in addition to the resources in the C+E Partner Curriculum guide.

[Microsoft Learning](#) offers a wide variety of official curriculum on-demand as well as [edX courses that are taught by Microsoft experts](#), let you learn through hands-on experience with broad reach of Azure technologies.

[Microsoft Learning Partners](#) are available world-wide to help enable your team for Microsoft Azure via live instructor-led training. Instructor-led can be scheduled as a dedicated delivery at your location or virtually using remote learning technologies. Many courses are scheduled as open-enrollment courses which allows you to not have to schedule a dedicated class.

[Microsoft Virtual Academy](#) provides live and on-demand virtual training for your technical team, with new courses arriving weekly. Also, includes access to a comprehensive assortment of e-books from Microsoft Press.

[Pluralsight](#) is a key Microsoft partner offering Azure training. Find more than 40 beginner, intermediate, and advanced training courses on Azure. If you are a Visual Studio subscriber, use your benefits to access Azure training. [70-534 Training - 70-533 Training](#)

[Opsgility](#) is a key Microsoft partner offering Azure training. Find more than 70 online classes focused on Azure with full-learning paths for Azure certification. Opsgility also offers a full set of instructor-led trainings for Azure focused on Architects, Developers, DevOps, Operations, Sales and Decision Makers. [70-534 Training - 70-533 Training - Real World EMS](#)

[O'Reilly Safari](#) provides subscription access to more than 40,000 books, videos, and interactive tutorials from over 200 of the world's best publishers, including O'Reilly, Pearson, Harvard Business Review, and Packt. They also offer live online training courses led by instructors from O'Reilly's network of tech innovators and expert practitioners.

Increase Readiness and Marketability with Certifications

Currently there are seven Azure specific certification exams that can lead to an MCSA or MCSE certification.

MCSA CLOUD PLATFORM



MCSA: Cloud Platform Solutions Associate

Demonstrate your expertise in Microsoft cloud-related technologies to reduce IT costs and deliver more value for the modern business.

Required Exams

- [70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions](#)
- [70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions](#) – recommended

MCSA LINUX ON AZURE



MCSA: Linux on Azure Solutions Associate

This certification demonstrates your ability to design, architect, implement, and maintain complex cloud-enabled Linux® solutions that leverage Microsoft Azure open source capabilities. It also validates your Linux system administration skills to show that you are fluent in today's cloud-native world.

Required Exams

- [70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions](#)
- [Linux Foundation Certified System Administrator](#)

Learn more about:

RESOURCES

- ➔ [MCSA Cloud Platform](#)
- ➔ [MCSA Linux on Azure](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft Badges from Acclaim](#)

MCSE CLOUD PLATFORM AND INFRASTRUCTURE



MCSE: Cloud Platform and Infrastructure Solutions Expert

The Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE): Cloud Platform and Infrastructure certification validates that you have the skills needed to run a highly efficient and modern data center, with

aka.ms/practiceplaybooks

expertise in cloud technologies, identity management, systems management, virtualization, storage, and networking.

Pre-Requisites

- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate – Window Server 2016](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate – Cloud Platform](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate – Linux on Azure](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate – Windows Server 2012](#)

Choose one of the following Azure Exams:

- [70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions](#)
- [70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions](#) – recommended

MCSE DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYTICS



MCSE: Data Management and Analytics Solutions Expert

Demonstrate your broad skill sets in SQL administration, building enterprise-scale data solutions, and leveraging business intelligence data—both on-premises and in cloud environments.

Pre-Requisites

- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Architect – SQL Server 2012/2014](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Architect – SQL Server 2016 Database Administration](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Architect – SQL Server 2016 Database Development](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Architect – SQL Server 2016 Business Intelligence Development](#)

Choose one of the following Azure Exams:

- [70-473: Designing and Implementing Cloud Data Platform](#)
- [70-475: Designing and Implementing Big Data Analytics Solutions](#)

RESOURCES

- ➔ [MCSA Cloud Platform and Infrastructure](#)
- ➔ [MCSE Data Management and Analytics](#)

Increase Readiness and Marketability with Certifications

MCSD APP BUILDER



MCSD: App Builder
Solutions Developer

The Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer (MCSD): App Builder certification validates that you have the skills needed to build modern mobile and/or web applications and services.

Pre-Requisites

- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate \(MCSA\) – Web applications](#)
- [Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate \(MCSA\) - Universal Applications](#)

Choose one of the following Azure Exams:

- [70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions](#) - recommended
- [70-487: Developing Microsoft Azure and Web Services](#)

MCSD AZURE SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT



MCSD: Azure Solutions Architect
Solutions Developer

Microsoft Azure is the cloud for modern business. When you receive Azure certification, and become a Microsoft Azure

Specialist, you'll gain professional recognition for your expertise covering the full breadth of architecting, developing, and administering Azure solutions.

Note: This certification is retiring March 2017.

Azure Exam requirements:

- [70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions](#)
- [70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions](#)
- [70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions](#)

MCP PLANNING FOR AND MEASURING DEVICES IN THE ENTERPRISE

Azure Exam Requirements

- [70-398: Planning for and Measuring Devices in the Enterprise](#)

RESOURCES

- ➔ [MCSD App Builder](#)
- ➔ [Planning for and Managing Devices in the Enterprise](#)
- ➔ [MCSD Azure Solutions Architect](#)



Setup Azure for Internal Use



AZURE CREDITS

Providing access to Azure for your technology professionals is one of the key first steps to preparing for a successful Azure practice. Microsoft provides several ways for your organization to have access to Microsoft Azure for development of new services, testing workloads, learning in general, or for delivering services. Members of the Microsoft Action Pack program receive monthly credits of \$100 of Azure at no charge. Join the [Microsoft Azure Pack](#).

FLEXIBILITY WITH AZURE CREDITS

Any taxes which may result from receiving services at no charge are the sole responsibility of the recipient. The choice is now yours on how you use your Azure credits. Use them on any Azure service based on your needs including, Virtual Machines, Web Sites, Cloud Services, Mobile Services, Storage, SQL Database, Content Delivery Network, HDInsight, Media Services, and many more.

Use the [pricing calculator](#) to estimate how much you could use with \$100 per month. Here are a few usage scenarios that consume no more than \$100 per month:

- Run 1 small Virtual Machine instance for the entire month, or
- Store 400 GB of data in Storage, or
- Develop and test a web application using Cloud Services, with 3 web roles and 2 worker roles on small instances, for 10 hours a day, 5 days a week, or
- Run a 30GB SQL Database for the entire month

Please see additional terms and conditions [here](#).

VISUAL STUDIO

If your organization has Visual Studio subscriptions, you should know that each subscription has a set amount of Azure credits built in that the subscriber can use. The credit amount varies depending on the type of subscription purchased. You can also use MSDN software within your MSDN subscription on Azure Virtual Machines for development and test at no extra charge. The rate you will pay does not include any licensing costs even virtual machines with SQL Server, SharePoint Server, or other software that is normally billed at a higher rate.

Providing your team access to Azure is just as important as providing them a computer.

\$50 AZURE CREDIT	\$100 AZURE CREDIT	\$150 AZURE CREDIT
Visual Studio Professional – annual Visual Studio Professional with MSDN Visual Studio Test Professional with MSDN	MSDN Platforms	Visual Studio Enterprise – annual Visual Studio Enterprise with MSDN Visual Studio Enterprise with MSDN (BizSpark) Visual Studio Enterprise with MSDN (MPN)

RESOURCES

→ [Azure Pricing Calculator](#)

Primary Way to Purchase

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure EA Portal](#)

Ways to Purchase Azure

There are three primary ways you can purchase Azure and if you are a CSP you have built in usage for testing your solution.

EA AGREEMENTS

Another option for getting access to your technical professionals is to purchase an Enterprise Agreement. This arrangement is ideal for larger organizations that require the ability to create subscriptions for different departments and even implement charge back based on the department. Azure subscriptions within an EA agreement are managed through the Azure EA portal and allow for delegated administration and the ability to set quotas at the department or subscription level. The following <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/pricing/enterprise-agreement/> has more information on how to get started with purchasing an enterprise agreement for Azure usage or adding Azure to an existing enterprise agreement.

PAY AS YOU GO AND TRIAL ACCOUNTS

Another option is to create a free trial with Azure and allow it to convert to a pay-as-you-go subscription. An Azure free trial is valid for 30 days and allows up to \$200 in Azure credits. After the initial 30 days, any Azure usage is billed directly to you on your credit card. You can start a free trial by browsing to <http://azure.microsoft.com> and clicking the free trial link.

OPEN LICENSE

You can also purchase Azure through a reseller using the Microsoft Open License Program. Open Value is the recommended program if you have a small to midsize organization with five or more desktop PCs and want to simplify license management, manage software costs, and get better control over your investment. It also includes Software Assurance, providing access to valuable benefits such as training, deployment planning, software upgrades, and product support help you boost the productivity of your entire organization. See the following for more information on the Microsoft Open Licensing program:
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/licensing/licensing-programs/open-license.aspx>.

CSP SANDBOX

Make sure you are taking advantage of the CSP sandbox capability. Every Microsoft partner on-boarded in CSP has access to \$200 of test accounts for every subscription they provision.

Identify and apply for Azure Investment Programs

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Partner Offers to support Microsoft Azure deal lifecycle](#)

Cloud and Enterprise (C+E) Investment Programs

The C+E Investment Programs utilize business investment funds (BIF) to accelerate opportunity and deal velocity supporting both the near and long-term strategies and priorities for the C+E business.

OBJECTIVES

- Support strategic priorities for your business
- Drive deal velocity to meet your revenue and consumption goals
- Generate customer and partner references through defined solutions and design wins
- Support competitive opportunity wins, migrations and upgrade scenarios

See the Partner Offers to support Microsoft Azure deal lifecycle presentation from WPC to learn more about these programs as well as the section [Leverage Investment Resources](#) for details on the available programs

It is important to talk with your Microsoft representative to understand what programs are currently available in your region.

Identify and apply for Azure Sell Incentives

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Setup Digital Partner of Record](#)
- ➔ [Setup DPOR Step-By-Step Video](#)
- ➔ [Silver and Gold Requirements for Cloud Platform Competency](#)
- ➔ [Azure Incentives Overview](#)
- ➔ [Azure Incentives Guide \(rates, business rules, payment processes\)](#)
- ➔ [Partner Incentives Experience](#)

Digital Partner of Record

DPOR automates how partners are attached as the Partner of Record for the subscriptions you are actively managing for customers for Microsoft Office 365, Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online, Microsoft Intune, Enterprise Mobility Suite (EMS), and Microsoft Azure.

DPOR ALLOWS PARTNERS TO:

- Support customers' cloud services, helping to deliver strong business outcomes and high ongoing services levels for the customer.
- Qualify for MPN cloud competencies that will help you grow your business and unlock benefits, such as unlimited cloud support, sales and technical training to develop your expertise, internal software use rights, and other special offers.
- Gain insight into your customers' cloud consumption and usage, allowing you to monitor and proactively engage with your customers, implement solutions, and help them reach their desired business outcome. This insight can also be leveraged for cross-sell/upsell opportunities, and allows partners to proactively engage customers at risk for non-renewal.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The key to receiving incentives for digital partner of record (DPOR) is to obtain the Silver or Gold Cloud Platform Competency. Each competency has a minimum amount of Azure Consumption you must reach through DPOR before you will receive incentives. To get started, all you need do is ask your customers to add you as the DPOR on any of their subscriptions that you manage. For instructions on how to add a DPOR to a subscription, see Digital Partner of Record (DPOR) User Step-by-Step Video.

MULTIPLE PARTNER SUPPORT

With DPOR multiple partners can be recognized for the value they add to customers' cloud subscriptions, and everyone benefits.

CSP Incentives Overview

Resources



RESOURCES

- [CSP Indirect Provider Incentives Overview](#)
- [CSP Indirect Provider Incentives Guide](#)
- [CSP Indirect Reseller Incentives Overview](#)
- [CSP Indirect Reseller Incentives Guide](#)
- [CSP Indirect Provider Incentives Resources](#)
- [CSP Direct Partner Incentive Overview](#)
- [CSP Direct Partner Incentive Guide](#)
- [CSP Direct Incentives Resources](#)

CSP Incentives Overview

The Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider Incentives reward Cloud Distribution partners for driving the activation and enablement of a resale channel and the sale of Online Services. The CSP Direct and Indirect Reseller Partner Incentives are designed to support partners in the initial stages of building Cloud Solutions Provider practices.

CSP INDIRECT PROVIDER INCENTIVE OVERVIEW

Learn about the CSP Indirect Provider incentive program purpose, policies, and rates.

CSP INDIRECT PROVIDER INCENTIVE GUIDE

Read this guide for additional incentive details, including systems and tools, calculation logic, policies and processes, and information required to participate.

CSP INDIRECT PROVIDER INCENTIVE RESOURCES

View other training and resources.

CSP INDIRECT RESELLER INCENTIVE OVERVIEW

Learn about the CSP Indirect Reseller incentive program purpose, policies, and rates.

CSP INDIRECT RESELLER INCENTIVE GUIDE

Read this guide for additional incentive details, including systems and tools, calculation logic, policies and processes, and information required to participate.

CSP INDIRECT RESELLER INCENTIVE RESOURCES

View other training and resources, complete with how-to videos and step-by-step setup.

CSP DIRECT PARTNER INCENTIVE OVERVIEW

Learn about the CSP Direct Partner incentive program purpose, policies, and rates.

CSP DIRECT PARTNER INCENTIVE GUIDE

Read this guide for additional incentive details, including systems and tools, calculation logic, policies and processes, and information required to participate.

CSP DIRECT PARTNER INCENTIVE RESOURCES

View other training and resources, complete with how-to videos and step-by-step setup

Mobility Enterprise Agreement

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Enterprise Agreement](#)
- ➔ [Software Assurance](#)

Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA)

Any Enterprise Agreement customer can add Azure to their EA by making an upfront monetary commitment to Azure

Get the best pricing, discounts, and added benefits designed to support server and cloud technologies.

- Get the best savings by deploying a common IT platform across the organization.
- Get 24x7 technical support, planning services, end-user and technical training, as well as unique technologies with Software Assurance.
- Minimize up-front costs and budget more effectively by locking in pricing and spreading payments over three years.

Respond to the rapidly changing technological landscape by accessing the latest versions of cloud and on-premises software.

- Meet the unique requirements of your organization based on its size and technology needs.
- Automatically access the latest software and technologies with Software Assurance.
- Choose from Microsoft cloud services, on-premises software, or a mix of both and migrate on your own terms.

Streamline license management with a single organization-wide agreement.

- Simplify purchasing with predictable payments through a single agreement for cloud services and software.
- Manage licensing throughout the life of your agreement with the help of a Microsoft Certified Partner or a Microsoft representative.
- Move to a pure per user licensing model and simplify licensing with no more device counting.

Build materials to support sales and marketing efforts

Resources



RESOURCES

- [MPN Sales & Marketing](#)
- [SureStep Marketing Resources](#)
- [DigitalStride Marketing Services](#)
- [Microsoft Partner Logo Builder](#)

Understanding Push vs. Pull Marketing

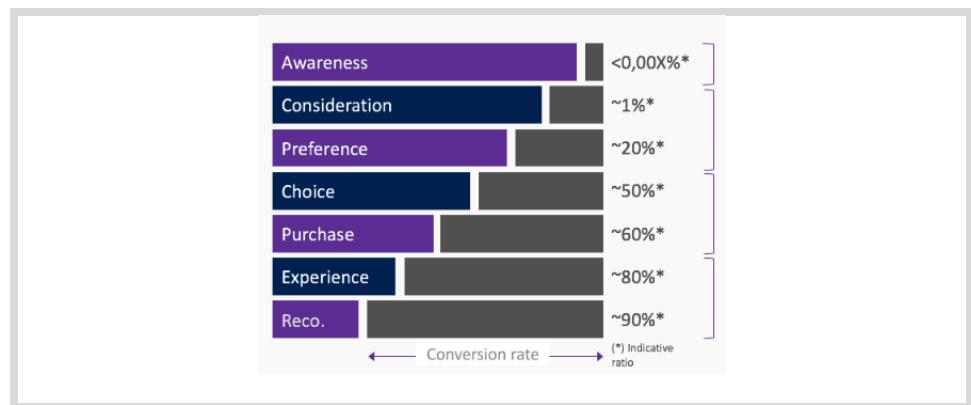
When considering the materials to build to support your sales and marketing efforts, it's important to be clear on how each approach yields customers.

When making a purchase, customers flow thru as many as seven stages when it comes to their knowledge about your offerings. They may stop at any one of the stages.

1. Awareness: is the customer aware (at the highest level) of what you offer?
2. Consideration: is the customer considering your offer?
3. Preference: is the customer preferring your offer against the competition?
4. Choice: is the customer choosing to go with your offer?
5. Purchase: is the customer purchasing your offer?
6. Experience: does the customer have experience with your offer, having purchased it?
7. Recommendation: does the customer recommend your offer to others?

Obviously, the best success comes in getting a customer all the way down to recommendation- they have not only fully explored your offer, but they have purchased it, used it and are actively recommending to others.

