



# Cloud Application Development

Microsoft Practice Development Playbook  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://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 Application Development.

## 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

<a href="#">Artis Consulting</a>	<a href="#">Mirabeau</a>
<a href="#">Atea</a>	<a href="#">New Signature</a>
<a href="#">AwareComm</a>	<a href="#">OpenSistemas</a>
<a href="#">Blue Meteorite</a>	<a href="#">PC Solutions</a>
<a href="#">DEFTeam Solutions</a>	<a href="#">Perficient</a>
<a href="#">Dimension Data</a>	<a href="#">PlainConcepts</a>
<a href="#">Empired</a>	<a href="#">Slalom</a>
<a href="#">Equinix</a>	<a href="#">Softjam</a>
<a href="#">Frama Data Systems</a>	<a href="#">SpanishPoint</a>
<a href="#">Hanu Software</a>	<a href="#">SQL Services Ltd.</a>
<a href="#">Kloud Solutions</a>	<a href="#">Theta</a>



## 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](mailto:playbookfeedback@microsoft.com)

# Table of Contents

## Introduction

About this Playbook.....	2
Objectives.....	2
How this playbook was made.....	2
Using the playbook effectively.....	3
Table of Contents .....	4
The Booming Cloud Opportunity.....	15
Define Your Practice Focus & Area of Expertise .....	16
Understand the Cloud Application Development Practice.....	17
Why choose Microsoft?.....	17
For Maximum Gains, Focus on PaaS.....	17
Let's examine the benefits of this approach.....	18
Committed to Partners .....	19
Looking Ahead.....	19
Sources:.....	19
The Application Development Opportunity.....	20
Application Development Today.....	21
EnTerprise Web and Mobile Apps opportunity .....	22
Testing Mobile Apps at scale.....	23
The DevOps Partners Opportunity .....	25
key customer challenges.....	25
Digital Media Opportunity .....	26
Digital video in business is growing. ....	27
Video is a key driver of user engagement in apps, with rapid growth year-over-year.....	27
Partner Practice Development Framework .....	28
Define Your Strategy.....	28
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	28
Go to Market.....	28
Close & Execute Deals .....	28
Optimize & Grow Your Practice.....	28
Define Your Strategy.....	29
Executive Summary .....	30
Define Your Strategy.....	30
Define & Design the Solution Offer .....	31
Understand the Cloud Business Models.....	31
Cloud Profitability Benchmark Assessment .....	32

Benchmark your business.....	32
Benchmark your cloud business now across the four pillars of the Modern Partner .....	32
Develop a Business Plan .....	33
Starting Your Business Plan .....	33
Cloud Opportunity.....	33
Creating the Marketing & Sales Plan .....	34
Marketing .....	34
Sales .....	34
Delivery.....	34
Financial Projections.....	34
Capital Requirements.....	34
Differentiation.....	34
Develop a Financial Plan.....	35
Financial Projections.....	35
Anticipated Valuation Impact.....	35
Risks and Mitigation .....	35
Define & Design the Solution Offer .....	36
Defining Your Value Proposition.....	36
Defining Your Solution Offer .....	38
Project Based Services .....	39
Managed Services .....	41
Intellectual Property.....	44
The Importance of Developing Intellectual Property.....	45
Defining Your Pricing Strategy.....	46
Standard Pricing.....	46
Virtuous Pricing .....	46
Flat Rating Pricing.....	47
Upfront fees .....	48
Payment terms.....	49
Defining Sales Incentives.....	50
Reward a sales action .....	50
The level of incentive versus required selling effort orients the sales .....	50
Simple enough to be understood and drive actions.....	50
Sales Compensation Variables.....	50
Positioning the Offer via Incentives.....	50
Include Automation .....	51
Continuous Innovation through DevOps.....	51
Key services for this offering.....	51
Consider Verticalizing the Offer .....	52

Identify Partnership Opportunities .....	53
Partner to Partner.....	53
ISV + channel-based MSP partners = international success.....	53
Make connections with Dynasource.com .....	53
Dynasource.....	54
Transform through collaboration.....	54
Increase demand for your resources .....	54
Get started now .....	54
Additional Partner Sources .....	54
Build a Business Case .....	55
Getting the Right Partners into the Azure Business.	56
Define Engagement Process .....	57
Pre-Sales & Post Sales.....	57
Pre-Sales.....	57
Post-Sales.....	57
Implementation .....	58
Team Data Science Process.....	58
Scrum Process .....	58
Agile Process.....	58
Capability Maturity Model (CMMI) Process .....	58
Agile as a Presales tool .....	59
Identify Engagement Resources.....	60
Identify the technical team.....	60
Identify and Fill the Gaps .....	60
Join the Microsoft Partner Network.....	61
About the Microsoft Partner Network .....	61
Network member .....	61
Action Pack.....	61
Competency .....	61
Take the next step with a competency.....	61
Microsoft Partner Programs.....	62
Cloud Solution Provider.....	62
P-Seller Program.....	62
MPN to Resource Alignment .....	63
Align Individuals to MPN Requirements .....	63
Join the Azure Mentor Program .....	66
Successful completion of this program would look like 3 key things:.....	66
Eligible Partners will.....	66
Define Engagement Process .....	67
aka.ms/practiceplaybooks	

