

Technology Services **Guide**

For Indirect Cloud Solution Providers

UK One Commercial Partner // FY19

Version: October 2018



purpose

This book has been created to provide clarity in a number of key areas with respect to the way Microsoft's One Commercial Partner (OCP) business in the UK works with indirect CSP partners ('indirect providers'); specifically:

- How your engaged Partner Technology Strategist will work with your business and your Partner Development Manager through the fiscal year.
- Where indirect providers can build or enhance their service offerings in line with Microsoft's modern partner transformation agenda.
- What Microsoft considers to be a good, better, and best view of indirect providers in order to create a consistent and competitive market for current and future indirect resellers to do business with/through.



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foreword

Microsoft's fiscal year '18 was about 'hitting refresh' internally and landing a new One Commercial Partner model globally in order to accelerate the transformation journey we are on with our partners. Fiscal year '19 is about focusing on those investments and driving faster, tighter execution against our strategic priorities. Key to the success for the entire ecosystem is the role of the indirect CSP provider. This document outlines the technology strategy approach we will take as we work together through the year: building the channel of the future.

It is important that we take both an immediate and longer term view of the way we shape our indirect provider strategy. The significant pace of development in areas such as artificial intelligence, app modernisation, data estate modernisation, and others, presents exciting opportunities. Therefore, it's imperative that we are building the skills and capacity in the reseller channel in order that they can then seed and meet customer demand.

Everything we do aligns to our 6 key themes around **modern life, modern workplace, business applications, applications & infrastructure, data & AI**, and **gaming**. We will continue to build solutions and practices to support these themes through the lens of our digital transformation pillars: **empower employees, engage customers, transform products**, and **optimise operations**. This combined technology strategy approach will help ensure the success of our channel and our customers for many years to come.

Thank you for your commitment to partnering with us this year and beyond.

Mark Margolis

Technology Director
UK One Commercial Partner
Microsoft



core pts team

1

The structure for FY19 remains largely unchanged in terms of how the Partner Development Manager (PDM) and Partner Technology Strategist (PTS) roles are allocated. The PTS team is a crucial part of developing a strong and successful Microsoft cloud business. They provide a strategic view of the whole stack of technology and act as the coordination point within One Commercial Partner to engage with the rest of the team.

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James has been at Microsoft since 2010 and in that time he's worked across several different teams, including education, public sector, corporate accounts and partner. Since 2015, James has been engaged with Microsoft Partners who work with small and medium-sized businesses, as well as digital agencies and distributors.

Partners

Tech Data, intY, Arrow ECS, Wirehive



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Sam joined Microsoft in 2015 having spent 10 years enabling partners from a pre-sales and technical perspective on a variety of integrated Business Applications. During Sam's time at Microsoft she has worked across multiple partner teams, and focussed on building additional capacity and capability for the Microsoft Partner Ecosystem via Modern Workplace, Bus Apps, and Apps and Infrastructure solutions.

Partners

Westcoast, Cobweb/Vuzion, QBS



Guy Gregory

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Having worked for several small MSPs for 15 years before joining Microsoft, Guy has a wealth of channel experience. His background has been focussed on architecting, deploying and supporting Microsoft cloud solutions within SMB businesses, and he is passionate about supporting the IT Pro community.

Partners

Ingram Micro, Giacom, Grey Matter



extended team

The PTS team is ultimately responsible for developing a technical business plan for each engaged partner. Part of this engagement will occasionally involve working with different expert teams within One Commercial Partner, and the wider Microsoft business.

To support the development of scalable, repeatable and relevant solutions, technology practices or intellectual property (IP), the PTS team works closely with approximately 30 Cloud Solution Architects (CSAs) and Partner Technical Architects (PTAs).