The efforts behind each of these stages nets different levels of conversions. For example, awareness efforts yield the smallest conversion as your message, once broadcast, may simply not meet what the customer is searching for. However, recommendation yields significant conversion as prospective customers involved in conversation with your existing customer have already expressed their interest and have self selected- your customers recommendation pushes over the choice hurdle quickly.



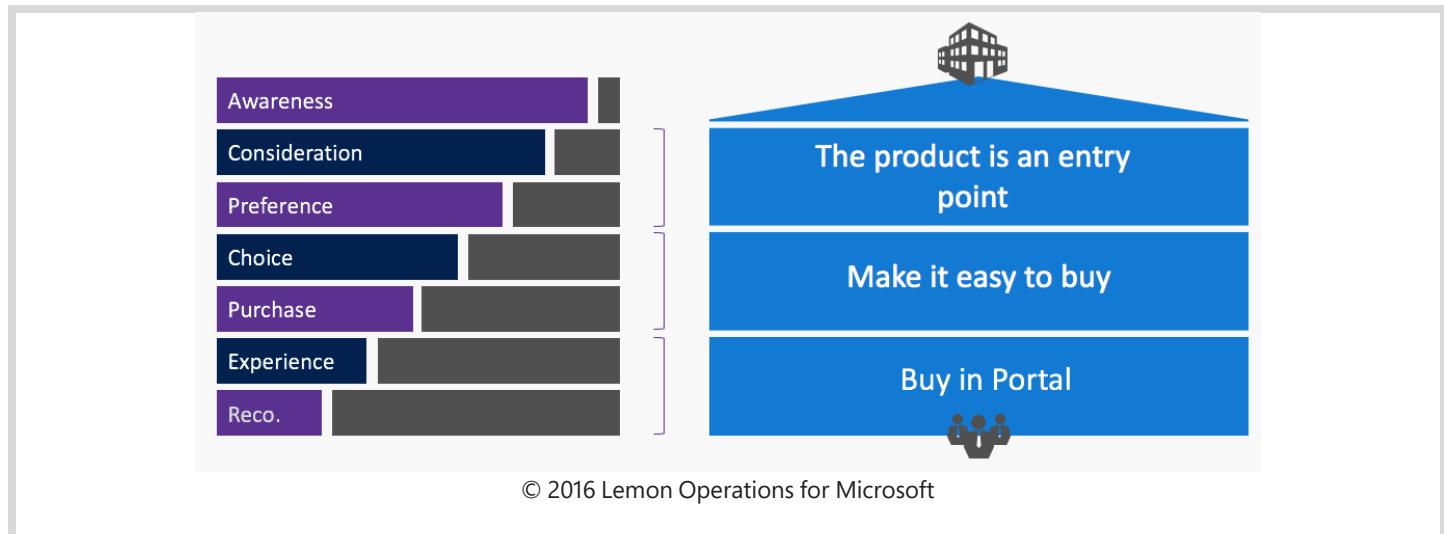
With this understanding in mind, let's examine the different approaches you use that favor either the top of the funnel or the bottom.

Approaches such as advertising, mass email and telemarketing are all examples of approaches that push customers towards you, primarily by increasing their awareness.

For an offer based strategy, awareness and consideration come from being on the radar of your prospects. Preference and choice come from your dedicated sales motion, and purchase and experience come from efforts like your sales engineers and freemium models.



Approaches such as your website, marketing collateral, sales hotline are examples of pull approaches that draw customers in. For an offer based strategy your product is an entry point, make it easy to buy from a portal (no sales staff should be required). If you do so, you are making it easy to recommend.



Build materials to support sales and marketing efforts

Resources



Take advantage of sales and marketing resources through MPN

RESOURCES

- [MPN Sales & Marketing](#)
- [Campaigns](#)
- [Web Content](#)
- [Marketing SureStep](#)
- [Services](#)
- [DigitalStride](#)
- [Microsoft Community Connections](#)
- [Logo Builder](#)

Sales and Marketing Resources

The Microsoft Partner Network makes it easy for you to find professional, personalized marketing resources that will help you to market your business. Save time, save money, and get the tools and support you need to reach your customers.

CAMPAIGNS

Use customizable marketing and sales content.

WEB CONTENT

Keep your website up to date with customer facing dynamic content.

MARKETING SURESTEP

Get step-by-step guidance to help build your marketing plan.

SERVICES

Find a marketing service provider to help with your marketing.

DIGITALSTRIDE

Run a digital marketing program to boost your website traffic.

MICROSOFT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Educate local businesses on current technology solutions.

LOGO BUILDER

Differentiate your business with customized logos

Create key contracts

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Sample Proposal](#)
- ➔ [Sample SOW](#)

Key Contracts for your Practice

Azure practices need to use a set of legal documents. Your practice need to have these documents ready. At a minimum your practice should be ready with these documents.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

A Service Level Agreement or SLA is a contract between a service provider and the end user that defines the level of service expected from the service provider. SLAs are output-based in that their purpose is specifically to define what the customer will receive both in terms of service levels and in form of compensation should service levels not be achieved.

MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT

A Master Services Agreement (MSA) is a contract reached between parties, in which the parties agree to the most common terms that will govern future transactions or future agreements. For example, it may detail standard rates from a the practice rate chart, services provided, standard payment terms and terms for liability, ownership of intellectual property, and the dispute resolution process.

STATEMENT OF WORK

A Statement of work (SOW) is a document that defines what work or deliverables will be provided to the client, including a brief description of the project, delivery milestones, costs and payment schedule. This document typically references the MSA that is already in place with the customer and is intended to allow the quick agreement on, definition of an effort with minimal additional contractual paperwork.

MUTUAL NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

A mutual non-disclosure agreement (MNDA or NDA) is a document that defines the terms for the handling of confidential information exchanged between the vendor and customer. A mutual NDA is recommended because it fairly addresses the confidentiality needs of both parties and as such is often the first document signed before any detailed discussions begin (usually well before any of the other contracts listed on this page). An NDA (the non-mutual kind) is variant of the MNDA that is specifically authored to favor the confidential information disclosure of one party.

Setup Tools and Systems

Resources



Choose a tool that supports the process you select the best.

RESOURCES

- [Implementation Process](#)
- [GitHub](#)
- [Visual Studio Team Services](#)
- [Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Project Service Automation](#)
- [Microsoft Project Online](#)
- [SharePoint Online](#)

Project Tools

Having selected an implementation process, how do you keep track of the progress of a project both in terms of progress against a project plan as well as with respect to project budget as well as protect your IP? Here are some tooling options.

MICROSOFT PROJECT ONLINE

Project Online is a flexible online solution for project portfolio management (PPM) and everyday work. Delivered through Office 365, Project Online provides powerful project management capabilities for planning, prioritizing, and managing projects and project portfolio investments — from almost anywhere on almost any device. Project Online can be used by administrators, portfolio managers and viewers, project and resource managers, and team leads and members.

VISUAL STUDIO TEAM SERVICES

Provides various tools from running agile teams, from support for Kanban boards, work item backlogs, scrum boards, source control, continuous integration and release management. Source control functionality provides Git support which enables integration with GitHub if such integration is desired.

While Visual Studio Team Services will help you manage the technical aspects of your project, cost-containment requires a different set of tools.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FOR PROJECT SERVICE AUTOMATION

Provides users with capabilities required for setting up a project organization, engaging with customers, project scheduling and costing, managing and approving time and expense, and closing projects. It is specially targeted to address the needs of a Project Services based practices, as it is designed for professionals who manage projects and the associated customer engagement process end-to-end.

SHAREPOINT ONLINE FOR DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Document management controls the life cycle of documents in your organization — how they are created, reviewed, and published, and how they are ultimately disposed of or retained. Although the term "management" implies that information is controlled from the top of the organization, an effective document management system should reflect the culture of the organization that uses it.

GITHUB

Provides the hosted environment for developers to version control and share their source code both privately (e.g., internally to a team) and publicly (e.g., an open source project) and collaborate on development projects.

Setup Tools and Systems

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Yammer](#)
- [OneDrive for Business](#)
- [Skype for Business](#)

Collaboration Tools & File Sharing

Collaborating with customers through the lifecycle of a project or the duration of a managed services agreement is critical. There are several services that are available to make it easy to share project plans, or setup lists for shared data such as project plans or feature lists.

MICROSOFT TEAMS

Microsoft Teams is the latest collaboration tool from Microsoft and is designed to make your content, tools, people, and conversations available in a single location.

YAMMER

Yammer is an enterprise social network collaboration offering to allow teams to collaborate and share files with each other.

ONEDRIVE FOR BUSINESS

OneDrive for Business is an enterprise file sharing service that is designed for automatic synchronization of files between your computer and the cloud. OneDrive makes it easy to share files with your customers or partners.

SKYPE FOR BUSINESS

Skype for Business is an enterprise online meeting and conference service designed for business.

SURFACE HUB

Skype online integrated collaborations device, or “meeting room in a box” if you like. In addition to the built-in team experiences like Skype for Business, Microsoft Office and Whiteboard, Microsoft Surface Hub is customizable with a wide array of applications. Universal apps built for Windows 10 shine on Microsoft Surface Hub and scale to the large screen. You can also connect apps from your personal device and drive them from Microsoft Surface Hub

Using CRM to grow your business

Using CRM to grow your business

CRM solutions streamline processes and increase profitability in your sales, marketing, and service divisions.

A strong CRM solution is a multifaceted platform where everything crucial to developing, improving, and retaining your customer relationships is stored. Without the support of an integrated CRM solution, you may miss growth opportunities and lose revenue because you're not maximizing your business relationships. Imagine misplacing customer contact information, only to learn that your delay pushed your client into the arms of a competitor. Or, picture your top two salespeople pursuing the same prospect, resulting in an annoyed potential customer and some unfriendly, in-house competition. Without a centralized program where your people can log and track customer interactions, your business falls behind schedule and out of touch.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

CRM tools make the customer-facing functions of business easier. They help you:

- Centralize customer information
- Automate marketing interactions
- Provide business intelligence
- Facilitate communications
- Track sales opportunities
- Analyze data
- Enable responsive customer service

Running a successful business is no simple task. When marketing campaigns, data analysis, meetings, customer care, and more all happen simultaneously, you need a powerful CRM solution to bring all these functions together in one place.

As a sales professional, you'll be working a lot with the following types of records:

ACCOUNTS: Account records contain information about the companies you do business with.

CONTACTS: Contact records contain information about the people you know and work with. Usually, multiple contacts are associated with one account. Contacts could include people responsible for making purchasing decisions, people in charge of paying invoices, support technicians, or anyone you work with at the company.

LEADS: Leads are potential sales, and you or your company can get leads from many different sources. For example, you can generate sales leads from marketing campaigns, inquiries from your website, mailing lists, social media posts, or in person at a trade convention.

OPPORTUNITIES: When you qualify a lead, it becomes an opportunity, or a deal that you're getting ready to close.

Dynamics 365 can be customized, so you can also work with records relevant to your field and the way your organization does business.

RESOURCES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ Microsoft Dynamics 365➔ Dynamics for Sales➔ Dynamics for Customer Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ Field Service➔ Project Service Automation➔ Marketing |
|---|--|

Support Ticket Setup and Tracking

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Customer Service](#)

Customer Support

Setting up tickets, tracking issue resolution and managing customer success are fundamentals of your practice.

Providing support to your customers from your practice is a non-trivial, omni-channel effort. We suggest the following service which can help you quickly setup and start managing your customer support efforts.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Customer Service: is designed to manage the efforts of your customer support teams. It provides licensed users with access to core customer service capabilities for a significantly lower price than comparable offerings from other vendors, including Enterprise case management, Interactive Service Hub, Unified Service Desk, SLAs and Entitlements, and other Service group management functionality

CREATE CONSISTENCY AND LOYALTY

Provide the seamless service your customers expect by meeting them where they are with the information they need, every time.

- Give customers great service on their channel of choice.
- Make Help easy by providing relevant, personalized service.
- Proactively address issues by detecting customers' intent and social sentiment.

MAKE YOUR AGENTS' JOBS EASIER

Give your agents complete information—in a single customer service software app—to make smart decisions and provide great service.

- Reveal customers' case histories, preferences, and feedback.
- Provide guidance on entitlements and service-level agreements.
- Display it all in a single interface tailored to their job and skill set.

GET AN ADAPTIVE ENGINE

Respond quickly to customer and market changes within an agile, cloud-based environment that has digital intelligence built in.

- Adapt and customize easily using configuration, not code.
- Extend your functionality through a single interface.
- Rely on advanced analytics and a trusted cloud platform.

Decide on a Solution Marketplace

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure Marketplace¹](#)
- [Microsoft Azure Certified](#)
- [How to publish an offer in the Azure Marketplace](#)

Azure Marketplace

Azure Marketplace is an online store that enables ecosystem partners to offer their solutions to enterprises and Azure customers around the world. Within a single, unified platform, customers can easily search, purchase, and deploy your solutions on Azure with just a few clicks.

The source for thousands of software applications and services certified by Microsoft to run on Azure. The Azure Marketplace supports offers that include Virtual Machines, Developer Services, and Solution Templates.

The Azure Marketplace provides your solutions exposure thru the marketplace page and the listings deeply integrated with the Azure Portal. For example, HDInsight Applications are integrated into the steps users take to deploy an HDInsight cluster (so users could layer on your application atop their HDInsight cluster), but are also available via the Marketplace blade of the Azure Portal.

The process of getting your solution listed in the Azure Marketplace is referred to getting Microsoft Azure Certified—this comes with benefits, many of which includes select benefits from the Silver Cloud Competency from the Microsoft Partner Network

CERTIFY APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES

Solutions sold in the Azure Marketplace must be Microsoft Azure Certified. This provides assurance to your customers that your offers have been tested for usability, readiness, and compatibility with Azure.

- Access broad-reaching Microsoft marketing channels, and receive co-marketing assistance and promotion outside of your Azure Marketplace listing.
- Leverage technical and business planning support to help you maximize your ROI.
- Utilize a self-service portal that contains ready-to-use marketing resources to enhance your communications and messaging.
- Take advantage of resources such as the Sales Accelerator Toolkit and credits for display and search advertising to help drive customer adoption.

Develop Your Sales Channel

Resources



Develop your sales channel

With the Azure Marketplace, you can easily bring your solutions to market and build a sales channel that connects you to Azure customers and channel partners around the world.

- Merchandise your solutions to our enterprise customer base, including 80% of Fortune 500 companies and many of the world's leading developers.
- Instantly access 87 global markets and sell your solutions in 60 local currencies.
- Integrate your offer into Azure, simplifying customer deployment and delivering a more consistent user experience.
- Maximize customer awareness by having your solutions accessed online at azure.microsoft.com/marketplace or directly in the Azure management portal.

OPERATIONALIZE

The Azure Marketplace handles metering, billing, reporting and management of customer accounts, freeing you to focus on product development and marketing.

- Streamline customer acquisitions by enabling customers to easily search, purchase, and deploy your solutions on Azure.
- Utilize marketplace features such as free trials to help generate leads and increase customer adoption.
- Take advantage of flexible pricing models that align to your business model and strategy.
- Simplify billing and reduce friction by having Microsoft manage billing for Azure Marketplace purchases.

MICROSOFT PARTNER NETWORK PINPOINT

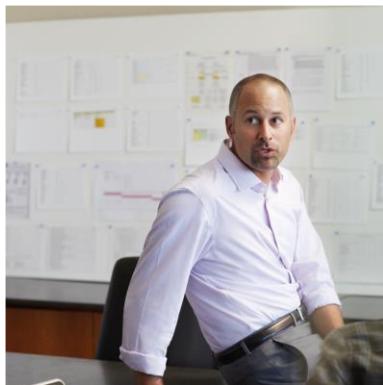
List your company on Pinpoint, an open commerce platform for Microsoft partners, to market and sell technology and Cloud solutions and to increase your pipeline of qualified leads.

APPSOURCE

AppSource provides a marketplace for your Software-as-a-Service offerings. AppSource offerings range from complete applications to add-ins and extensions to Microsoft and Partner solutions. It is intended as showcase for your apps that work with Azure, PowerBI, Dynamics, Office and more. Customers can try out your app in a self-service fashion or enable them to request a trial from you. As a Partner, you can also be listed in the Partner listing to market your practice services to customers.

Implement Marketplace Integration

Resources



RESOURCES

- [How to Publish an Offer in the Azure Marketplace](#)
- [AppSource Review Guidelines](#)
- [Get Listed on PowerBI.com](#)

Increase your visibility

Once you identify and select the Marketplace to target for promoting or selling your services.

Each marketplace is different in their approach to performing the integration, but you should be aware that there are generally these phases you will need to follow:

1. Create the commercials: This involves putting the basic contracts in place, and providing information about your company and the descriptions about the product or service you will list. In some cases, you may first need to wait to be approved and on-boarded before you can proceed.
2. Package and Integrate: In this technical step, you work with the marketplace API's to integrate your offering. At this stage you are typically able to test your marketplace offering and make sure everything works as expected and looks correct.
3. Submit for Approval: Once your integration is complete, you will need to submit your integrated package for review, before it is made publicly available. You may need to iterate on this step as you get your package compliant with the marketplace requirements.
4. Share: A Marketplace can help increase your visibility, but without additional effort to call attention to your listing in the marketplace, customers finding you in the most popular marketplaces may be like them finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. Make sure you publicize this offer, list it on your website, and ensure that your existing customers are all aware of it so they can help point others to it.

