Microsoft Azure Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) Overview

Purpose:

The purpose of this battle card is to provide Microsoft Partner sellers with an overview of Microsoft Azure value proposition as it relates to Infrastructure-as-a-Service solutions. The battle card includes general information on the Azure value proposition, key differentiators, conversational guidance for target audiences, objection handling, and guidance for incorporating your unique partner value prop into the Azure story. Azure success story and resources to learn more about Azure IaaS solutions are also included.

Assumptions: Battle card users are part of the Microsoft CSP program and familiar with program fundamentals. Do not share with customers. Intended for Microsoft Partner use only.

Microsoft Azure

Microsoft Azure is a growing collection of integrated cloud services—analytics, computing, database, mobile, networking, storage, and web—for moving faster, achieving more, and saving money. Azure is among the fastest growing and largest public cloud platforms in the world. With 38+ datacenter regions, 120,000 new customer subscriptions per month, over $10 billion in investments, and more than $1 billion spent on security and R&D annually, it's not surprising that more than 66% of Fortune 500 companies are using Azure.

Azure IaaS

Azure offers a powerful compute, networking, and storage platform to meet the cloud objectives of your customers. Many customers are in the process of choosing their cloud provider of the future and Azure infrastructure—coupled with your value-added services—provides them with the right strategic investment. Customers who utilize Azure IaaS solutions benefit from the flexibility, reliability, and scalability an enterprise-ready cloud provides. Backed by the industry-leading security and compliance of Azure, customers can rest assured about the safety of their apps and data. Azure also supports customers who have hybrid deployment requirements, enabling them to move workloads between their own datacenters, partner datacenters, and Azure. Additional details include:

Computer

Azure provides a wide range of VM sizes and images, enabling buyers to choose the best deployment options for their environment. Additional Azure benefits include:

- Broad support for Open Source Software (OSS)— approximately one third of all Azure VMs run Linux
- Full RedHat support
- Pay-as-you-go, consumption pricing options
- Commitment to match AWS pricing
- Hybrid use rights—provide the ability to leverage existing investments

Network

Azure offers numerous networking services to build sophisticated network topologies and extend datacenters to the cloud. Additional Azure benefits include:

- Load balancers, traffic managers, and powerful content delivery networks for superior performance
- High throughput, low latency, resilient
- ExpressRoute connection options
- The ability to leverage MPLS investments in Azure
- Free ingress (unlimited) and free egress (first 5GB)

Storage

Azure delivers durable, highly available, and massively scalable storage options—Blob, Queue, File, and Disk— that keep pace with explosive data growth. Additional Azure benefits include:

- Support for up to 80,000 IOPs
- Cost-effective solution for nearline, online, and highly available business needs
- Locally redundant storage (3 locations)
- Geo-redundancy options

Audience Messaging

IaaS conversations with customers will often involve multiple stakeholders with various objectives. The messaging below will provide high level talking points to help facilitate conversations.

Business Decision Maker (CXO, LOB, VP)

Conversations with BDMs are often less technical in nature and tend to focus more on the strategic nature of cloud commitments. The focus of the conversation should include elements such as:

- Empowering digital transformation via newfound cloud agility
- Superior ROI and the shift from CAPEX to OPEX models
- Faster time-to-market and quicker release cycles
- The global reach provided by Azure's vast datacenter footprint
- Enhanced business focus by offloading datacenter maintenance

Technical Decision Maker (IT Pro, IT Manager)

Technical decision makers are generally more focused on the detailed operation of their IT environments. TDMs may display a strong aversion to the perceived loss of control or the additional risks of a cloud deployment. Core talking points include:

- Security—encrypted communications and threat management/ mitigation practices
- Data privacy—ISO/IEC 27018 commitments
- Data transparency—clarity on data storage and access
- Compliance—ISO 27001, HIPAA, FedRAMP, SOC 1, SOC 2, etc.