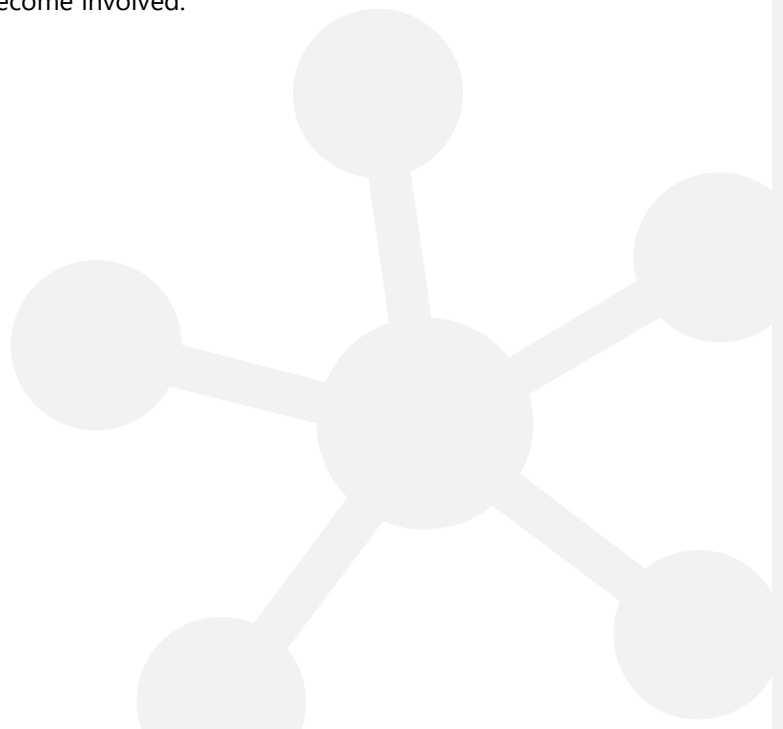
CSAs have a primary focus on Microsoft's Azure cloud, with each CSA maintaining a set of skills in a particular domain. For example: artificial intelligence and machine learning, microservices architecture, infrastructure and networking, etc.

Partner Technical Architects focus on Microsoft's modern workplace and business applications technologies and maintain focus on specific domains including Dynamics 365, Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams, Enterprise Mobility & Security, etc.

Both CSA and PTA teams engage partners through the lens of knowledge transfer, ensuring that they're working with you to establish future self-sufficiency and scale. With this in mind, they work with indirect providers in two streams:

- **To-Partner**, to support the aims of the indirect provider and One Commercial Partner team to bring to market new solutions, practices, run enablement workshops, etc.
- **Through-Partner**, to support the scale delivery of enablement to the channel through workshops, hackathons, communities, social and digital.

Above all else the CSA and PTA teams require a clear outcome for any engagement with which they become involved.



services guide

2

To establish a consistent approach to providing services in the indirect CSP model, the table below describes the types of services deemed to be mandatory, good, better or best for an indirect provider to develop.

In doing so, it provides opportunities for new revenue streams, drives competition through differentiation and raises the bar for all providers.

#	Offering	Mandatory	Good	Better	Best
1	Maintain at least one silver cloud competency	•	•	•	
2	Maintain up-to-date CSP platform, fully enabled to sell all CSP workloads	•	•	•	•
3	Technical enablement program to sell new workloads	•	•	•	•
4	Advanced Support for Partners		•	•	•
5	Capability to deliver a DCM program		•	•	•
6	Learning-as-a-Service, or partnership with a Microsoft Learning Partner		•	•	•
7	Partner lifecycle management program		•	•	•
8	Offer pre-packaged Microsoft solutions through platform		•	•	•
9	Premier Support for Partners			•	•
10	Capability to deliver Architecture Design Sessions / Solution Alignment Workshops			•	•
11	Technical pre-sales resources to support partner opportunities			•	•
12	Write and follow technical business plans for top partners			•	•
13	Specialised technical enablement program (i.e. AI, IoT, Dynamics, etc.)			•	•
14	Offer pre-packaged multi-vendor solutions hosted on Azure (i.e. Veeam on Azure, Citrix on Azure, etc.)			•	•
15	Maintain at least one gold cloud competency				•
16	Change management services and training (i.e. ProSci®)				•
17	Provide technology thought leadership & community building to channel (i.e. blog, podcast, events, etc.)				•

premium services

In addition to providing services to on-board, enable and accelerate the development of partner services, there are several opportunities to create new revenue streams. By providing 'pay to access' services you can offer exceptional value to partners by helping to solve problems they don't have the resources to solve. It also helps differentiate you in the market by offering services which play to your unique capabilities.