Define and Implement Intellectual Property Resources



RESOURCES

- [Building IP to Drive Margins](#)
- [Create Stickiness with IP](#)

Implementing IP in your Cloud Offerings

Tips to get you started with productizing your IP and going to market:

1. **Define your solution.** When I ask partners how they determined what IP they were going to build, I often get the same answer, which is that they realized most of their customers were asking for the same thing or something very similar, and rather than continuing to do high-cost custom work for every customer, they decided to productize what their customers were asking for. Bring your sales, marketing, technical and delivery teams together to brainstorm and define what your solution will look like.
2. **Determine what will differentiate your solution** from others in the market. It is really important that you think about your differentiation strategy. What is going to make your solution better than other solutions like it in the industry?
3. **Maintain rights to the IP.** As partners make the transition from project or custom services to packaged IP, it is critical they revise the agreements they sign with their customers to enable the partner to maintain the IP rights to the solutions.
4. **Establish a recurring revenue model.** The beauty of deploying IP in the cloud space is that you can light up the recurring revenue model which will have a positive impact on the valuation of your business and will help even out your cash flows in the future.
5. **Consider your channel strategy.** One of the advantages of productizing your IP is that it opens up a lot of doors to sell your solution through channel partners.

Here are a couple of resources for an even deeper dive into cloud profitability:

Check out Blue Rooster's [story](#) on how they transitioned from a project services to an IP focused partner in just nine months!

Visit the [profitability scenario content](#) to learn more about the opportunities to build IP on top of the 20 most common Microsoft cloud services/scenarios.

Grow Technical Skills by Contributing to the Community

Blogging, Meetups and More!

Contributing to the technical community has the benefit of growing credibility with the outside world for your practice. It has the side benefit of strengthening the technical acumen of your delivery team by having them focus on a specific subject for a public facing deliverable. Below are some suggested options to get started.

BLOGGING

Technical blogging is a great way of increasing the skills of your technical team as well as growing stature in the community at large with your organization. Blog posts should be well thought out and simple to digest. Visual aids such as diagrams or nicely formatted source code snippets go a long way towards readability.

MEETUPS AND USER GROUPS

Speaking at user groups is another valuable tool to increase the skills of your team. Similar to blog posts its great practice for honing vital communication skills with your team as well as a great opportunity to dig deeper into a specific subject related to your practice.

GLOBAL AZURE BOOTCAMP

Each user group will organize their own one day deep dive class on Azure the way they see fit and how it works for their members. The result is that thousands of people get to learn about Azure and join online under the social hashtag #GlobalAzure! This is a great opportunity to attend, participate as a speaker (reach out to your local organizer to see how you can help) or you can host your own. For more information <http://global.azurebootcamp.net/>.

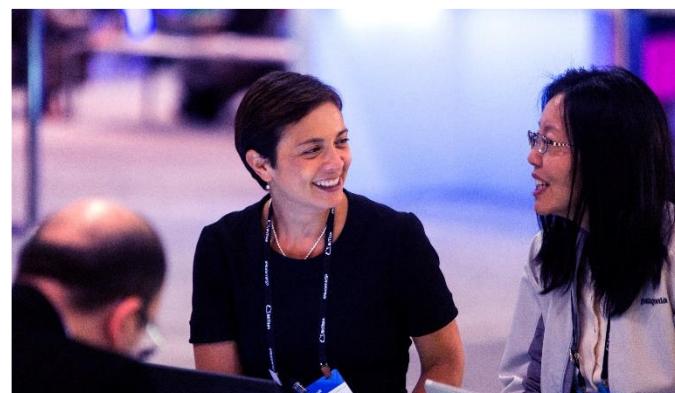
WEBINARS

Webinars are another resource to extend your teams skills. Similar in scope to speaking at a meetup or user group the webinar allows a much broader reach as attendees from all over the globe can attend.

MICROSOFT MVP COMMUNITY

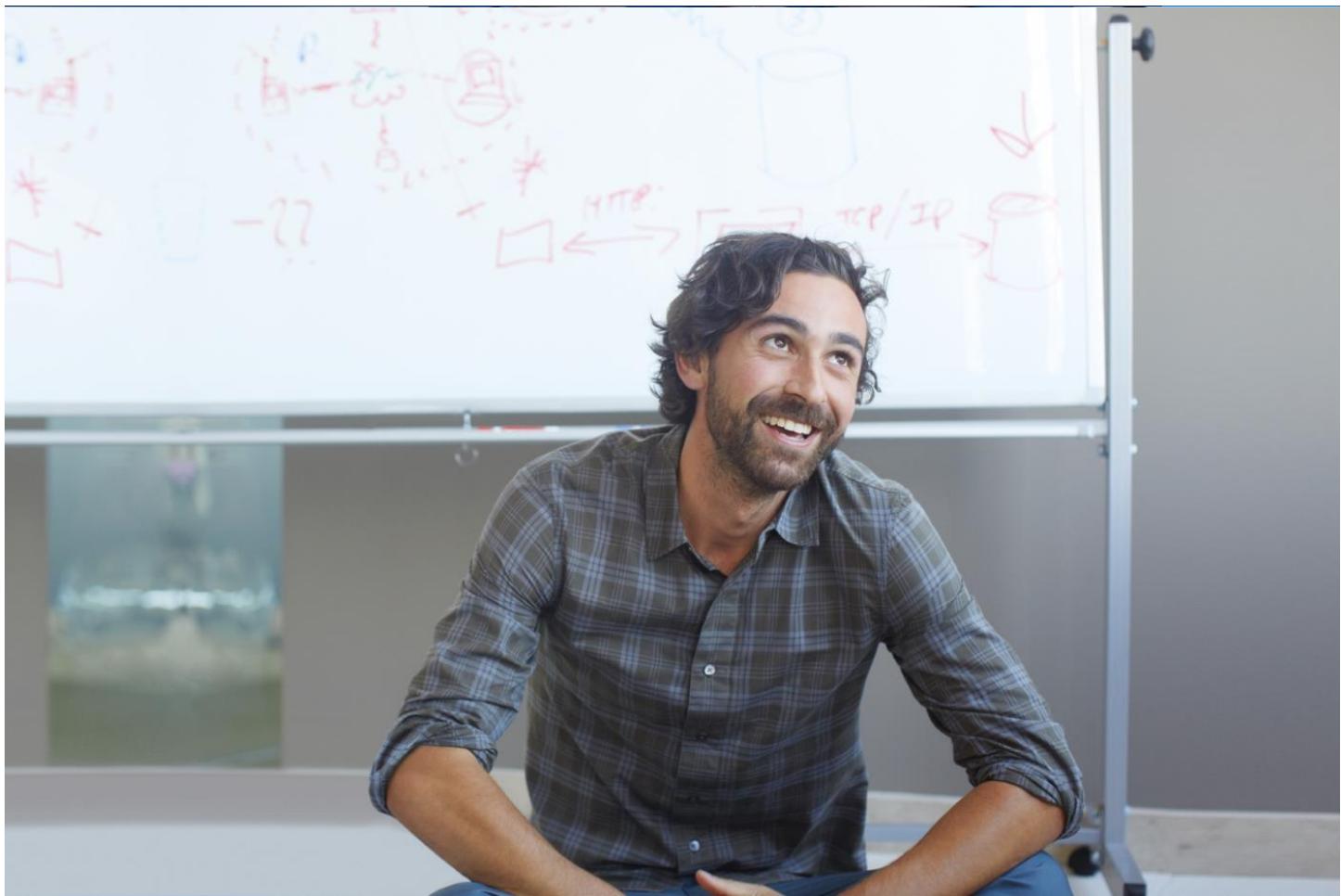
For more than two decades, the Microsoft MVP Award is our way of saying "Thanks!" to outstanding community leaders. The contributions MVPs make to the community, ranging from speaking engagements, to social media posts, to writing books, to helping others in online communities, have incredible impact. Among other benefits, MVPs get early access to Microsoft products, direct communication channels with our product teams and are invited to the Global MVP Summit, an exclusive annual event hosted in our global HQ in Redmond. They also have a very close relationship with the local Microsoft teams in their area, who are there to support and empower MVPs to address needs and opportunities in the local ecosystem.

Contributing to the Azure community not only helps the reputation of your practice it can also hone much needed skills for your delivery team.



RESOURCES

- [Global Azure Boot Camp](#)
- [Microsoft MVP Site](#)



Go to Market

Cloud Infrastructure & Management
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



Create Engagement Checklists & Templates

Standardize Customer Engagement

Repeatable processes make for profitable practices, use the following example checklist to kick start your own checklist to use when executing a new engagement.

- Initial requirements meeting
- Identify product owner/manager(s)
- Follow-up meeting to clarify and establish next steps
- Discuss MVP (minimal viable product) criteria
- Establish development process (Agile, Scrum, etc.)
- Identify milestones and tasks; share with customer
- Provide cost estimates for development, cloud services, and ongoing maintenance/support
- Address customer objections to proposed technology and services
- Acquire data (or sample of data) for initial data assessment and proof of concept development.
- Host project artifacts (issues, code, etc.) to share with internal team and customer (e.g. Visual Studio Team Services)
- Follow up with customer and provide status/demos on a regular basis (e.g. 2 week sprint)
- Final handoff to customer
- Conduct project debrief with customer
- Conduct internal project post-mortem

HYBRID PRACTICE ACCELERATORS

The Cloud Infrastructure and Management Practice Accelerators are designed to help you build your Hybrid Cloud practice based on Microsoft Cloud Infrastructure Platform: Microsoft Azure, Microsoft Azure Stack, Windows Server, and System Center.

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure Deployment Planning Services for Public Cloud](#)
- ➔ [Hybrid Practice Accelerators](#)

Executive Summary

Go to Market

In the previous section, we reviewed how you should hire, train and equip your staff, as well as prepare the operations side of your practice by providing the right systems, tools and materials.

In this section, we will help you in going to market by providing guidance on how to define your sales process, and launch your digital marketing activities. A key point we make here is to consider leading both your sales and marketing efforts with the notion of providing digital transformation to your customers.

With your awareness activities in place you are well positioned to engage with customers and prospects. We will explore how you should effectively represent your practice through a well-thought out website and social media interactions, expand your brand awareness and find new customers or new talent by building a community strategy that includes attending meetups and conferences, writing publications and blog posts. To make things easier, we provide you with a recommended bill of materials you should create as a part of your go to market efforts.

In this section, we provide guidance to help you find your first customer, as well as how you can continue the on-going process



of acquiring customers. You will learn how you can create initial engagements with customers by providing services like cloud readiness assessments or a cloud migration plan.

As you start to acquire customers, you should be concerned about how you create long term customer relationships that provide stable revenue for your practice. We provide guidance on how you can learn to perform nurture marketing that helps keep you top of mind with your customer as a valuable partner in their business.

Measuring your customer adoption and engagement becomes important the moment you start to acquire customers, and we conclude this section with some guidance on how you can measure engagement by leveraging a marketing automation platform.

Top 5 things to do

Get your practice off the ground by finding new customers, but don't stop there. Build lasting relationships with your customers by nurturing and investing in them. These are the top 5 things you should do to keep the momentum going.

- Define your customer's buying journey
- Launch a modern website and digital marketing activities
- Find your first customer through Microsoft's resources and nurture the relationship
- Build a presence in the community
- Invest in marketing automation tools

Define your sales Process

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Planning your Cloud Business Transition: Sales Video](#)
- [Strategies for Unlocking Digital Transformation](#)
- [Customer Journey](#)

Plan your customer's journey to buying

Selling is the business. Until you close a sale, you don't have capital to work with, customers to serve or a business to consider. Microsoft knows it is critical to get your sales and marketing in alignment and ready to represent your Azure Practice.

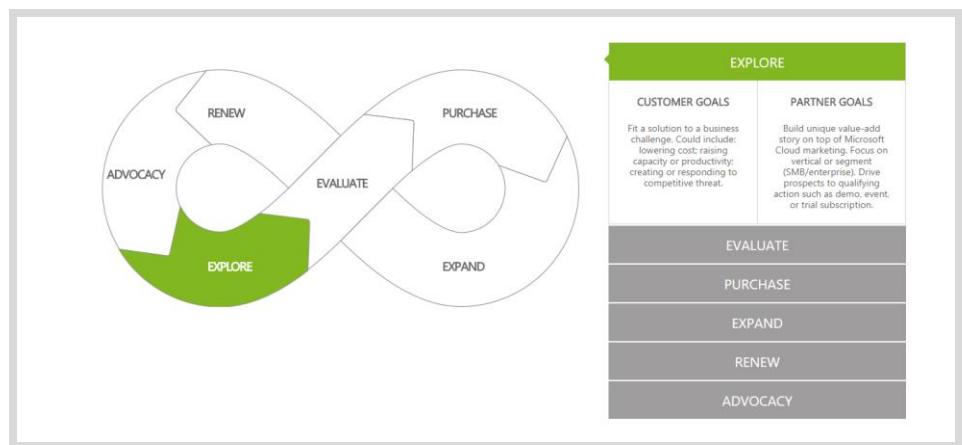
Define your value proposition and tell the world why to do business with your company.

Everyone in the company is in marketing. Make sure they are prepared to represent the firm with key consistent messages.

Every unique individual has a journey to go through to buy from you. And today's buyer is exceptionally educated with regards to their needs. The secret is knowing where the customer is in the journey and providing education that meets the need.

As many of your customers embark on their own digital transformation journeys, keep the principle of customer lifetime value in mind. In other words, focus not only on the initial sale, but on growing the average revenue from a customer over the typical lifetime of their relationship with you.

The customer journey to buying is a multi-step process: Explore, Evaluate, Purchase, Expand, Renew and Advocacy. Learn much more about Customer Journeys [here](#).



See also [Engaging with Customers](#) in this playbook.

Launch Digital Marketing Activities

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Smart Partner Marketing](#)
- [Search Engine Optimization Video](#)
- [How to Build a Website](#)
- [Customer Journey](#)
- [MPN Marketing Resources](#)
- [Building a Digital Marketing Solution on Azure](#)

Your website is all-important.

Microsoft understands the need for you to build compelling content and lead capture mechanisms mapped to the customer journey. Ensure tracking is in place to track leads and pull them into your CRM for lead tracking and scoring.

To be discoverable in the major search engines, you will need to spend time on Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Additionally, you will want to carve out your keyword niche, by identifying those strong keywords that customers are likely to use to search for your services and ensure these are the words that are consistently used throughout your website. With a keyword list in mind, you should also consider making targeted ad buys on the major search engines. This is Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and along with SEO represents the minimum you need to be nurturing for your website to succeed.

A web site is still where customers most frequently go to learn about your business, products, and services. The Smart Partner Marketing website from Microsoft offers many resources on building an effective web site.

A cornerstone of demand generation is content ... effective content.

You must understand your customers through research and experience. You watch your customers and learn about what compels them and when they are ready to make a positive move towards buying. Content should be made available for each stage of the customer journey. For instance, content for early interest in Azure would be very educational and level 100. You might also want to create early content that reflects the business value of Azure. At level 200 you'd have case studies, feature/benefit drill downs and more advanced content. At the point a prospect is ready for the purchase, your content should be very directive. You should lead customers to the buying process. You should connect the prospect with someone who can close the sale – direct or through another partner.

The most effective content marketers are dedicated to the task. Content decisions and creation should be led by an assigned team that understands the key target audiences. Don't make content an afterthought or small component of your strategic marketing plans. Ensure the right authors are creating pertinent information for every stage of the buying process.

Engaging with your customers means finding out where they spend their time. It is learning where they gather information. Who do they listen to? A few of these "places" are covered here. Keep in mind there are many other places/online locations users gather.

Digital Marketing Services

Resources



RESOURCES

- [DigitalStride](#)
- [DigitalStride Registration Form](#)

DigitalStride

Microsoft DigitalStride offers partners a packaged set of digital marketing services at a low price, including Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which can help potential customers find their website at a lower cost per acquisition.