Developers

Development has become increasingly influential in the buying process for cloud infrastructure. Development is often looking to streamline IT / development processes for accelerated application delivery and release cadences for new app features. Talking points include:

- **Shift to agile development methodologies by embracing Azure's immutable infrastructure**
- **Push out new app features faster by provisioning Azure infrastructure on-demand**

Objection Handling

It is very likely that customers will have concerns or questions about Microsoft Azure and your value added solutions. Below are a few common objections/questions and guidance for how to address them.

Objection/question	Suggested Response
"I'm hesitant to move to cloud IaaS because my business is beholden to several compliance mandates."	Microsoft Azure has the most comprehensive list of compliance certifications of any hyper-scale cloud provider. Azure also has industry-leading capabilities to meet the needs of key compliance requirements. Please visit the Microsoft Trust Center to get a full list of Azure's certifications and attestations.
"I don't want to increase security risks by migrating to the public cloud."	As a hyper-scale provider, Microsoft can make greater security investments than the majority of companies in the industry. By incorporating automation and machine learning capabilities into the core, Azure is continuously improving its ability to detect, isolate, and remediate potential threats. Moreover, Microsoft adheres to strict industry standards for security and is constantly tested and audited by 3rd party entities. Learn more at the Azure Security Center.
"I don't want to lose control of my company's sensitive corporate and application data by moving to the cloud."	With Azure, you have ownership of your data—that is, all data, including text, sound, video, or image files and software, that are provided to Microsoft by you, or on your behalf, through the use of Azure. You can access your data at any time and for any reason without assistance from Microsoft. Microsoft does not use customer data or derive information from it for advertising or data mining.
"I'm worried about the cost of transitioning to a new service delivery model. Won't these new investments increase my overall operating costs?"	Quite the opposite in fact. With the flexibility of cloud, you can spin up the resources you need instantly, scaling up and down based on demand and traffic. You only pay for what you use. With on-premises infrastructures, you may be stuck with under-utilized resources that require ongoing maintenance and capital investment to maintain.
"Why can't I just buy Azure infrastructure services directly and deploy it myself?"	That is definitely a viable option, albeit much more challenging than you may think. It takes a lot of technical expertise to stand up the environment, right-size the deployment, and ensure the workload is migrated correctly so there are no setbacks. Additionally, once your workload is in the cloud, your must continually maintain it to ensure it's performing optimally. As a Service Provider we are here to offload the burden of maintaining your cloud infrastructure so you can focus on your strategic initiatives and the things that actually add value to your business.
"I am hesitant to get locked into an Azure commitment long term, do I have options here?"	One of the excellent benefits of Azure and the Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) program is that you only pay for what you use If you want to try Azure out for a while, you can. It's a true pay-as-you-go model and does not require a large upfront payment or multi-year contract.
"If I am unsatisfied with my service, can I take back control of my subscription?"	Yes. The CSP program offers the ability to transition a CSP tenant to a direct contract with Microsoft (and vice versa) with complete subscription mobility.

Partner Value Proposition

While Microsoft Azure offers many great services and features, the promises of the cloud would be incomplete without value-added partner solutions like yours.

Be sure to incorporate your company story, value proposition, and/or unique IP into the Azure Backup sales process. Potential differentiators to highlight include:

- Managed Services
- 3rd party app integration
- Regional or geographic advantages
- Industry or horizontal expertise
- Additional value added IP and/or custom app development

CSP Partner Success

Many customers are finding success using a CSP partner to gain advantages for their business.

- Learn how Vetco leveraged a CSP partner, UDT, to use Azure services on a true consumption basis while also gaining local support from the partner. The case study can be found here on the Microsoft Customer Story website

- Be advised that the case study described above is for your edification and should likely not be shared with prospective customers

Resources

- Azure Home Page
- Microsoft Trust Center
- Azure Products and Services
- Azure Partner Page
- Azure Cloud Resource Center
- CSP in a Box
- Azure Partner Learning Paths
- Azure IaaS: VMs and Virtual Networks with Mark Russinovich
- Microsoft Azure for IT Pros: Introduction to Microsoft Azure
- Microsoft Azure IaaS Deep Dive jump Start