#	Offering	Premium
18	Technical Account Manager	•
19	Technical services (i.e. end-to-end solution design, migration, etc.)	•
20	Outsourced development (i.e. IoT hardware, bespoke development, etc.) for partners to re-sell as their own	•
21	In-house developed IP for sale	•
22	Partner community matchmaking	•



baselining

3

It is often said that in order to know how to get to where you are going, it is a good idea to know where you are to begin with. Taking a baseline of where your business is today against the services in the matrix is useful in establishing a common benchmark from which you can work with your PTS to establish areas of strength and weakness, and build a clear plan with SMART objectives to track throughout the year.

The responses from each indirect provider are confidential insofar as they are not shared with other providers.

It is recommended that you work with the technical services matrix spreadsheet and discuss each line in depth to establish a current position against the following criteria:

1. No current capability
2. A plan has been put in place to achieve
3. Work is being undertaken to achieve
4. Item is in testing / pre-launch
5. Item is fully achieved and available

Once complete, your PTS can consult with you on which areas are a priority, what success should look like, timescales, commitment of resources, etc. This work will then inform the technical business plan which is submitted to Microsoft.

The baselining exercise is not designed to be a one-time activity. It is recommended to review the matrix at least one more time in the year to ensure it's kept up to date. This is important when it comes to understanding the indirect provider capability 'map' and helps Microsoft prioritise its resources to ensure the channel is being served adequately.

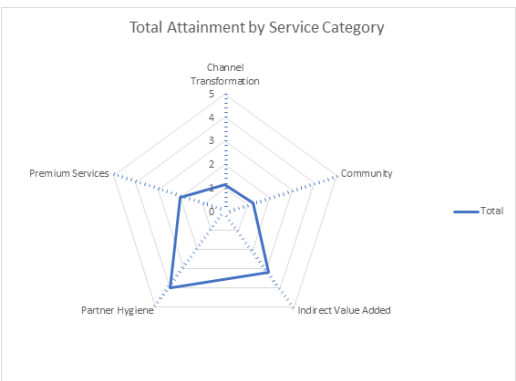


Fig 1. Sample radar chart output from baselining exercise

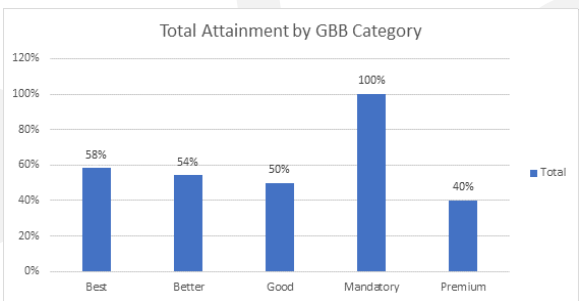


Fig 2. Sample column chart output from baselining exercise

service descriptions

4

1. Maintain a silver cloud competency

Microsoft's competencies unlock benefits for partners and signal to customers a degree of trustworthiness. They're also an indication of capability which can lead to more opportunities, deeper relationships and repeat business. Competencies are typically achieved by hitting or exceeding key indicators such as Azure consumed revenue (ACR), exam certifications, etc.

As a baseline, we believe that every indirect provider should attain and retain at least one silver cloud competency.

Go to the [Microsoft Partner Competencies](#) pages to learn more.