The services also include the improvement of a partner's Microsoft Referrals profile helping to generate new cloud opportunities and more business transactions. Some of the additional benefits of developing your digital marketing capability through DigitalStride include:

- Driving net new revenue at a fraction of the cost of adding a new sales representative
- Building personalized contact points with potential customers
- Easily monitoring the sales pipeline and measuring return on investment (ROI)
- Taking advantage of a more cost effective way of reaching customers compared to traditional media
- Deliver content syndication and the ability to dynamically update content based on new campaigns and launches

DIGITALSTRIDE BENEFITS

- Assigned agency project manager
- 6 hours of consulting
- Tailor-made baseline reports
- Monthly reporting updates
- Digital IQ assessment
- Search engine optimization (SEO) review
- Website optimization score
- Social presence check
- Referrals presence check
- Search engine optimization
- Implementation of SEO recommendations
- Real-time online SEO dashboard
- Improvement of search engine friendliness, link popularity, and keyword ranking
- Content syndication
- Deployment of Microsoft Office 365 microsite
- Microsite includes try/buy links along with offer banner
- Referrals optimization
- Agency-led optimization of Microsoft Referrals profile

Digital Transformation with Azure

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Digital Transformation Partner Site](#)
- [Digital Transformation Blog](#)
- [Account Based Marketing](#)
- [Digital Transformation at the World Economic Forum](#)
- [Digital Transformation Stories](#)

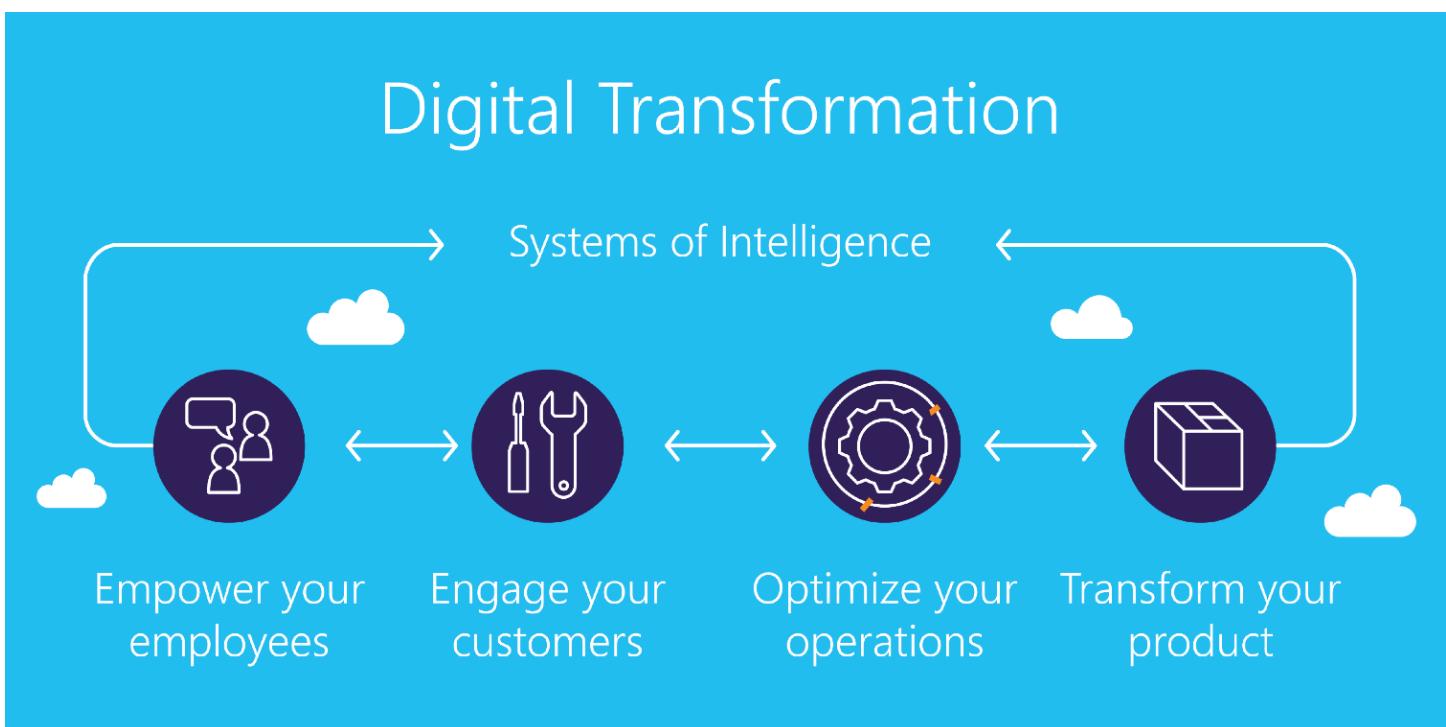
Leading with Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a broad, expansive concept with many nuances that seem to pop up everywhere.

Many enterprise companies (such as Microsoft, Kaiser Permanente, and Hewlett Packard) are advocates and proprietors of digital transformation. However, increasingly so are smaller, scrappy startups, ISVs, and partners just like you. With digital transformation, smaller businesses are now better able to identify a customer need and use scalable technology to help new customers in amazing ways.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION INCLUDE:

1. Empower your employees: Employees need to be empowered to do their best work from anywhere, at any time, on any device. I challenge you to think about how you can empower your customers with the technology you use every day to focus more on business growth and spend fewer hours on less valuable business operations. Keep in mind that with this new ability to access information from anywhere, protecting your data, wherever it goes, also becomes a priority.
2. Engage your customers: Customers are expecting new levels of connections with the businesses they partner with and purchase from. In this digital age, customers are experiencing deep personalization and interactive marketing, as well as enjoying the ability to connect with businesses easier than ever before. With constant connection and personalized interactions, you can build loyal, profitable customer-relationships. By automating these processes, you can further boost your sales and service teams' productivity.
3. Optimize your operations: Optimizing your business process often starts with your IT infrastructure. Once you've divvied up what information you can store where, you can greatly reduce the cost and complexity of IT management with new resources like the cloud. With data backup and recovery, you can be back online in minutes without losing the time and effort you had put into your work. Finally, you can reduce risk, with easier compliance, if you choose solutions which prioritize safeguarding your business.
4. Transform your product: If you innovate with agility, and are open to the consistent changes we see in today's business landscape, you will be able to adapt quickly to changing business needs. For example, with new data analytics services, you can turn your data into a business asset. Data protection and security is tied to all four pillars and is critical to reinforce, and sometimes lead with, when having a customer conversation around these messages. This is all about making sure that your data is protected everywhere on all devices, that efficient and effective data backup and recovery solutions can bring you back online in minutes, and risk is mitigated with easier compliance services and solutions..



How Enterprises Make this Work

Digital Transformation

Essentially, digital transformation implies leveraging new tools and technologies to change the way your business functions, from product development to customer interaction. In the Digital Transformation panel at the 2016 World Economic forum chairmen and CEO's (from HP, Kaiser Permanente, Alcoa, Schneider Electric and Salesforce) discussed what digital transformation has meant for them, the challenges they've faced, and advice to other companies about executing their own digital transformations.

Their stories span from innovation in building and quality testing products, to new ways of interacting with their customers. Meg Whitman, CEO of HP, discussed moving to the cloud as being a key step in their digital transformation and has helped them keep up with the fast-paced tech market. Bernard Tyson, Chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente, mentioned a new patient-relationships strategy called "Care Anywhere", which allows patients to connect with clinicians digitally. The opportunities are truly endless.

“

If we...

”

- Stand proudly on the strength of the Microsoft Platform
- Follow the vision of CEO Satya Nadella “To Empower All Stakeholders”

Then, together with integrity, we will transform the cloud possibilities into unlimited realities for work, home, worship and play and together we will build a better world for All Stakeholders.

Richard Jorgensen PhD (hc)

The AwareComm Vision®, The Partners United Reality

Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Account based marketing is the technique of marketing to each customer as a separate entity.

You do not use a standard marketing plan for all customers. Instead you create a unique plan for each enterprise to best capture their attention and move them through the sales cycle.

It is critical to develop a profile for each of your enterprise accounts so that you can conduct ABM. Begin with [The 4 Steps to Creating your Ideal Customer Profile](#) and [Creating your Targeted Accounts List](#) with Sales and Marketing.

Customers want to feel that you are uniquely suited to help them achieve their business goals, and using an ideal customer profile (ICP) will help to ensure your messages resonate more effectively. Tailoring your unique [value proposition](#), targeted marketing strategy and ongoing support around a customer profile that you are ideally suited to serve will ensure that you not only attract customers that you are better equipped to support, but that you also retain and grow those customers into larger accounts. To get you started, here are four steps to help you create your ICP:

Self-Evaluate

Your organization's self-evaluation should be grounded in realism. Your ideal customer should be perfect for who your company is now, not who you'd like it to be. You might be amazing at helping small retail shops improve their point-of-sale technology and manage their ongoing IT needs. In that case, you probably shouldn't list Wal-Mart as your ideal customer. Your success stories from the past won't resonate well and you'll be setting yourself up for pain or even failure if you do manage to land a customer outside of your ideal profile spectrum. With that in mind, your ideal customer should also have the capacity to grow along with your company's progress. Maybe your ideal customers now are smaller businesses that have high growth potential to mature as your service offerings and support capabilities also grow.

These are a few specific things you identify about your company as you define your ideal customer:

Baseline: We all want to be bold and visionary and so it's easy for us to talk about where we see ourselves going in the future. However, an honest and clear depiction of where your company stands now will help you find customers who can help you reach your goals. Make sure you know what metrics you will be using to measure progress along the way. You may want to target IT decision makers, but how are you measuring that those are the folks receiving your message? Make sure that prospects from the right verticals or industries are coming to your site and that the content you present to them (and the tone of your messaging) is appropriate to drive the desired behavior.

Current Capabilities: Again, this is all about realism. It's important to be realistic about what can be done to meet potential customers' needs. Here is where you consider the maturity of your product, the experience and size of your team, your technology, and every other aspect which dictates what your company CAN do. If you go after very large accounts, are you set up to market to and reach the large number of stakeholders involved in the buying process? Are you ready to work with large procurement departments and potentially have to customize your offerings to meet those customers' demands? Or are small and midmarket customers in a certain geography a better fit for your company? Consider these points carefully to help ensure your marketing pulls in customers as close as possible to the profile you outlined.

Adaptability: With your company's current resources and experience, are you able to meet a customer's needs as they develop and grow? At what stage in your company's life cycle will your relationship most benefit them? At what point, will your product or service no longer be capable of supporting them? For example, one company I was working with took on a large nationwide client, only to find that having to be on-site in multiple locations across the country stretched their staff too thin and was costing them more than expected, stunting growth within other accounts. After opening a second office in Boston before establishing the core capabilities that made their first office successful, they soon realized this customer was outside of their ideal customer spectrum and mutually cut ties, but not before experiencing a costly lesson in the importance of having a clearly defined ICP.

Get to know your existing customers

It's possible that you've already found some ideal clients that you can learn from. Take an inventory of their demographics (industry, geography, company revenue, etc.) and decision maker psychographics (personality, how they make decisions, preferences). Take note of how you acquired those customers and ask them why they chose you. Use that information to market to more customers like them. Incentivize those existing happy customers to write a review of why they enjoy working with you on your website and other sites that potential customers frequent. Finally, document the challenges you solve for your current customers and use those stories across your channel strategies.

Use predictive analytics

Does just reading the phrase predictive analytics scare you? Don't let it!

Mick Hollison, CMO at [InsideSales.com](#) asks you to "imagine the ability to accurately predict not only who your best leads and prospects will be, but when and how will be the most effective ways to reach them and then to engage. This ability alone will empower marketers and salespeople in the coming seasons to be radically more productive and profitable than they are today. Used properly, it can transform the science of sales forecasting from a dart-throwing exercise to a precision instrument."

With predictive analytics tools now more pervasive and affordable, they can be of great support to your ICP selection process. Our goal is to learn more about our current key accounts, better understand why they bought from us, and find more customers who have similar attributes.

Most predictive analytics solutions in the market have features that help you with look-alike modeling to identify target accounts. These then help you target the few accounts that will potentially drive the largest part of your revenue. Microsoft's internal SMB marketing team uses these tools to extract data related to current top customers from CRM and marketing automation solutions. This information can then be combined with external data sources about customers to construct an "Existing ICP" data model. You can use this model with a host of providers to then run your "Existing ICP" data model against prospects already in your CRM database, social media analytics sources and all other 3rd party resources you can get your hands on. This then gives you great insights and ability to identify the accounts that resemble your existing ICP.

Dig deeper

Once you have defined a few different situations, and have a good understanding about where you and your current customers stand, you can begin conceptualizing your ICP. Here are some additional questions, traits and scenarios that will help you identify the ICP when you are engaging with potential leads:

- What is the customer challenge or pain point that needs solving?
- Are they aware of that challenge; are they actively searching for solutions?
- Do they have a sense of urgency about solving the challenge?
- Does your solution and its current capabilities solve the pain points?
- Does your solution or service integrate with their existing investments?
- Do you understand their procurement process; does it match with how you sell?
- Can you offer the support that they are expecting both while onboarding and on an ongoing basis?
- Do you have access to the decision makers in the customer organization?

Doing this exercise will give your team a good idea about where you are and where you want to go, as well as where your ideal customers are and where they are willing to go. Knowing the ins and outs of who you are targeting, where you can find them and they can best benefit from your offering will make fleshing out marketing campaigns and knowing who to ask for referrals from much easier.

Just as you expect your business to change and grow, your ideal customer profile must remain equally agile. After you think you've identified your ICP, be sure to occasionally pull metrics to reassess your course of action if needed. By treating your ICP as a living, breathing prototype, your business (a living, breathing entity itself) will remain healthy and profitable.

[Blog post](#) by Alex Sessoms Microsoft Senior Partner Marketing Manager on 26 July 2016

RESOURCES

- ➔ [The 4 Steps to Creating Your Ideal Customer Profile](#)
- ➔ [Creating Your Targeted Accounts List](#)
- ➔ [Making Sense of Digital Transformation](#)

Engage with Customers & Prospects

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Meetup.com](#)
- [Microsoft Envision](#)
- [Microsoft Ignite](#)
- [Microsoft Build](#)
- [Microsoft Inspire](#)
- [Azure Blog](#)
- [ZDNET Microsoft Blog](#)
- [Satya Nadella Twitter](#)

Getting in Front of the Customer

Meetups are generally more local and smaller sized groups. They come together around a common interest and regularly talk. They usually meet in person in a limited geographic area. A great example of a meetup is the Boston Azure Meetup. You can learn about Azure with like-minded peers.

This meetup is your opportunity to speak to an audience that wants to hear your message. Do you have a recent case study you can discuss? Maybe you've had a breakthrough with the technology? Maybe you are just good at talking about the benefits of Azure. Be sure to understand the nature of the meetup – is it technical or business focused? This obviously determines the content you will deliver.

More than just getting in front of perspective customers, meetups are a great place to practice your public speaking. Whether you have little experience, or you just want to try out some new ideas, meetups are very forgiving venues.

MAXIMIZING YOUR TIME AT CONFERENCES

Conferences are a mainstay of the technology industry. Look at Microsoft's technical events – Ignite, Build, etc. all provide a place for learning. Getting the opportunity to speak at such a conference is very difficult. However, you can sponsor a booth, signage, event, etc. at the conference. This is your opportunity to reach a captive audience interested in what you are "selling". Make sure you have a messaging framework for all representatives of your company for the event. Everyone should be telling the same story about your offerings. This helps build brand awareness.

There are opportunities to do side types of sessions – outside the main stages. You should look at those first to get started with the event. Many times, they have chalk-talks or industry birds-of-a-feather type activities to exchange knowledge. Again, you build awareness and you might also walk away with a new customer.

THE WRITTEN WORD STILL MATTERS.

Once the lifeblood of the technology industry, publications take a backseat to bloggers and tweeters these days. With so much information to consume, a reader must decide where to spend time gathering information. Printed publications are all but obsolete. You will find a few, but most are on line today. This makes the demand for more frequent new information even more important. This opens doors for you to write. You can contact a publication and find out what they look for in submissions. Rarely do you get paid for this work. Instead you are doing it to build awareness of you and your product or service. You need to consider your blog a publication today – a very critical one. Blogs are not only followed by individuals but also picked up by reporters. Your blog posts are today's articles. Even your very short tweets can lead to more emphasis on your topic. Anything written – online or off – today is a publication.

Engage with Customers & Prospects

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Channel 9](#)
- [.NET Rocks](#)
- [Microsoft Cloud Show](#)
- [Microsoft Office Webcasts](#)

Content is King

Webinars and podcasts are nothing new. They are however more sophisticated. The technology to make them happen for the end user is simple to use. The presenter has little to learn to be successful. It is very different presenting via webinars and podcasts instead of in front of people. It takes some practice to get good. Don't forget to allow that preparation time.

Webinars vary in length. The best webcasts are far less than 30 minutes. If appropriate for the audience and the tools, allow time for live questions and answers. Always record your presentation for future viewing. Make the most of the time by putting your webcast on your web site, YouTube and other venues that invite this type of content. You can also share a link to a short webcast to a prospective customer email.

Video content marketing in general is very popular. Every marketing plan should include a provision for video. In less than a minute you can deliver powerful messages that keep the audience attention. Today's viewer is used to small interactive chunks of information. They need to get the point very quickly, leave a positive impression and then move on. And hopefully moving on means buying your product.

Engage with Customers and Prospects

Bill of Material (BOM)

Customer-Ready Material for your Offering

A BOM is a critical part of launching your cloud practice, new offerings, IP, etc. You need to carefully think through what your customer requirements will be in terms of information to make the purchasing decision. The BOM can vary widely. And it is often necessary to create multiple BOMs – for internal audiences as well as customers. Microsoft recommends you be prepared with the following items in your customer BOM. This material should be developed largely by the Product Management team with assistance from Development, Sales, Support, and others. If you don't have the material below ready at launch time, it is important to ask yourself if you are ready to start talking to customers. As mentioned in other sections, information is critical today. Flashy commercials and cool videos only get you so far. Your job is to educate potential customers on the benefits of your product or service as well as how it will solve their business needs.