Identify Equipment, Services, and Tools .....	67
Azure Subscriptions .....	67
Developer Tools .....	67
Visual Studio Team Services (VSTS).....	67
Application telemetry and testing tools .....	67
Linux, Windows or Mac OSX workstations.....	67
Broadband internet connection.....	67
Practice Cost Calculation.....	68
Estimating your Azure Spend .....	68
For example, .....	69
Identify Potential Customers/Pilot .....	71
Engage your existing customers.....	71
Build your prospect hit list .....	72
Webinars and Podcasts: .....	72
Referrals:.....	72
White Papers: .....	72
News Articles: .....	72
Social Media:.....	72
Case Study:.....	72
Define Customer Support Program and Process .....	73
Support Overview.....	73
Define Customer Support Program and Process .....	74
Supporting Your Customers.....	74
Support Model:.....	74
Escalation Process:.....	74
Maintenance Contracts .....	75
Support Options from Microsoft.....	76
Signature Cloud Support .....	76
Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners .....	76
Resources .....	76
Submitting Azure Support Requests.....	77
Resources .....	77
Partner Advisory Hours .....	78
Technical presales assistance .....	79
Deployment services .....	79
Support.....	79
Summary of Support Options .....	80
Operationalize & Get Trained.....	81
Executive Summary .....	82

Operationalize & Get Trained .....	82
Creating a hiring plan.....	83
Should you Hire New Resources or Train Existing Resources?.....	83
Resources.....	83
Hire Resources.....	84
Sales Resources.....	84
Marketing Resources.....	84
Technical Resources (Architecture, Infrastructure, and Development) .....	85
Management.....	86
Support Resources .....	86
Job Descriptions.....	88
Recruiting Resources.....	92
Top 10 Sources to Find Skilled Labor and What to Look For .....	92
Resource Compensation.....	93
Train Your Business Team .....	94
Training is Good for Business.....	94
Cloud Platform University .....	95
C+E Partner Curriculum Guide.....	95
MPN Learning Paths .....	95
Microsoft Inspire Conference Recordings.....	95
Partner Community Events, Calls & Webinars .....	95
Smart Partner Marketing .....	95
Build staff on-boarding and mentoring plan.....	96
Preparing and Training IT Staff for the Cloud .....	96
Complete Training.....	97
Technical Training .....	97
Azure Skills.....	97
Microsoft Conferences.....	97
Safari .....	97
Pluralsight.....	97
Opsgility .....	98
Partner Community Events, Calls & Webinars .....	98
Microsoft Virtual Academy .....	98
EDX Courses.....	98
Cloud Platform University .....	98
MPN Learning Paths .....	98
Microsoft Inspire Conference Recordings.....	98
Azure Skills.....	98
Microsoft Learning On Demand Courses .....	98

TechNet Virtual Labs .....	98
Attend a Microsoft Azure Course .....	98
Microsoft Azure Books.....	98
Channel 9.....	98
Azure Documentation .....	98
Stack Overflow .....	98
Microsoft Learning Partners .....	98
Complete Certifications .....	99
Solutions Associate Certifications .....	99
MCSA: Cloud Platform Solutions Associate .....	99
MCSA: Linux on Azure Solutions Associate.....	99
Solutions Expert Certifications.....	100
MCSE: Cloud Platform and Infrastructure .....	100
MCSE: Data Management and Analytics .....	100
Solutions Developer Certifications .....	100
MCSD: App Builder.....	100
MCSD: Azure Solutions Architect .....	100
Setup Azure for internal use.....	101
Azure Credits.....	101
Flexibility with Azure Credits.....	101
Visual Studio .....	101
Microsoft Partner Network .....	101
CSP Sandbox.....	101
Ways to Purchase Azure .....	102
EA Agreements .....	102
Pay as you go and Trial Accounts .....	102
Identify and enroll into Azure Sell Incentives .....	103
Attaching a Digital Partner of Record (DPOR) .....	103
How does it work? .....	103
Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA).....	104
Cloud Solution Provider.....	105
CSP Direct .....	105
CSP Indirect.....	105
Identify and apply for Azure Investment Programs.....	106
Cloud and Enterprise (C+E) Investment Programs.....	106
Objectives .....	106
Build materials to support sales and marketing efforts.....	107
Understanding Push vs. Pull Marketing .....	107
Sales and Marketing Resources.....	109