2. Maintain an up-to-date CSP platform

An up-to-date platform is critical to providing an excellent experience for reseller partners. Whether developed in-house, or bought from a third party, it's imperative that indirect providers use platforms which are enabled to take advantage of the developing capabilities of the CSP program. As new SKUs (such as Azure RIs) are added, resellers look immediately to use them. Opportunities can be won or lost by an indirect provider's ability to fulfil. If the platform is out of date, an indirect provider may lose business to the competition whose platform is not.

Go to the [Partner Center API and SDK early adopter program](#) pages to learn more.

3. Technical enablement program to sell new workloads

A structured enablement program is important when it comes to helping resellers understand new technology quickly, accelerating their ability to sell and deploy it. Whether delivered digitally or in person, or a combination, it's important to ensure that your resellers have a basic understanding of key topics including: *working with your CSP platform; the basics of Azure; Microsoft 365, etc.; how to build repeatable solutions; how to optimise cloud architecture for best performance, security and cost; and so on*. Partners who receive training in this model consume services more quickly than those who are left to learn on their own.

Go to the [Azure Citadel](#), [Cloud Practice Playbooks](#) and [Microsoft Learn](#) pages to learn more.

4. Advanced Support for Partners

Providing support to reseller partners might not be a key part of an indirect provider's business model. ASfP can alleviate some of this responsibility by enabling an indirect provider to access a tier of Microsoft Support which can service both the indirect provider directly and the reseller channel.

Having ASfP is a mandatory requirement for becoming a direct (1-tier) CSP partner, and we believe that indirect providers should have it too, as a matter of good service to resellers and their customers.

Go to the [Advanced Support for Partners](#) pages to learn more.

5. Capability to deliver a DCM program

The lucrative DCM program is running again in FY19 and is a useful lever to accelerate the migration and modernisation of existing on-premises or third-party-hosted DCs to Azure. As indirect CSP providers, it's important to identify top potential resellers to nominate onto the program. Equally, it's important to provide the support and services to help qualify them and their customers. This can be done through in-house resources or by partnering with specialist SI partners.

Go to the [datacentre migration kit](#) pages and review the [cloud migration playbook](#) to learn more.

6. Learning-as-a-Service, or partnership with a Microsoft Learning Partner

Microsoft Learning Partners are an excellent way to scale the delivery of in-house training and enablement of your reseller channel. They provide world-class Microsoft Certified Trainers to help you skill-up in the way that makes most sense for your business. They also offer on-demand courses accessible anywhere, anytime. The Microsoft Learning Partner network delivers flexible, solutions-based, customised training across a wide range of Microsoft technologies.

Go to the [Microsoft Learning Partners & Providers](#) pages to learn more.

7. Partner Lifecycle Management Program

Increasingly, resellers look for more than a transactional relationship from their indirect provider. Having a robust lifecycle management program that applies the right resources to the right partners at the right time drives all the right behaviours across many forms of transformation: cultural, sales and technology. Investing time to educate, grow and listen to your resellers will see them invest further into your ecosystem and make it less tempting to move to a different provider.

8. Offer pre-packaged Microsoft solutions through platform

Resellers sometimes need a helping-hand with selling their first Azure workloads. Many make the mistake of trying to sell the whole stack by leading with the all-up Azure message. Indirect providers can simplify this journey by creating bite-sized pre-packed solutions built on top of Azure functionality making it easier to sell and deploy.

For example, pre-canned ARM templates to provision 'standard' virtual machines as a Microsoft Small Business Server alternative.

9. Premier Support for Partners

Whilst Advanced Support for Partners (ASfP) can cover many requirements of an indirect provider, there are benefits to upgrading. The two offerings are not mutually exclusive and can be run in parallel to meet different needs.

For example, if you run your own in-house developed CSP and marketplace platform you may wish to cover your business with PSfP, whilst only offering ASfP to your reseller partners. This gives you peace of mind that you'll have the mission critical support right when you need it if your platform encounters difficulties.

Go to the [Premier Support for Partners](#) pages and [compare partner support plans](#) to learn more.