Suggested Bill of Material Components

- 100 level services customer ready presentation (awareness) – This presentation is largely introductory and around creating awareness. Don't underestimate the need however. You will use this 100-level deck more than you think, especially with business decision makers and business users.
- 300 level offerings customer ready presentation – The 300-level presentation is deep. Receivers of this presentation are learning not only why they need your offering, but what it is, how it is built, technology features and more. This type of presentation will often be given at a technical trade show. You can also think of this deck as the one for technical users and decision makers.
- Pitch deck for sales opportunities – This is the third presentation you will need. This is the shorter presentation of all your decks. This is the presentation you use to close the sale. The emphasis is on value proposition, pricing, customer support post-sale and client success.
- Demo - professionally recorded and scripted for others to present – A demo is critical. You need to create a recorded demo that can be watched from a web site, YouTube, a trade show, etc. You also need to script the demo so anyone giving it can be on task with the messaging.
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ) - everything you can think of that will be asked by customers – A FAQ is meant to be an internal document. All the information in the document is meant to be spoken to prospects and customers. This is a collection of information you have learned over time might be of interest to the

customer. You want everyone in the company to have the same answer to product and other company questions.

- Positioning and messaging about offerings including value proposition – A messaging document ensures everyone is speaking the same messages to the customer. This written document would not be handed to the customer. All the language in the document is customer ready and used in marketing vehicles.
- Understanding of competition and customer ready messaging – Your BOM must emphasize the competition. You must have a mapping of features in the competition versus your offering. This may or may not be customer ready. This is a decision each firm should make.
- White paper detailing services, offer, business value and technical depth – As you are offering a technical product or service, you need to explain those aspects to someone who wants to know. The white paper is a look "under the covers" at how the product or service was built, technologies uses and covering business value.
- Data sheet describing offering in concise way – The data sheet is often considered a leave behind. This is the one pager that covers quickly the facts a customer needs to decide to ask for more information.
- Company/Offering website – Websites are still the number one place people come for information on your company, management team, products and more. You need a modern web site to display your offering.
- Social media channels (and participation in channels other than your own) – Setting up social media channels cannot be overlooked. Today social media is the most influential channel for information exchange, especially technical products. You need dedicated resources to this effort and ample content to be effective.
- Videos for promoting your offering by audience viewing – Video as a marketing tool is very popular. You need up to two-minute videos that show off your product or offer. This is a selling and awareness tool.
- Creative - established look and feel for all customer material – Your company and offerings must have a similar look and feel when displayed publicly. You need professional guidance to ensure every time someone encounters your company, they are seeing the same type of look and feel.

This is just a short BOM. You can get much more detailed. This BOM will get you started in the right direction. Hiring a resource to run the marketing or working with an agency is a decision you will want to make early on. Either way, you must dedicate budget and resources to marketing and the BOM to see the success you want.

Define Technical Community Strategy

Resources



Collaborate and meet customers through by delivering workshops

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure CAT Workshop Content](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft Technology Center](#)

Engage with Workshops

Many of the partners interviewed have significant success through face-to-face customer interactions via workshops.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops typically involve high level hands-on training of either the technology or a proof of concept demonstration based on the technology geared towards your solution. These workshops allow direct discussion with business and technical decision makers that allow for deeper discussion and solution selling.

MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGY CENTERS (WHERE AVAILABLE)

Technology initiatives can transform your business, but they can also stall or end in disaster. How can you ensure your technology investments payoff by creating new businesses, enabling your employees to be more productive or open new channels to engage with your customers?

At the MTC, we will help you find the right solutions to transform your business in a mobile-first, cloud-first world. With over 40 locations around the globe, the MTCs bring together the right resources to help you explore the potential impact of cloud, mobile & social solutions to your business.

- People: The MTC staff are experts in Microsoft solutions. Their tenure in the industry ensures they will effectively guide your team to rapidly find solutions to your technology challenges.
- Partners: The MTCs have formed alliances with industry leaders who provide comprehensive resources, including hardware, software, and services to explore during your engagements.
- Place: The MTC environment provides rich interactive and immersive experiences for you to learn first-hand how Microsoft and partner technologies can help you take on your most difficult challenges. Keeping your eye on the ball while performing a deep dive on the start-up mentality to derive convergence on cross-platform integration.

Using the MTC ➔

Execute Nurture Marketing Efforts

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [MPN Marketing Resources](#)

Creating Long Term Customer Relationships

Nurture marketing means staying in front of your customer by providing them valuable content.

Nurturing customers is a must in the noisy messaging world of today. You must start with your existing customers. You must ensure they understand what they bought, how to be most successful and what other offerings you have. Nurturing new customers is equally important. You will create journeys for each type of prospect with the content that fits where they are in the buying cycle.

You create these long-term customer relationships through nurture marketing. Nurture marketing is positioning your company as an expert, delivering relevant content at the right time using tools like whitepapers, news articles, webinars, and delivering them in a structured way.

WHY NURTURE?

Simply put, nurture marketing yields significantly more leads, increased revenue and improved customer satisfaction- all things critical to growing your practice.

Up to 300%
more leads

Up to 260%
increase in
revenue

35%
improvement
in customer
retention

Invest in relationships

Nurture campaigns are a clear investment in your customers. It is a commitment to learn where they are in the buyers journey and deliver the right message when they need it. Did you know a sales rep needs to touch someone 7 times before a purchase. Most reps give up after 2-3 calls. Keep the following in mind that is true about prospects *6 months after* the prospect expressed interest:

26%

Purchased the
type of product

56%

Say they still
plan to buy

33% of them

Have budget
authorization

Nurture marketing is often associated with email marketing. It is related. However, nurturing customers is not simply sending out a generic email blast periodically. Nurturing is understanding of your customer needs and behaviors. Nurturing is ensuring the customer gets just what they need when they need it to make a buying decision in your favor.

The five keys to successfully nurture prospects are as follows:

AUTHENTICITY

- There is no substitute for knowing what it is like to stand in the shoes of your customer
- You must sound like you have true business insight
- The language you use is key
- A vertical focus is usually critical
- Get this wrong and your message will be ignored

RELEVANCE

- Speak to known business pains (as opposed to technical)
- Speak to where in the buying cycle the prospect is at

- Remain consistent to your core value proposition
- Speak to the emotional triggers (focus on the "why") including fear, gain/greed, curiosity

VARIETY

- "Feed" the prospect's hunger for information
- Find the right cadence and frequency
- Do not overwhelm or they will unsubscribe

FOLLOW-UP

- The handoff to sales is critical, but it must happen at the right time
- Track buyer engagement to determine optimum timing by monitoring the frequency of interaction and the level of interest based on lead scoring

AUTOMATION

- Timing, consistency, and frequency matter
- The only way to ensure the thoroughness of timing, consistency and frequency is with the use of marketing automation software



Engage Technical Pre-Sales in Sales Conversations

Selling is Technical

How to be sure you talk to the technical and business decision maker.

From the very start of your engagement with a prospect, you need to be aware of the need for technical pre-sales assistance. Many times, you are dealing with business decision makers during the buying cycle. In that case, you are less likely to have a need for technical assistance. However more than ever before, technical staff are a part of decision making with Azure practices. When the customer has one or more technical resources on the purchase committee, you need to engage technical pre-sales.

Your technical pre-sales staff should be very experienced users of your products and services. These employees need training or experience as a user of your products. Former support employees often make good technical pre-sales staff. The technical pre-sales staff is in place to explain technology, how it works, how it meets a business need and to answer any other questions. The business benefits can be left to the sales and marketing staff. This is where they shine. The technical staff should excel at the more complex issues that come from prospects. Technical staff should be dedicated to pre-sales. They should work together with sales efforts. One without the other cannot be effective. You need the sales staff to speak to business decision makers. Equally, you need pre-sales to answer all technical inquiries.



Examples of technical probing questions to ask during presales conversations supporting a Cloud Application Development Practice:

- Where does your data reside?
- What on-premises or cloud data stores do you currently leverage?
- For our area of interest, what is the volume of data?
- How often is it updated or is new data received?
- Is the data highly variable in schema?
- What application development and technologies are within your existing team's comfort zone?
- What application platforms would you like to target? Web, mobile, desktop, IoT, etc.
- Do you have any compliance or regulatory requirements that pertain to the handling of your data?
- Can you walk us thru the high level of where data enters your system and how it is ultimately consumed?
- Across what geographies is your data stored and from which regions is it consumed?

RESOURCE

- ➔ [Azure Briefing and Pitch Decks](#)
- ➔ [Azure Pre-Sales Resources](#)
- ➔ [Azure Training Resources](#)

Find Your Customers

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Smart Partner Marketing](#)
- [SMB Partner Insider Community](#)
- [Microsoft Community Connections](#)

Find Your First Customer

Microsoft provides these resources to help you find your first customer

The [Microsoft Partner Network](#) makes it easy for you to find professional, personalized marketing resources that will help you to market your business and find new customers. Save time, save money, and get the tools and support you need to reach your customers.

Build the foundations you need to reach your first customer by following the [Smart Partner Marketing](#) program, which provides what you need to know for marketing Microsoft solutions in a Cloud first world: assess your status, learn smart marketing principles, and execute marketing tactics.



Project LeadGen is a great way to find your first cloud customer. Project LeadGen is a comprehensive sales and marketing program to help Microsoft partners develop sales opportunities built on Microsoft cloud solutions. Utilizing key assets from [Microsoft Community Connections](#), this 5-part training series includes instructional videos, event assets and personal coaching. This program is for partners who would like to learn about Seminar Selling and how they can leverage Microsoft branding to build business leads.

Project LeadGen can be used to acquire new customers as well as address existing loyal customers. Remember informing your existing customers of new services is appreciated by your clients. Coming from a trusted source, they are more likely to show interest that leads to a sale. You can download Project LeadGen from the [SMB Partner Insider Community](#) website or [directly from here](#).

Find Your Next Customer

Keep your momentum going. There are a range of benefits to assist with your Go-To-Market activities. Here are some key resources to help you be successful.

SUCCESSFULLY DRIVE YOUR SALES AND MARKETING EFFORTS

[Campaign Finder](#) - Go to market faster, reach the right customers, and grow your profits with these customizable sales and marketing materials. Explore the latest featured campaigns or select one based on the solutions you sell to customers.

DIGITALSTRIDE

Microsoft [DigitalStride](#) offers partners a packaged set of digital marketing services at a low price, including Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which can help potential customers find their website at a lower cost per acquisition. The services also include the improvement of a partner's Microsoft Referrals profile helping to generate new cloud opportunities and more business transactions. Some of the additional benefits of developing your digital marketing capability through DigitalStride include:

- Driving net new revenue at a fraction of the cost of adding a new sales representative
- Building personalized contact points with potential customers
- Easily monitoring the sales pipeline and measuring return on investment (ROI)
- Taking advantage of a more cost effective way of reaching customers compared to traditional media
- Deliver content syndication and the ability to dynamically update content based on new campaigns and launches

WEB SYNDICATION

Keep your website up to date with customer facing dynamic content. Visit our new and improved [content syndication experience](#).

Welcome to Marketing SureStep - Marketing is like a road trip. Lots of fun and surprises, but fewer bad surprises if you have a map. A marketing plan is like that map. Our step-by-step marketing plan template helps you drive your marketing in the direction you want.

Case Study:

KLOUD

Learn how Kloud is optimizing their sales and marketing strategy to increase profitability.

Watch now

“

With Azure, our clients see an immediate ROI and business impact from technology expenditures.

”

Sam Ibrahim

VP Sales, Hanu Software



Measure Customer Adoption & Engagement

Resources



RESOURCES

- ➔ [Marketing Automation Video](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft Dynamics Marketing](#)

Measure & Track

Marketing Automation Today

Marketing automation, an essential part of your marketing strategy, refers to software platforms and technologies designed for marketing departments and organizations to more effectively market on multiple channels online (such as email, social media, websites, etc.) and automate repetitive tasks. Marketing automation is much more than just email but frequently thought of that way. Microsoft recommends you invest in marketing automation tools to effectively engage customers, nurture them through the buying process and measure/track adoption.

Investment in marketing and the use of marketing automation is pivotal to success for today's Cloud practice. Today's customer requires information and education to make an informed purchase decision. Only through nurturing your prospects and existing customers with appropriate content will you find your pipeline full.

One of the key features of marketing automation is lead scoring. This feature allows scoring or grading of leads based on their interaction with your marketing content. Your sales force can stay focused on only those prospects most likely to purchase. You can measure number of visitors, company they come from, behavior on web sites, reaction to emails and what links the prospect clicked on.

All this intelligence allows you to follow up with an informed perspective. Customers appreciate you taking the time to know what is important to them and presenting that material upon contact.

Some of the popular marketing automation platforms include [Microsoft Dynamics Marketing](#), Adobe Marketing Cloud, ClickDimensions, Marketo, Eloqua and Hubspot.

Intellectual Property

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Create Stickiness with IP](#)
- [Microsoft Partner Go to Market Team](#)

Vertical or Horizontal IP

Making money in the cloud usually has a portion of you retaining IP to drive annuity. Annuity is a key strategic component to a cloud practice.

Most IP Solutions will fall into either a Vertical or Horizontal category. Vertical IP solutions all require a knowledgeable seller, and some configuration to be done. On the Horizontal side, applications provided are industry agnostic.

DISTRIBUTION

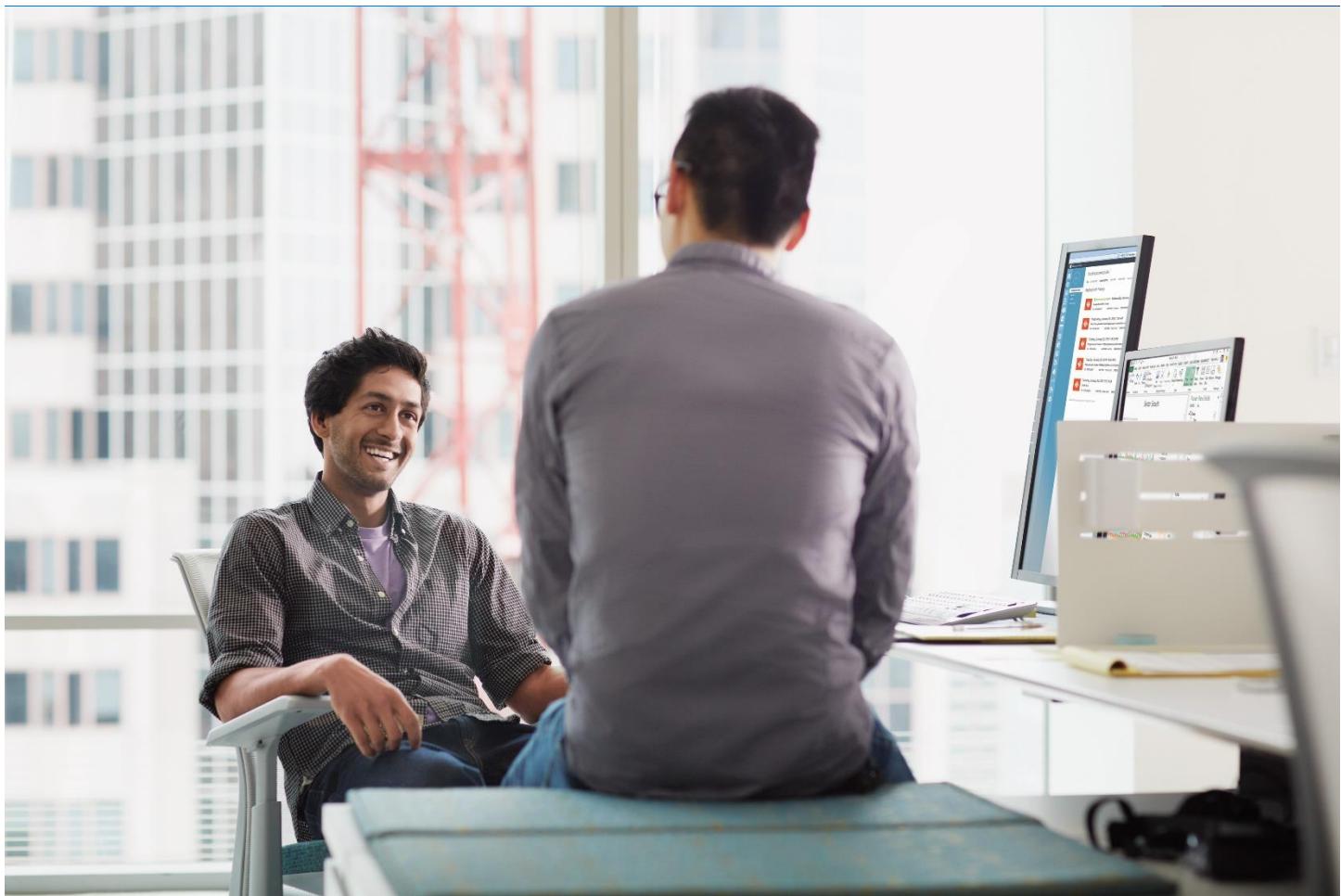
Direct to Customers

One way to get your solution out there is to go directly to the potential end customers. This is going to make the most sense for a vertical solution as potential customers are more easily defined and identified. The downside is that you are going to have to do all the selling with your own forces which may limit your ability to scale, on the other hand if your solution is complex, it may be the only way it can get sold. The upside is that you do not have to share any of your margin with anybody and you have a lot more flexibility in per deal pricing. You should think hard about the direct approach; for a few bucks of margin, you are putting the whole load on your shoulders. Most IP today has a shelf-life, so speed is more important than it has ever been. If you have a great solution, you will eventually have competition, and even a solution of significantly lesser quality can beat you with a better sales plan.