Campaigns.....	109
Web Content .....	109
Marketing SureStep .....	109
Services .....	109
DigitalStride .....	109
Microsoft Community Connections .....	109
Logo Builder .....	109
Create key contracts.....	110
Key Contracts for your Practice.....	110
Service Level Agreement.....	110
Master Services Agreement.....	110
Statement of Work.....	110
Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreement .....	110
Setup Tools & Systems .....	111
Project Management .....	111
GitHub.....	111
Visual Studio Team Services .....	111
Microsoft Project.....	111
Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Project Service Automation .....	111
Collaboration Tools & File Sharing .....	112
Microsoft Teams.....	112
Yammer .....	112
OneDrive for Business .....	112
Skype for Business .....	112
Surface Hub.....	112
Customer Relationship Management.....	113
Support Ticket Setup and Tracking.....	114
Customer Support.....	114
Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Customer Service .....	114
Create Consistency and Loyalty .....	114
Make your agents' jobs easier.....	114
Get an Adaptive Engine.....	114
Define & Design the Solution Offer .....	115
Assessing for Readiness.....	115
Creating a cloud migration plan.....	116
Migration Planning .....	117
Decide on a Solution Marketplace .....	119
Azure Marketplace.....	119
Certify Applications and Services.....	119

Develop your sales channel .....	120
Operationalize .....	120
Cortana Intelligence Gallery .....	121
Experiments .....	121
Jupyter Notebooks .....	121
Solutions .....	121
Tutorials .....	121
Collections .....	121
Competitions .....	121
AppSource .....	122
Power BI .....	122
PowerBI.com Solution Templates .....	122
PowerBI.com Partner Showcase .....	122
Increase your visibility .....	122
Create Engagement Checklists & Templates .....	123
Standardize Customer Engagement .....	123
Execute Solution Integration Plan .....	124
Successfully Develop and Deploy the Solution .....	124
Go to Market .....	125
Executive Summary .....	126
Go to Market .....	126
Define your sales process .....	127
Plan your customer's journey to buying .....	127
Launch digital marketing activities .....	128
Build a modern, discoverable website .....	128
Social Media .....	128
Content Creation .....	128
DigitalStride .....	128
Digital Transformation with Azure .....	129
Leading with Digital Transformation .....	129
The four pillars of digital transformation include: .....	129
How enterprises make this work .....	130
Account Based Marketing (ABM) .....	132
Self-Evaluate .....	132
Get to know your existing customers .....	132
Use predictive analytics .....	133
Dig deeper .....	133
Engage with Customers & Prospects .....	134
Engaging with the user community in different ways .....	134

Meetups .....	134
Conferences .....	134
Publications .....	135
Webinars and Podcasts .....	135
Bill of Material (BOM) .....	136
Define Technical Community Strategy .....	137
Engage with Workshops .....	137
Workshops.....	137
Microsoft Technology Centers (Where available) .....	137
Execute Nurture Marketing Efforts .....	138
Creating Long Term Customer Relationships.....	138
Why Nurture? .....	138
Invest in relationships .....	138
Authenticity .....	139
Relevance.....	139
Variety .....	139
Follow-up.....	139
Automation .....	139
Engage Technical Pre-Sales in Sales Conversations.....	140
Selling is Technical .....	140
Find Your Customers.....	141
Find Your First Customer .....	141
Find Your Next Customer .....	142
Successfully drive your sales and marketing efforts .....	142
DigitalStride .....	142
Web syndication .....	142
Case Study:.....	142
Measure Customer Adoption & Engagement.....	144
Measure & Track .....	144
Close & Execute Deals .....	145
Executive Summary .....	146
Close & Execute Deals.....	146
Develop Customer Adoption & Onboarding Plans .....	147
Maximize customer lifetime value.....	147
People .....	147
Process .....	147
Technology .....	147
Identify Opportunities to Co-Sell with Microsoft .....	148
Closing the Sale Together .....	148

Develop Proposal .....	149
Write winning proposals.....	149
Negotiate and Close Deals .....	150
Be on point with Azure Sales Training.....	150
Training Recommendations .....	150
Pitch Perfect Conversation Checklist .....	151
Selling Azure Solutions.....	151
Instructions for Partners.....	151
Deploy/Implement Solutions .....	152
Execute Efficiently .....	152
Deploy/Implement Solutions .....	153
The Case for Agile .....	153
Cultural Shift.....	153
Pair Programming.....	153
Mob Programming .....	154
Scrum.....	154
Code Reviews .....	154
Test Driven Development.....	154
Deploy/Implement Solutions .....	155
Architecture Design Session.....	155
Primary Audience .....	155
Before the ADS.....	155
During the ADS.....	156
Discovery.....	156
Envisioning .....	156
Planning .....	156
After the ADS.....	156
Implement Proof of Concepts .....	157
Proof of Concept High Level Flow.....	157
How to perform a Proof of Concept? .....	157
Define Scope.....	157
POC Execution .....	158
Next Steps.....	158
Creating a Cloud App PoC .....	158
Transition to Managed Services .....	159
Pass the customer off to your managed service team .....	159
Expectations.....	159
Opportunity .....	159
Digital Partner of Record .....	159