10. Capability to deliver Architecture Design Sessions and Solution Alignment Workshops

We often leap to the assumption that a particular technology or architecture is the right solution to a problem, and the purpose of an ADS or SAW is to establish whether that assumption is valid. Whether it's deciding on the best way to deploy a hybrid Exchange environment, or whether to use PyTorch or TensorFlow as your deep learning framework, being able to facilitate these workshops is important in keeping your resellers designing solutions which will be successful. They are a powerful way to de-risk engagements.

11. Technical Pre-Sales Resources

Resellers don't always have the in-house skills or bandwidth to manage opportunities that stretch their capabilities. As they learn and grow, it's important that the indirect provider can give them that 'helping hand'. The technical pre-sales role is critical in providing channel evangelism and technical enablement, not just about Microsoft technology but about your whole proposition. They're your front-line to the technical audience in the channel. They should be delivering workshops, helping qualify opportunities and be a driving force behind your reseller community work.

12. Write and follow technical business plans for top partners

In keeping with the [Pareto principle](#), writing a technical business plan for your top partners is important in establishing a mutual set of 'conditions of satisfaction' against which you'll measure their growth and your impact in accelerating it. A technical business plan should take into account the reseller's strengths, weaknesses, desired state, market opportunity, capability to invest capital in talent, skills development, etc. A great plan makes it clear what joint work between the reseller, indirect provider and Microsoft will be undertaken during the year, what the expected outcomes will be, and will have an executive sponsor from the reseller to sign it off.

13. Specialised Technical Enablement Program

Beyond initial capabilities such as Exchange Online deployment, or a VM migration, there lies a world of opportunity in advanced technologies like machine learning, containers, unified communications, big data and analytics, and more. A specialised technical enablement program should follow-on from mastering the 'basics' and help enable partners to build practices and solutions using those advanced workloads. Examples include: data estate modernisation, IoT, AI, modern collaboration, etc.

Go to the [Cloud Practice Playbooks](#) pages to learn more.

14. Offer pre-packaged multi-vendor solutions hosted on Azure

The longest-lasting, deepest relationships are built when indirect providers combine the power of multiple vendors together to create useful, commercially attractive, easy-to-deploy bundles and solutions. Being able to automatically transact licensing for, and provision, many workloads at once under the banner of "-as-a-Service" simplifies selling for the reseller, lowers the cost of solution development and unlocks higher margins for the indirect provider by enabling the inclusion of first-party IP solutions co-sell.

15. Maintain at least one gold cloud competency

Microsoft's competencies unlock benefits for partners and signal to customers a degree of trustworthiness. They're also an indication of capability which can lead to more opportunities, deeper relationships and repeat business. Competencies are typically achieved by hitting or exceeding key indicators such as Azure consumed revenue, exam certifications, etc.

As a stretch, we believe that every indirect provider should aspire to attain and retain at least one gold cloud competency.

Go to the [Microsoft Partner Competencies](#) pages to learn more.

16. Change management services and training

Increasingly, the definition of a successful technology deployment isn't measured in the number of licences purchased, or Azure compute bought in advance. Customers define success by how much value they get from their investment – and that value can be represented in the enduring use of the product or service by the end users. Change management services play an essential role in landing a new technology successfully in a business. Methodologies such as ProSci® or Chargefirst PCI® can be the difference between an under utilised project failure and a digital transformation success.

17. Provide technology thought leadership & community building to channel

The reseller community looks to technology vendors for inspiration and guidance on where to make their big bets for the future. Whether through blogging, podcasting, in-person seminars and workshops or attending marquee events like Microsoft Inspire, Ignite or Build, it's important to have a presence that excites and motivates ecosystem sales and technical audiences at scale.

The best indirect providers have a leading voice in their communities.

18. Technical Account Manager

Having a named technical contact to build and execute a technical business plan, orchestrate workshops and resources to accelerate solution or practice development, taking to market new offerings, etc. is a powerful service to add to your portfolio as an indirect provider. People like to know they have a real person invested in their success and a dedicated TAM can ensure your resellers continue to grow their businesses with you versus the competition.