Distribution with Resellers

Distribution probably makes as much money from vendors as it does from selling the vendors' products. Expect to fund various marketing activities, and since their margins are thin, that may not be an unreasonable request. You are not doing distributors a favor by allowing them to sell your product for you at scale.

Be prepared for some significant upfront expenses to integrate with their back-end systems, and each distributor has their own systems. Distributors are probably not the starting point for most IP. Consider building a direct channel first; if partners will not resell your IP there, then all distribution will provide is a lot more partners who will not resell your IP.



Close & Execute Deals

Cloud Infrastructure & Management
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



Close & Execute Deals

Executive Summary

In previous sections in the playbook, we covered topics from how to build your practice from selecting products or services to specialize in, to building and training your team to make your ideas a reality, to bringing your special offering to market and finding and keeping great customers. What is there left to do? In this section, we cover some strategies to compel potential customers who may be sitting on the fence when considering your offer, to select your business proposition. One way to do this is by writing a winning proposal. Another way is to build a proof of concept or prototype of your product or service offering, which could help a prospect understand what it is you're offering, or to solidify their vision of what you can make possible. Microsoft is committed to helping your business grow, and provides both co-selling and co-marketing opportunities.

Your success is driven by several factors, one of which is knowing how to sell Azure solutions as part of your offering and how to negotiate deals. We provide training resources to assist with these presales efforts. Another factor is your ability to work efficiently and to use proven methods that help ensure successful delivery. To assist, we highlight the various development processes available so you can choose the right process for your practice and team. Then we discuss strategies to improve upon the requirements discovery and clarification process by holding architecture design sessions, and building proofs of concept.



It has been said that our current customers are our best customers. The transformative world of cloud brings expectations and opportunities. Expectations from your customers that you will support your IP with continued maintenance, for example. Opportunities for building your recurring revenue

by offering levels of support, aided by a Digital Partner of Record (DPoR), as another example. On the topic of support, we link to Azure-specific best practices, technical guidance, and troubleshooting resources to guide your development/architecture team, and to assist your support team in this area.

Finally, we'll talk about some Microsoft investment resources you can leverage to help fund your and your customers' journey to the cloud. Microsoft provides various funding pipelines that help accelerate Azure usage. These funds range in use from funds that can help you win the deal by delivering proof of concepts, to funds that aid you in building deployment plans, performing competitive migrations or help drive additional Azure consumption by your customer.

Top 5 things to do

Add value to your practice and turn your prospective customers into lasting ones. These are the top 5 things you should do to close and execute deals.

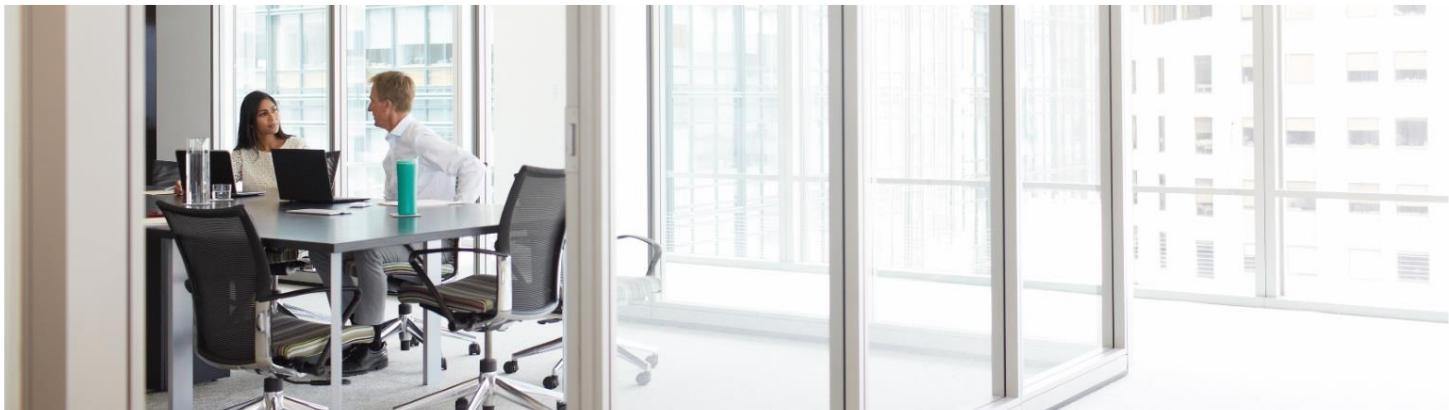
- Identify opportunities to co-sell with Microsoft
- Write a winning proposal and be prepared to negotiate
- Conduct an architecture design session and build a proof of concept
- Provide ongoing support to your customers
- Leverage Microsoft investment funds

Plan Your Customers Journey

Plan for people, process and technology

RESOURCES

→ [Customer Success Manager the New Farmer](#)



PEOPLE

- Hire a [customer success manager](#) to look after the customer's usage, look for opportunities to cross-sell and upsell new services and build plans to ensure customers are adopting and deploying the services they have purchased.
- Create train the trainer sessions with super users and IT staff. These engagements tend to increase satisfaction and adoption.
- Assign a cloud business owner on the leadership team of the customer to get all different parts of the business aligned and excited about adopting the new technology you are implementing
- Reward customer retention and loyalty – renewals, product and services attach
- Infuse a customer focused strategy and culture

PROCESS

- Understand your customer's business pains and needs to drive usage by helping them solve those business pains.
- Sell it right and take a staged approach to cloud deployment to increase adoption rates.
- Build a customer adoption plan that includes goals, expected outcomes, adoption metrics and rollout projects.
- Add managed services to your offering and become your customer's outsourced IT department.
- Increase customer value by identifying upsell and/or cross-sell opportunities and next logical purchases. Leverage Microsoft cloud roadmap to introduce new opportunities.

TECHNOLOGY

- Deploy CRM Online to manage and track your customer relationships and opportunities. Leverage your internal use rights!
- Build an adoption focused portal. Leverage Microsoft resource sites such as IT Showcase and FastTrack as a source for adoption focused content, training videos and email templates.
- Establish yourself as Partner of Record and leverage active usage and consumption data in the Cloud Services Partner Dashboard to understand your customers' usage and where incremental support is needed to drive adoption.
- Leverage 3rd party tools to streamline and automate deployment and adoption.
- Measure customer ROI and satisfaction – how much you have saved your customer, what benefits they have received.

Develop Proposal

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Proposal Template](#)
- [Million Dollar Consulting](#)
- [Technical Presales Assistance](#)
- [Submit Advisory Request](#)

Write winning proposals

Customer proposals are a cornerstone of your Azure Practice. You must put together a compilation of information and data compelling enough to move your prospect to a sale. When you get to the proposal stage, you should be very well poised to close the business.

When writing a proposal, there are a few key things to keep in mind. First, you should have already discussed what you are proposing with the customer—never rely on a proposal for negotiation. Second, write your proposal so that the customer is provided a choice of “YES’s”. After reading your proposal the customer has multiple paths to move forward, and the path to not moving forward is not attractive. Third, structure your proposal so that the material that is most readily agreed to comes first then gradually layer in the items that might introduce friction. A simple example of this is—do not put the proposal fee or estimate at the beginning.

A [proposal template](#) is available for use with your practice. For more suggestions on writing successful proposals, see the book *Million Dollar Consulting: The professional’s guide to growing a practice*.

During your pre-sales process, note that Microsoft has resources to assist you. Gain a competitive advantage to win more deals by connecting with Microsoft experts for personalized remote technical assistance during the presales phase to help you position Microsoft solutions, overcome customer objections, demonstrate the value of solutions, and present solutions to your prospective customers, including:

- Proof-of-concept guidance
- Business value proposition
- Competitive assistance
- Feature overview and comparison guidance
- Request for proposal (RFP) questions
- Technical licensing recommendations

For a request outside of the qualified Technical Presales Assistance core benefit, partner advisory hours are deducted from benefits.

Negotiate and Close Deals

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Partner University Programs & Training](#)
- [Technical Presales and Deployment Training](#)
- [Partner Enablement Blog](#)
- [MPN Learning Paths](#)
- [Video: Win More Deals](#)

Be on point with Azure Sales Training

As more platforms migrate to the cloud, Microsoft Partners should understand the growing opportunity for solutions built on Microsoft Azure, and how to sell them. Below are sales resources that will help you learn how to sell it and how it's licensed, and to become familiar with high level deployment considerations.

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations for self-paced training will introduce you to and deepen your understanding of Azure. You can also use the Hot Sheet to find upcoming sales training.

- [Hot Sheet Training Schedule](#)
- [Microsoft Azure, Your Customers, Your Future webcast series](#)
- [Partner Enablement Blog](#)

Be sure to take advantage of the role-play, objection handling and sales training resources available to you as a valued Microsoft Partner at the Microsoft Partner Network's [Learning Paths site](#). Also, be sure to use Microsoft Partner Technical Services in helping you with technical presales efforts- just [submit an Advisory Service Request](#) using the My Support drop down on that page.

The screenshot shows a list of seven Azure Sales Training modules:

Module	Description	Duration	Action
Azure Sales Training - Module 1 - The Cloud for Modern Business	This video provides an overview of Microsoft Azure, including key benefits, recent announcements, etc.	25m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 2 - Microsoft Azure Overview	This module provides a high-level overview of Microsoft Azure, the benefits of cloud services, and what customers can do with Azure.	4m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 3 - Microsoft Azure Sales Scenarios	This module provides an overview of customer scenarios, reasons why customers are considering Microsoft Azure, what you should sell to customers in specific situations, and how to identify opportunities.	12m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 4 - Microsoft Azure Objection Handling	This module reviews common customer questions, concerns, and objections and provides answers and responses to those objections.	10m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 5 - Microsoft Azure Pricing	This module provides an overview of Microsoft Azure pricing and licensing options.	8m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 6 - Microsoft Azure Opportunities	This module provides an overview of the business opportunity for partners related to Microsoft Azure.	8m	Add to Plan
Azure Sales Training - Module 7 - Sales Resources	This module provides an overview of resources and tools Microsoft has developed to help partners sell Microsoft Azure to their customers.	10m	Add to Plan

Pitch Perfect Conversation Checklist

Selling Azure Solutions

To be successful with selling, a Partner needs to discuss the customer's business environment and industry confidently and offer new perspectives that contribute to the unique value of the combined Microsoft and Partner solution. Below are some value tips for a pitch perfect conversation.



- Demonstrate knowledge of the customer business climate.
- Discuss the short/long-term business implications of industry trends around the cloud.
- Ask questions to validate understanding and/or uncover the account's business drivers and critical business goals.
- Ask more probing questions to fully understand the BDM's problems/needs, potential business value if problems are solved and/or implications if the problems are not solved and actions that have been taken to solve problems.
- Position the business value of the Microsoft Azure vision without immediately communicating the product/specific features.
- Explain how the end-to-end Microsoft Azure Vision can provide business value to the BDM in his/her context.
- Use competitive knowledge to position Microsoft/Partner solution strengths.
- Effectively handle BDM objections.
- Share a relevant Microsoft Azure workload story to solve business challenges and/or satisfy business needs that the BDM is facing.
- Skillfully integrate a demonstration that articulates the key elements of the solution. Demonstration should successfully integrate a demo that reinforces how it solves the commercial customers' business challenges.
- Close with appropriate next steps.

Microsoft has two Pitch Perfect courses available on Partner University

[Pitch Perfect – Microsoft Secure \(Published July 1\)](#)

[Pitch Perfect – Azure \(Published Sept 8\)](#)

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Pitch Perfect - Microsoft Secure](#)
- ➔ [Pitch Perfect - Azure](#)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTNERS

Before accessing any content, a partner must be both associated to his/her company's MPN ID and must have onboarded or logged into Partner University for the first time. The partner-facing instructions for completing both steps can be found on CloudDAM [here](#).

Deploy/Implement Solutions

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Modern Partner: Optimize Your Operations](#)

Execute Efficiently

Focus on working smarter, not harder.

Think of your projects like products on an assembly line: focus on providing your services with precision. That means using standardized, repeatable “components” and appropriate automation to streamline the processes and enhance quality. Be mindful of deploying the right skills for each task in order to maximize productivity and profitability. For example, small increments of a high cost senior resource can be spread across a number of projects to oversee complex steps and mundane tasks can be delegated to third-party tools that are readily available.

As you progress, take note of processes and methodology you could codify and repeat. Take the time to document them for review and potential implementation later. Make sure all team members always looking for ways to optimize their efforts whether by automation or process standardization.

In the heat of project delivery, be sure to minimize exceptions, and strive to deliver items repetitive work products in the same way, in all circumstances.

Finally, be willing to say no. Saying no is a reasonable response to requests that deviate from your standard solution.

Deploy/Implement Solutions

Architecture Design Session (ADS)

An architecture design session is a working session between your experts and the customer.

This intensive, two-day session delivers in-depth technical information on integrating data from across your customer's entire organization and delivering it in an analysis-ready form. Presentations, demonstrations, and whiteboard discussions are customized to address your customer's needs. In many cases, the design session is used to identify candidate proofs of concept. Here are some potential topics that are covered during an architecture design session:

- *Server topology*: To plan and deploy your customer's business productivity solution, it's necessary to understand the required server topology.
- *Integration platform*: The Azure services work seamlessly together and can also be integrated with third party and LOB applications. The ADS will endeavor to fit diverse systems together.
- *Social computing*: Companies need to leverage their employees' ability to make business connections and create, share, and evaluate content in a natural way.
- *Secure framework*: Companies can create experiences that are both user based and role based. Choose from a range of options for restricting sensitive information, and deliver the most relevant experience while meeting industry standards and enterprise security requirements.
- *Virtualization and cloud computing*: Extending your customer's enterprise by leveraging cloud resources or virtualization reduces the cost of hardware and additional resources.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- Architects
- Developers
- Test and quality assurance (QA) engineers
- Technical staff

Phases of a successful architecture design session

BEFORE THE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN SESSION

Prior to performing the architecture design session, it is important to conduct a simple session with the customer to establish the scenario. This session is oftentimes referred to as ideation or opportunity definition. The goal is to establish the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) of their needs, which can be used as a guide for the ADS, streamlining the brainstorming process, and informing the agenda and milestone goals you will bring to the session.

- Schedule a time for the design session – normally 1-2 days
- Schedule a location: ensure you have whiteboards and a projector
- Schedule resources: experts from your team, and a cross-cutting panel of technical and business stakeholders from the customer
- Build an agenda: establish milestone goals in advance so that the ADS doesn't get consumed discussing a single topic
- Prepare preliminary documentation and architectural diagrams. Even if you only have the basic building blocks, it's good to come prepared with something you can modify during or after the session

DURING THE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN SESSION

Begin by reviewing requirements with your customer. As you conduct the design session, whiteboard the requirements and proposed solutions, and arrive at a consensus for each major topic. During this time, be sure to capture photos of the whiteboard so as not to lose your notes.

There are typically the following phases during an architecture design session: Discovery, Envisioning, and Planning:

DISCOVERY

- Review the customer background and business technology strategy
- Project background and its drivers/aims
- Functional and non-functional requirements
- Usage scenarios
- Technology landscape

ENVISIONING

- Key functions and capabilities
- Components of the solution
- External connections and integration points
- Security considerations
- Abilities considerations
- Map requirements and scenarios to components

PLANNING

- Establish proof points
- Exclusions, risks, and issues
- Pre-requisites
- Deliverables
- Resources
- Escalation, communication, and long-term plans

AFTER THE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN SESSION

During the ADS, you and your customer planned a high-level architecture framework and conceptual design for a solution that addresses their organization's business goals and technical requirements. In addition to a summary of the engagement, you'll deliver information about:

- Special areas of concern to your customer's organization, such as security, compliance, and compatibility.
- Deployment scenarios that map to established deployment and practices and that cite specific examples where applicable.
- Familiarity with the Microsoft technologies proposed for the solution, in addition to any trade-offs among the differing technology options.
- The capabilities of your solution to deliver business performance on premises or in the cloud.

The outcome should be polished architecture diagrams that can be reviewed and signed off on by the customer. If one or more proof of concepts are desired, provide a plan and a timeline to deliver.

Implement Proof of Concepts

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure Deployment Planning Services for Public Cloud](#)
- [Pricing Azure Services with the Calculator](#)

Proof of Concepts

The ability to quickly provision infrastructure and managed services makes it much easier to stand up a proof of concept and use it for demonstrating a concept to key stakeholders. The acceptance criteria for a proof of concept should be chosen early and short but clearly defined milestones should lead the way to a successful proof of concept.

Some common best practices that can help you as you and your customer go through the journey of an Azure PoC.

- Start small by identifying the minimum problem you are trying to solve and focus on it
- Look for high value but low risk opportunities when getting started
- Take advantage of the platform. Azure can replicate some of the best technology in your datacenter but it can also do much more. Consider PaaS services that can accelerate your milestones and lower your overall burden from manageability and support.
- Treat each PoC as a continuous learning and improvement process. As your skills in Azure improve so will the way you approach a PoC.
- After you prove the concept, test it for performance, security, usability and supportability.

ESTABLISH EVALUATION CRITERIA

Ideally the solution you are deploying in Azure offers some key benefits over deploying the same solution on-premises. Establish goals early on and measure them throughout the PoC.

Some common goals your customers may ask for:

- How easy is it to scale up or down?
- Offer the service to users in different regions?
- How can I monitor and support the solution if it fails?
- How do I know my data is secure?

COMMON PROOF OF CONCEPTS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

- Lift and shift migration of an application to Azure
- Backup SQL Server to Azure Storage
- Implement hybrid monitoring with OMS Log Analytics
- Implementing Azure Backup for on-premises workloads
- Implementing hybrid storage with Azure StorSimple
- Setting up disaster recovery with Azure Site Recovery
- Establishing a site-to-site connection from on-premises to Azure
- Deploying a highly available workload such as SQL Server with Always On availability groups

Best practices for running an Azure project

Running a proof of concept, deploying, or creating a solution in Azure can cover a broad surface area of technologies and services that are used. A common problem for customers implementing solutions on their own is not following established best practices and existing reference architectures. It is our recommendation to ensure that your team is aware of and takes advantage of established best practices from Microsoft where possible. We have compiled a list of best practices resources as it relates to deploying infrastructure in Azure or for hybrid deployments.

DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW
Pricing Azure Services with the Calculator	Pricing calculator to price out services used in your Azure project.
Azure Guidance from Patterns and Practices	Checklists for availability, scalability, security for a broad list of topics and services in Azure
Azure Reference Architectures	A collection of documented best practices for deploying virtual machines and VPN connectivity in Azure.
Best practices for running a Windows Virtual Machine on Azure	Configuring storage, availability, performance, and connectivity
Performance Best Practices for SQL Server running in Azure	Performance tuning SQL Server in Azure Virtual Machines
Azure Resiliency Technical Guidance	Best practices for building resilient solutions in Azure
Azure Security Best Practices and Patterns	Best practices and patterns
Best Practices for Network Security	Best practices for protecting networks using virtual appliances, network security groups and hybrid connectivity solutions
Patterns for Designing ARM Templates	Best practices with template design and deployment
OMS Architecture	Reference Architectures for Operations Management Suite components
Asymmetric Routing with Azure ExpressRoute	Best practices for asymmetric routing using Azure ExpressRoute.
Best practices for Azure App Services	Best practices for deploying, monitoring and troubleshooting Azure App Service deployments.
Instrumenting applications using Application Insights	Using Application Insights to instrument applications for troubleshooting, monitoring and telemetry capture.

Test Solutions

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Testing Failover with Azure Site Recovery](#)
- [Chaos Test Service](#)
- [Testing Web Applications with Visual Studio Team Services](#)

Available Services

Every new platform has its own nuances which need to be tested before launching. You need to test the common, shared services that you will provide to the majority of customers—Independent of a customer's specific application requirements. This includes testing the management and monitoring tools, the ITSM and ticketing tools, firewall and configuration management tools, and any runbooks or automations you may have built. You should also test your offering with other commonly used Azure IaaS services such as compute, storage, and networking. In addition to traditional usability and product feature testing, there are many services and features built into Azure that can be used for testing solutions.

AZURE SITE RECOVERY FAILOVER TESTING

Azure Site Recovery includes the ability to test a failover between on-premises and Azure without disrupting the production environment.

CHAOS TEST SERVICE FOR SERVICE FABRIC

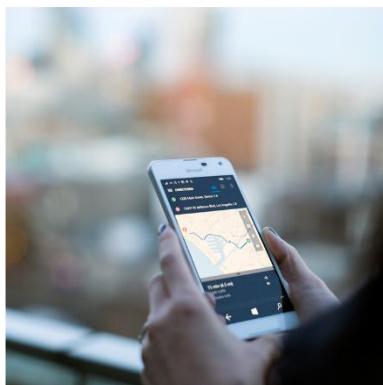
Service Fabric includes a suite of tools specifically designed to test running services. You can easily induce meaningful faults and run test scenarios to exercise and validate the numerous different states and transitions a service will experience throughout its lifetime, all in a controlled and safe manner. The chaos test induces random faults - everything from moving replicas to restarting entire nodes.

PERFORMANCE TESTING

Visual Studio and Team Services provide a wide range of tools and capabilities for performance testing your websites and applications. You can scale your tests to hundreds of thousands of concurrent users and generate load from multiple regions worldwide. Performance testing helps you understand and fix performance issues before they impact your business.

Azure Web Apps

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Using Deployment Slots for Testing](#)
- [Testing Web Apps in Production](#)
- [Penetration Testing Terms with Azure](#)

Staged Publishing with Web Apps

When using Azure Web Apps, you can create multiple deployment slots that can be used for deploying different versions of a web site.

- You can validate web app changes in a staging deployment slot before swapping it with the production slot.
- Deploying a web app to a slot first and swapping it into production ensures that all instances of the slot are warmed up before being swapped into production. This eliminates downtime when you deploy your web app. The traffic redirection is seamless, and no requests are dropped as a result of swap operations. This entire workflow can be automated by configuring Auto Swap when pre-swap validation is not needed.
- After a swap, the slot with previously staged web app now has the previous production web app. If the changes swapped into the production slot are not as you expected, you can perform the same swap immediately to get your "last known good site" back. application.

WEB APPS TESTING IN PRODUCTION

Testing in production, or live-testing your web app using live customer traffic, is a test strategy that app developers increasingly integrate into their agile development methodology. It enables you to test the quality of your apps with live user traffic in your production environment, as opposed to synthesized data in a test environment. By exposing your new app to real users, you can be informed on the real problems your app may face once it is deployed. You can verify the functionality, performance, and value of your app updates against the volume, velocity, and variety of real user traffic, which you can never approximate in a test environment.

PENETRATION TESTING

Microsoft conducts regular penetration testing to improve Azure security controls and processes. We understand that security assessment is also an important part of our customers' application development and deployment. Therefore, we have established a policy for customers to carry out authorized penetration testing on their applications hosted in Azure. Because such testing can be indistinguishable from a real attack, it is critical that customers conduct penetration testing only after notifying Microsoft. Penetration testing must be conducted in accordance with our terms and conditions.

Transition to Managed Services

Resources



RESOURCES

- [FastTrack](#)
- [Digital Partner of Record](#)

Managed Services Transition

This is the stage where transitioning to the service delivery management team. Depending on what was delivered there this could be a simple as validation of expectations. However, in the transformative world of cloud there is expectations and opportunity at this stage.

EXPECTATIONS

If you delivered IP (SaaS) then there is an expectation that you will maintain and support this IP. This allows for annuity for maintenance. It is recommended your handle this stage as an upsell unless the maintenance was agreed upon prior to/or during delivery.

OPPORTUNITY

Even if you did not deliver IP to the customer there is an opportunity to make continued annuity by offering levels of support (if your company business model supports this). This is where the Digital Partner of Record (DPoR) conversation can happen for annuity, or your company can establish levels of support on your own cost structure.

DIGITAL PARTNER OF RECORD

Customers benefit from adding a Digital Partner of Record. Doing so provides the partner with access to usage and consumption data, which allows the partner to better serve the customer and help them perfect the use of Microsoft services for their desired business outcome. This partner will also be automatically contacted for any FastTrack (<https://fasttrack.microsoft.com/>) services questions or issues.

See the topic [Signup for Azure Sell Incentives](#) for more information.

Manage and Support an Azure Deployment

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Azure Security Center Overview](#)
- [Azure Advisor Announcement](#)
- [Azure Forum Support Resources](#)
- [Partner Support Resources](#)
- [OMS Log Analytics](#)

Support Resources

Supporting an Azure deployment involves making the change over from deployment focus to ongoing health and occasional troubleshooting. Microsoft Azure offers several services that can be enabled to help management and monitoring of workloads running in Azure much easier as well documentation for troubleshooting the services for your practice.

AZURE SECURITY CENTER

Security Center helps you prevent, detect, and respond to threats with increased visibility into and control over the security of your Azure resources. It provides integrated security monitoring and policy management across your Azure subscriptions, helps detect threats that might otherwise go unnoticed, and works with a broad ecosystem of security solutions. Azure Security Center should be part of any managed service practice to assist with monitoring and support.

AZURE ADVISOR (PREVIEW)

Azure Advisor analyzes your resource configuration and usage telemetry to detect risks and potential issues. It then draws on Azure best practices to recommend solutions that will reduce your cost and improve the security, performance, and reliability of your applications. In this blog post, we will do a quick tour of Azure Advisor and discuss how it can help optimize your Azure resources.

OMS LOG ANALYTICS

Even if you are not offering OMS as part of your core offering, using Log Analytics for support and monitoring can be a huge time saver. Log Analytics can help you collect and analyze data generated by resources in your cloud and on-premises environments. It gives you real-time insights using integrated search and custom dashboards to readily analyze millions of records across all your workloads and servers regardless of their physical location.

ENGAGING MICROSOFT SUPPORT

If you are a CSP or have sold support as part of your managed services solution you are the front-line support for your customer. At some point you may need to contact Microsoft to escalate an issue. Microsoft offers several options via forum support or via [paid options](#) as discussed in the defining your strategy section to assist you.

Azure Trouble Shooting

Resources



RESOURCES

- [MSDN Support Forums](#)
- [Server Fault](#)
- [Stack Overflow](#)

Trouble Shooting Resources

To assist your support team, we have compiled several resources to assist with troubleshooting the related services your team may use as part of delivering services in this practice.

MSDN SUPPORT FORUMS

MSDN support forums are moderated by Microsoft staff and others in the community. This is a great location for asking troubleshooting questions for Azure.

STACK OVERFLOW

Stack Overflow is the largest online community for programmers to learn, share their knowledge, and advance their careers. This a great community based resource for assisting developers with troubleshooting code related issues on Azure.

SERVER FAULT

Server Fault is a question and answer site for system and network administrators. This a great community based resource for assisting IT Professionals with troubleshooting infrastructure related issues on Azure.

AZURE TROUBLESHOOTING RESOURCES

Troubleshooting RDP Connections	Reset Remote Desktop Connections
Troubleshoot Creating a new VM	Troubleshooting Specific RDP errors
Troubleshoot restarting or resizing a VM	Troubleshoot Application Access
Troubleshoot Allocation failures on Windows	Troubleshooting SSH connections
Troubleshooting Application Access on Linux	Troubleshooting Allocation issues on Linux
Troubleshooting Resource Manager Deployment issues with Linux	Redeploying a Virtual Machine
Troubleshooting ARM Template Deployment Errors	Troubleshooting and monitoring Azure Storage
End-to-End Storage Troubleshooting	Troubleshooting Web Apps with Visual
Enable diagnostics logging for web apps in Azure App Service	

Leverage Investment Resources

Resources



RESOURCES

- [SQL Server Deployment Planning Services](#)
- [Azure Deployment Planning Services for Public Cloud](#)
- [How Software Assurance Vouchers Work](#)

Consumption Investment Funds (CIF)

Microsoft has allocated funds to pay you to help your customers accelerate their usage of Azure.

The explicit purpose of CIF is to activate and accelerate Azure services usage via Microsoft Consulting Services and/or partners. CIF is for funding Microsoft services or partner engagements to accelerate Azure services usage, for example, by funding Proof of Concept or pilot efforts. It can also be used to fund the execution and delivery of Azure consumption plans supporting deployment and migration efforts.

CIF funds can be used during pre-sales delivery as deal support or as post-sales support for driving Azure consumption and adoption.

DEAL SUPPORT (PRE-SALES)

For deal support investments, there are specific return on investment (ROI) and funding requirements. Partners who receive CIF for deal support are required to complete the projects within 90 days of approval or they may risk losing the funds as they may be re-allocated to drive other opportunities.

DRIVING CONSUMPTION & ADOPTION (POST SALES)

For these investments, there are specific return on investment (ROI), funding requirements and the end customer must be participating in an Azure Consumption Plan that captures the agreed upon growth in Azure usage over the next 12 months. Partners who receive CIF for driving consumption and adoption must complete and invoice their projects within 120 days approval or they may risk losing the funds as they may be re-allocated to drive other opportunities.

DEPLOYMENT PLANNING SERVICES FOR CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Microsoft partners with Gold Competencies with Cloud Platform can enroll to provide Microsoft-sponsored structured consulting engagements and build custom deployment plans for customers. Work with Software Assurance customers looking to migrate infrastructure to azure or begin their journey to the cloud.

To learn more about CIF, any ROI and funding requirements you will need to contact your Microsoft representative.

Safe Passage Opportunities

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [Safe Passage Competitive Migration Funding](#)

Safe Passage

Safe Passage funding is for compete migrations in which the customer will lift and shift off of a competitor's platform.

MIGRATION

There are a few migrations programs provided within Safe Passage that focus on specific opportunities, including:

- Competitive Platform migration from VMWare including upgrades to Windows Server 2016 and System Center.
- Competitive mobility migration from AirWatch or MobileIron to EMS.
- Competitive data warehouse migrations from Oracle, Teradata, AWS Redshift to SQL Server, Analytics Platform System (APS), Azure Data Services or Azure SQL Data Warehouse.
- Complete migrations of mission critical workloads from Oracle, DB2, Sybase or competitors to APS to SQL Server, Azure, Azure SQL Database, APS.
- Competitive migration from AWS or VMWare to Azure.

Projects must be completed within 120 days of approval. To learn more about Safe Passage, you will need to contact your Microsoft representative

Leverage Investment Resources

Azure Everywhere

Simple funding for kick-starting targeted workloads.

AZURE EVERYWHERE

What is it that makes Azure so compelling but also challenging for partners to sell? Is it about generating customer interest? Articulating the right solution? To successfully overcome the sales challenges of the Cloud, we have designed an [Azure Everywhere program](#); to help you articulate, position and sell and migrate some of the most common on-premises solutions to Azure.

DELIVERY FORMAT

The Azure Everywhere program is delivered through a series of 150 minute webinars allowing you to increase your Azure Technical readiness through an easy to understand and step-by-step approach. The program starts with the Azure IaaS foundation course for IT Pros and Modern App Development for developers and continues with specific scenarios like Dev/Test, SQL server and SharePoint on Azure IaaS.

- Please [register](#) to watch the recordings or to watch the webinars in the series.



Azure Access

Azure trial accounts to support customers or partners.

Azure Access has two variants that differ according to project size.

- Small POC: Provides Azure passes that offer up to 3 months of credit and up to \$1,500 USD in credit.
- Large POC: Provide Azure passes that last 4 months or longer with up to \$10,000 in Azure credit

To learn more about Azure Access, contact your Microsoft representative

RESOURCES

- ➔ [Partner Offers to support Microsoft Azure deal lifecycle](#)



Optimize & Grow Your Practice

Cloud Infrastructure & Management

aka.ms/practiceplaybooks



Executive Summary

Optimize & Grow Your Practice

Previously covered by this playbook are strategies for building your cloud application development practice, finding and keeping customers then providing them with ongoing support, and leveraging Microsoft investment funds. In this section, we focus on ways you can continue to grow your practice, tweaking things as you evaluate your place in the market and whether you're meeting the needs of your current and prospective customers.

Are your customers satisfied by your services and products? Learn how to collect feedback, then use that feedback to optimize delivery and look for opportunities to document and improve processes and automate tasks. Gain additional vantage points about your successes and shortfalls by conducting a project post-mortem, or retrospective. Learn from your experiences to improve upon your process for greater chances of success in the future.

Use the land and expand strategy by looking for opportunities to provide incremental project services to your happy customers. A satisfied customer will likely be open to purchasing additional services from you, especially when you are able to offer solutions to needs you identified while delivering past services to them.

Discover ways you can focus on improving your value proposition by asking your customers specific questions about how you can do better. This might also open an opportunity to create a case study to highlight your success with the customer,



and use that along with a marketing plan to break into new vertical markets. If you are able to expand your customer base and can point to successful deployments like this one, it may be worthwhile to perform market and customer research to select an appropriate vertical to match your business maturity level.

To effectively grow your business, you need the funds to invest in pre-requisites for growth, like hiring special skills, buying a company, or renting more office space. We'll cover various key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure your success, so you can maximize both efficiency and profit to provide the funds to fuel growth.

We end off by discussing how nurturing your partner relationships can help reduce your costs of going to market, increase your reach, optimize your sales model, and expand your customer base. Partners can help fill knowledge gaps in new vertical markets, or provide you with access to the right decision maker in a new vertical. Our studies show that the group of partners who associated a large amount of their revenue with partner-to-partner collaboration were also the ones who were growing the fastest.