19. Technical Services

It's well known that the highest margins comes from the services and IP you can provide. Having a strong services catalogue that you can sell to resellers to carry out functions from viability workshops through to migrations, platform modernisation, etc. opens up a potential high value revenue stream for your business. You also solve a challenge many resellers face today around the difficulty to hire experienced talent. You can provide that 'talent-as-a-service' and help a reseller deliver cloud solutions quickly.

20. Outsourced Development

Just like providing technical services, being able to act as an outsourced development machine for your resellers means they can address opportunities previously out of their reach due to the bespoke nature of the client requirements. Whether it's developing a mobile application, building PowerApps or designing a customised Power BI dashboard solution, many resellers don't have the skills or bandwidth to deliver these in-house. Being able to white-label a solution you develop on their behalf can be mutually beneficial.

21. In-house developed IP for sale

As an indirect provider, you might have particular industry vertical experience that's different to your competition. Perhaps there's a common industry problem that you could develop some IP to solve and be able to offer that through your platform for sale by your resellers as a means of both driving CSP revenues and your own margins from the IP. Repeatable, targeted and high value solutions are the sweet spot to hit as they combine Microsoft's platform value, your platform and IP value and the reseller's end-customer relationship value together to drive a strong digital transformation outcome.

22. Partner community match-making

Microsoft's approach is to 'learn it all', not 'know it all'. The pace of technological innovation in the market is faster than ever, making it challenging to stay on top of every new feature, every new tool. It's therefore important to focus on what you're good at and partner with other Microsoft Partners to deliver solutions to customers. As an indirect provider you have a unique opportunity to create a strong community of industry peers geared to help each other.

A community might be something ad hoc, something supported by networking events and round tables, or might even be through a formal tool. The importance is simply in connecting people with complementary skills to win new opportunities, grow their businesses and realise the tremendous value you bring as an indirect provider in facilitating this community.



next steps

5

Once you've completed your first pass through the survey and have established your baseline position it's time to get planning! Who doesn't love a good plan?

When considering what you should plan to achieve, keep in mind some of the following ideas:

- **What strengths can you build upon that already exist in your business today?** Typically, it's harder to build something from scratch the further away it is from your current model and skill set. For example, if you have a history of building strong business productivity solutions it's going to be quite a leap to try and become an AI business overnight. Whereas, if you've been dealing in data for a while, taking your first steps into machine learning, big data and analytics isn't so difficult. *If the skills you need to grow aren't already in your business, why not consider a partnership with another company?*
- **Have you conducted a SWOT analysis of your competition to understand where there are gaps and opportunities in the market for you to differentiate your platform and services offerings?** There are some things every indirect provider should do, but there's still plenty of ways to stand out in the market. Whether it's building new levels of intelligence and insight into your platform, developing IP which your resellers can sell, or something nobody has yet thought of, it's always good to keep one eye on the competition!
- **Where does your Microsoft business rank in terms of the other vendors you carry, and where would you like it to be?** At Microsoft, we're mindful that we might not be your number 1 vendor in terms of wallet share today. The market is rapidly evolving and the industry is seeing a huge shift towards public cloud solutions, annuity business models, and repeatable solutions and IP. We're here to help you secure your future success by building a strong, profitable and predictable business.
- **What does success look like for you and your business in 3-5 years time?** Agreeing on a plan requires a partnership of mutually beneficial outcomes. It's a good idea to be clear about what you think your business needs to look like over a period of time as the engagement from One Commercial Partner will be multi-year.

Your PTS will work with you to consider these things and many others to establish an achievable and challenging technical business plan. The radar chart output from the baseline will be one of the key foundations to include.

You should agree with your PTS on a date to review the plan and baseline and update with the progress made throughout the year. This will aid in the QBR process by sticking to a consistent set of KPIs to refer to over time, and across providers.