Use the strategies we provide in this section to optimize and grow your practice.

Top 5 things to do

Learn from your customers and experience to optimize your practice, and expand to new markets through strategic partnerships. These are the top 5 things you should do to optimize and grow your practice.

- Gather feedback from your customers
- Learn from your project successes and failures
- Create case studies and a marketing plan to expand into new vertical markets
- Maximize your efficiency and profit to fuel growth
- Establish and nurture strategic partnerships

Collect Feedback

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [Net Promoter Score](#)

The Basics

Satisfied customers have no reason to change cloud suppliers, but of course you won't know how satisfied they are unless you ask them.

. It is critically important to have a mechanism in place to solicit feedback from your customers on a regular basis. You don't want to bombard them with requests to fill out surveys, but you do want to provide ample opportunities to tell you how you're doing.

If you provide managed services, this might involve asking users about their level of satisfaction with the service they receive. If you are more focused on providing project or professional services, consider sending out a satisfaction survey at the end of a project or meeting with the customer in person to collect feedback.

Consider using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a primary measure for satisfaction. The NPS is calculated based on responses to a single question: How likely is it that you would recommend our company/product/service to a friend or colleague? Those who respond with a score of 9 or 10 are called promoters and are likely to remain customers for longer and make more referrals to other potential customers. Those who respond with a score of 0 to 6 are labeled detractors and are less likely to remain as customers in the long term. You subtract the percentage of customers who are detractors from the percentage of promoters to arrive at the NPS score. Companies that use this method strive for a score of 50 or higher.

In addition to soliciting a quantitative measure of satisfaction, you should also provide customers with the opportunity to tell you why they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

Regardless of how you measure customer satisfaction, it is important to act on the feedback you receive and follow up with customers to demonstrate you are taking measures to address their concerns. If your customer is dissatisfied, get to the root cause and fix it. And then tell/show them how you fixed it.

If you provide project services, another technique to learn from is to conduct a post mortem of the delivered project. Here you should involve both the technical project team and the customer success manager to enumerate what went well, what went wrong and what could have been done better. Focus on the latter two for opportunities to improve your solution or your process.

Optimize and Grow from Feedback

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Optimize Your Operations eBook](#)

Use Feedback to Optimize and Grow

Take the feedback you have collected from the customer and your customer team to optimize delivery and look for opportunities to document and improve processes and automate tasks.

Work to identify opportunities to optimize the costs incurred in delivering the solution. Often times, this will lead you to either opportunities for IP creation or for the creation of repeatable processes you can use with your next round of customers.

Many people automatically associate Intellectual Property (IP) with software, apps, and technology tools, but standardized and repeatable processes can also be your secret sauce. When you document the steps involved in completing a job or create templates for deliverables, you are creating intellectual property.

It is very common to get caught up in delivering projects and solutions and never get to the task of documenting what's been done and the lessons learned along the way. But unless you build in the time to take a breath and take stock of what worked well and what didn't, you will never be able to develop repeatable methods and processes. You need to make harvesting repeatable work products a standard task and hold staff accountable (or reward them) for completing it.

Think broadly about your repeatable processes. Go back and look at your last 20 or 30 or even 50 projects and see what they have in common. You may be surprised by how many times you have completed a type of project or specific task over and over again. And if you have done something often enough, chances are you have a latent specialization. Successful partners take this discovery to the next level, by wrapping that depth of experience up as a "product" that can then be sold, publicized and marketed as a differentiated skill or service

Performing a Post Mortem

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Deliver Customer Lifetime Value eBook](#)
- [Cloud Services Partner Dashboard](#)

What is a post mortem?

A project post-mortem, also called a project retrospective, is a process for evaluating the success (or failure) of a project's ability to meet business goals.

A typical post-mortem meeting begins with a restatement of the project's scope. Team members and business owners are then asked by a facilitator to share answers to the following questions:

- What worked well for the team?
- What did not work well for the team?

The facilitator may solicit quantitative data related to cost management or qualitative data such as perceived quality of the product. Ideally, the feedback gathered from a project post-mortem will be used to ensure continuous improvement and improve the management of future projects. Post-mortems are generally conducted at the end of the project process, but are also useful at the end of each stage of a multi-phase project. The term post-mortem literally means "after death." In medicine, the term is used to describe an examination of a dead body in order to discover the cause of death.

Use of a Net Promoter Score can be very helpful to get a clear depiction of the customers view of success of the project.



The Net Promoter Score is an index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company's products or services to others. It is used as a proxy for gauging the customer's overall satisfaction with a company's product or service and the customer's loyalty to the brand.

Land & Expand

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Deliver Customer Lifetime Value eBook](#)
- [Cloud Services Partner Dashboard](#)

Growing Scope

With a successful customer engagement behind you, at this point you will want to understand how you can increase the scope of the services you provide to your customer.

With a successful customer engagement behind you, at this point you will want to understand how you can increase the scope of the services you provide to your customer. We call this the land and expand strategy. In this strategy, you want to look for opportunities to provide incremental project services with goal of driving stronger usage of your services. You should look for opportunities to cross-sell and upsell incremental solutions to customers based on needs identified during service delivery.

For example, if you are the digital partner of record on your customer's Microsoft subscriptions, you have access to their cloud solution usage and consumption data via the Cloud Services Partner Dashboard. You can use it to identify areas where you should be encouraging deeper and wider usage of Azure, as well as areas where the customer may benefit from incremental project or advisory services..

Here is an example of Land & Expand in the Cloud Infrastructure and Hybrid practice

LAND

Say for example the customer brought your practice to help setup a site-to-site VPN connection to establish hybrid connectivity to Azure to migrate a line-of-business application to Azure.

EXPAND

Using the knowledge gained about the customer's data, you are in a strong position to make recommendations that improve the customer's situation and enable you to deliver added value. For example, you might propose that additional workloads that the customer has decided not to migrate yet could be configured for failover to the cloud using Azure Site Recovery. Additional easy options would be to configure Azure backup to protect the new cloud-based workload and for on-premises servers to replace legacy solutions like tape backup.

Refine Customer Value Proposition

Resources



RESOURCES

→ [How to Tell Your Story: Value Propositions Video](#)

Refine Customer Value Proposition and Offer

Focus on what you could do better and communicate

Your value proposition is your calling card and who you are. And each audience you do business with or deal with potentially need a different value proposition. You need to consider what each audience needs from you and your firm. Microsoft has created a [video](#) with step-by-step advice on creating a powerful value proposition.

THE FOUR MAGIC QUESTIONS

1. What do your customers love about your company?
2. What would they change?
3. What keeps them awake at night that we solve?
4. What are competitors doing they wish you did?

Once you go through the exercise of answering these questions with key input from staff, customers, partners and others, you ask focus in on what you could be doing better. This is where you build your value proposition.

An example of an effective value proposition: "Acme Tech Partners is in your neighborhood, so our staff can solve any issue quickly. We have deep experience with Azure, and are able to keep your data safe, secure, and available without negatively impacting your business"

Expand to Similar Customers

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Modern Partner Optimize Operations](#)

Vertical Customer Play

Each vertical market is unique, but may be familiar.

All partners are looking to grow their customer base from time to time. One of the best moves you can make is to make advancements in new vertical markets. Some of the vertical markets to consider include: Retail, Financial Services, Healthcare and Public Sector.

Partners may consider using marketing campaigns and featuring case studies to show success in other industries. You should be prepared to offer a free engagement, advice or proof of offering to break into a new industry.

At the time, you begin to consider growing your pipeline with vertical market plays, you need to ask some questions. Is the business ready for additional customers? Do you have capacity on your bench or other areas? Answers to these questions help define which verticals you want to explore. Market and customer research can help you answer which vertical to focus on to match your business maturity level.

Lastly, appropriate content by industry is critical. You will be wise to commission a collection of marketing to use for your marketing automation, web site, proposals, direct emails and more. Having the correct content for the market instills confidence in your business.

Optimize Costs

Resources



RESOURCES

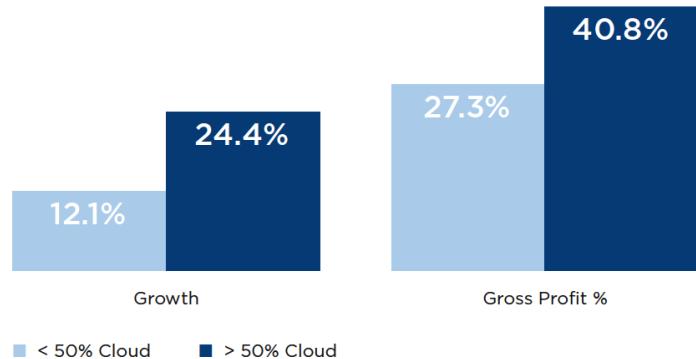
- [Modern Partner Optimize Operations](#)

Efficiency, Profit and Growth

Optimize profit to fund growth.

We all want to have profitable businesses and IDC's research shows that those that are heavily invested in cloud do better than their peers with respect to profitability. But profit doesn't happen automatically just because of cloud. You need to have the right processes and methods in place to drive the efficiencies that reduce costs while still delivering high quality services. If you are able to achieve that balance, profit should follow.

GROSS PROFIT AND REVENUE GROWTH BY CLOUD REVENUE



Source: IDC eBook, sponsored by Microsoft, *The Modern Microsoft Partner Series, Part 1: The Booming Cloud Opportunity*, 2016

But, it doesn't stop there. If you have efficiency and profit, you have also created the fuel for growth. Your profit provides the funding to invest in pre-requisites for growth, whether it's hiring special skills or buying a company or renting more office space.

Metrics that matter in a cloud business

To determine if your cloud business is performing to the best of its ability, you need to establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure your success. Here are some metrics you should consider using:

- **Staff utilization:** The amount of time spent on billable work divided by the number of billable hours per person per year (typically 1500 to 1700 hours, taking statutory holidays, vacation, and training into account).
- **Billable markup rate (BMUR):** This measures the profitability of billable resources. It is calculated by taking the hourly charge-out rate of the individual and dividing it by their loaded cost (salary, variable pay, benefits) per billable hour. Best-in-class partners score 2.5 on this metric, while 2.0 is the generally accepted baseline.
- **Backlog.** This is the total amount of work you have outstanding in days (including project work, support work, and ad hoc work with clients) divided by the total number of billable resources. Anything beyond 120 days indicates a strong pipeline of work; anything less than 30 days may be problematic.
- **Rate of customer acquisition.** The number of new customers acquired per month, quarter or year.
- **Average revenue per user (ARPU).** Total revenue divided by the number of users.
- **Average revenue per customer (ARC).** The average amount spent per month among customers who subscribe to managed services offerings.
- **Direct sales cost.** This measure determines the value a seller is providing to the company. In the cloud, 8-10 percent is ideal and 15 percent is acceptable, but anything beyond that means either their quota is too low or their income is too high.
- **Percentage of billed revenue spent on marketing.** It's common to see less than 1 or 2 percent of revenue being spent on driving net new demand. However, some of the most successful partners spend anywhere from 8 to 10 percent.
- **Renewal rate.** This is the percentage of customers that renew their cloud subscriptions. Typically, you're looking for something less than 8 to 10 percent per year of annual churn.
- **Attach rate of secondary offerings.** The value of secondary offerings sold in addition to the solution

sold as the first step in the engagement (e.g. Office 365). IDC research shows that the average partner sells \$4.14 of their own offerings for every \$1 of Microsoft cloud solutions they sell. Partners with more than 50% of their revenue in the cloud attach \$5.86 of their own offerings.

- **Services attach rate.** This is the percentage of active customers paying for managed services in addition to core product offerings. You want to aim for a 70% or higher attach rate if managed services is a primary focal point for your business.
- **Percent of revenue from recurring sources.** Ideally, a partner starting their journey to the cloud should aim to have 15 percent of revenue from these sources by the end of year one, 33 percent by year two, and 45 percent or more by year three.
- **Gross margin by offering.** For project services, striving for 30 percent or more gross margin is important; managed services should return at least 40 percent and IP over 50 percent.
- **Efficiency factor.** The measure of how much work you've already done that can be repurposed, packaged, and resold as IP.
- **Average calls per customer.** The average number of calls per customer in a given month for managed services. It's reasonable to expect lots of calls in the early stages of the customer relationship, but over the long term, call volume should subside.
- **Average case duration.** The amount of time it takes to field the call, work, resolve, and document a case ticket.
- **Services rep utilization.** This is calculated as the average hours annually spent per representative actively working cases, divided by the number of available hours.

These measures aren't new - in fact, they've been around for as long as services businesses have been in place. The challenge is how you manage them. Are these metrics being tracked on a regular basis? Do you have process and cadence for reviewing them? What is your plan if your results fall below the baseline?

Revisit Partnerships

Resources



RESOURCES

- [Enterprise Cloud Strategy eBook](#)

Grow Partnerships

Nurture your partner relationships.

Identify new partnership opportunities to reduce costs of going to market, increase reach, optimize sales model, increase share of wallet with customers.

Intervate found that much of the demand for their products came from vertical markets that they were not equipped to serve. Instead of trying to develop all the vertical expertise in-house they began to work with other partners to complete vertical solutions that were outside of their expertise.

If you have horizontal intellectual property (IP) or unique skills, you may be able to differentiate by working with partners with vertical expertise. You can decide how the relationship works on a partner by partner basis. For instance, you may just need a partner to introduce you to the right decision maker in a vertical. If you don't speak the language of the vertical, you may need a partner to take on the sales consultant role. You may want the partnership to extend to scoping the requirements for a vertical or to jointly build a vertical-specific version of your IP.

There are many ways that a Partner to Partner (P2P) relationship may help you specialize. You probably will need separate partnerships for each vertical focus. If one or two verticals become dominant, consider developing your own internal expertise.

Working with other partners can also be an effective method of expanding your geographic reach or to provide ongoing customer support more efficiently than you can yourself. In most scenarios, working with other partners allows you to focus on your own core advantages.



There are many ways that a Partner to Partner relationship may help you specialize. You probably will need separate partnerships for each vertical focus. If one or two verticals become dominant, consider developing your own internal expertise.

Some partners recommend positioning yourself as a trusted technology AND business advisor which can lead to introductions to most functional leaders in the company, creating a great base for expansion.

Use your own experience as the basis for best practices for your customers. Start by identifying small, incremental initiatives that will make a visible impact for the customer. If you haven't done this kind of project before, recruit a 'friendly' customer for a proof-of-concept.

Successful partners have created their version of differentiation by being on the bleeding edge of technology. There is a bit of self-fulfilling prophecy in this. If your company is known as an early adopter, you will get more projects that deploy new technologies.

You should invest upfront to have the basic understanding of the new technologies to get a project.

Cloud Infrastructure & Management Playbook Summary

Thank you for taking the time to review this playbook. We hope you have gained new insight on how to add the Cloud Infrastructure & Management practice, and how to successfully grow your practice by taking advantage of unique offerings from Microsoft, engaging with your customers, and forming strategic partnerships.

Our goal, when creating this playbook, was to organize resources and provide insight that you can use to quickly accelerate or optimize your Azure focused practice. To this end, we laid out the practice's opportunity, then provided relevant information on business strategies and technical topics to capitalize on the opportunity, within five sections that you can review in order, or individually at any time.

In the first section, **Define Your Strategy**, we helped you thoroughly define the strategy upon which your practice will be built. The key actions we prompted you to take are: Identify your unique value proposition, define and price your offer, build your business plan, leverage the Microsoft Partner Network, and plan your support options.

In the second section, **Operationalize & Get Trained**, we focused on the importance of hiring the right team, and then providing appropriate and ongoing training and certifications. We also suggested various tools and resources for obtaining an Azure subscription, building your product or service, managing your customers, and reviewing the marketplace. The top five things we suggested you do are: Hire, train, and certify your team, setup Azure for your practice and become the Digital Partner of Record on your customer's Azure subscriptions, setup your CRM, project management, collaboration, and support tools, build your sales, marketing, and legal materials, and evaluate your marketplace options.

The third section, **Go to Market**, emphasized getting your practice off the ground by finding new customers, and then nurturing and investing in them to build lasting relationships. The key takeaways were: Define your customer's buying journey, launch a modern website and digital marketing activities, find your first customer through Microsoft's resources and nurture the relationship, build a presence in the community, and invest in marketing automation tools.

The fourth section, **Close & Execute Deals**, showed you how you can add value to your practice and turn your prospective customers into lasting ones, by working efficiently, selling Azure solutions as part of your offering, and negotiating deals. We prompted you to take action on the following: Identify opportunities to co-sell with Microsoft, write a winning proposal and be prepared to negotiate, conduct an architecture design session and build a proof of concept, provide ongoing support to your customers, and leverage Microsoft investment funds.

The final section, **Optimize & Grow your Practice**, stressed the importance of learning from your customers and your experience in providing solutions to them, to optimize your practice, and expand to new vertical markets through strategic partnerships. The top five actions we provided for you in this section were: Gather feedback from your customers, learn from your project successes and failures, create case studies and a marketing plan to expand into new vertical markets, maximize your efficiency and profit to fuel growth, and establish and nurture strategic partnership