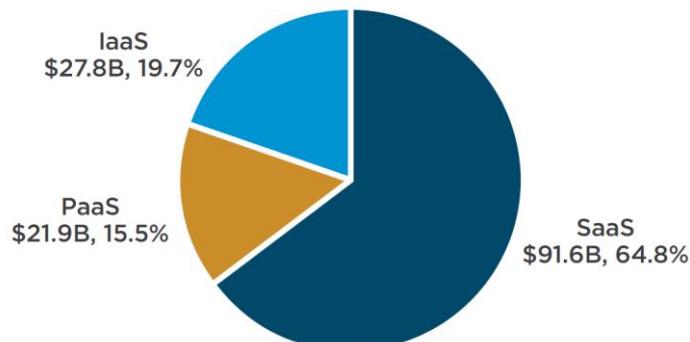
Best practices for running an Azure project.....	160
Troubleshooting Resources.....	161
Cloud Application Development Troubleshooting Resources .....	161
Leverage Investment Resources .....	162
Consumption Investment Funds (CIF) .....	162
Deal Support (Pre-Sales) .....	162
Driving Consumption & Adoption (Post Sales) .....	162
Deployment Planning Services for Cloud Application Development .....	162
Safe Passage .....	164
Leverage Investment Resource .....	165
Azure Everywhere.....	165
Azure Everywhere.....	165
Delivery Format.....	165
Azure Access.....	165
.....	166
Optimize & Grow Your Practice.....	166
Executive Summary .....	167
Optimize & Grow Your Practice .....	167
Collect Feedback .....	168
The Basics .....	168
Use Feedback to Optimize and Grow .....	169
What is a post mortem? .....	170
Land & Expand .....	171
Growing Scope .....	171
Land .....	171
Expand .....	171
Refine Customer Value Proposition .....	172
Refine Customer Value Proposition and Offer .....	172
Expand to Similar Customers.....	173
Vertical Customer Play .....	173
Optimize Costs .....	174
Efficiency, Profit and Growth .....	174
Metrics that matter in a cloud business.....	175
Revisit Partnerships.....	176
Grow Partnerships.....	176
Cloud Application Development Playbook Summary .....	178
Feedback.....	178

# 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**

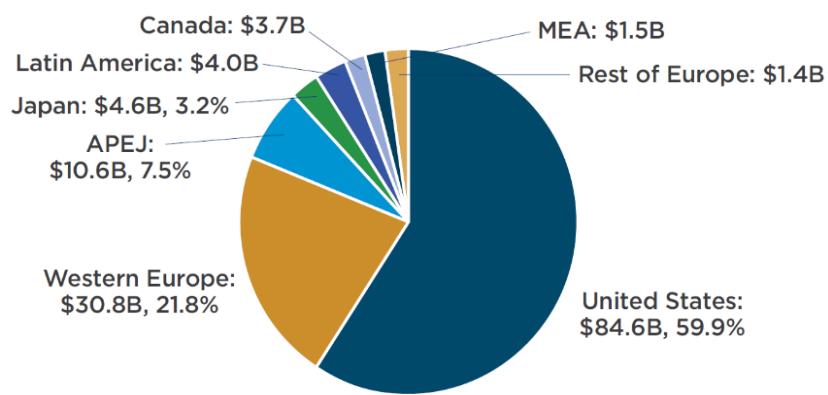


#US40709515 - Worldwide and Regional Public IT Cloud Services Forecast, 2015-2019

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 Your Practice Focus & Area of Expertise

This playbook focuses on the Cloud Application Development practice and will help you build the next generation of intelligent apps with an open, comprehensive solution for any developer and any platform.



## APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Help your customers to digitally transform by leveraging the Azure PaaS Platform. Build offerings around web and mobile apps, application modernization, customer-facing apps, and app migration, using Azure PaaS capabilities.

[Area Home](#)



## DEVELOPER OPERATIONS

Developer Operations (DevOps) partners are experts in helping organizations define, build, manage, and continuously deliver great solutions on-premise and in the cloud by leveraging the powerful DevOps and ALM features of Microsoft's Development platform.

[Area Home](#)



## DIGITAL MEDIA

Endless opportunities to grow your business building digital media solutions: Global distribution of premium video content, engaging with and educating employees, connecting and interacting with customers, optimizing your customer's business, and more.

[Area Home](#)

# Understand the Cloud Application Development Practice

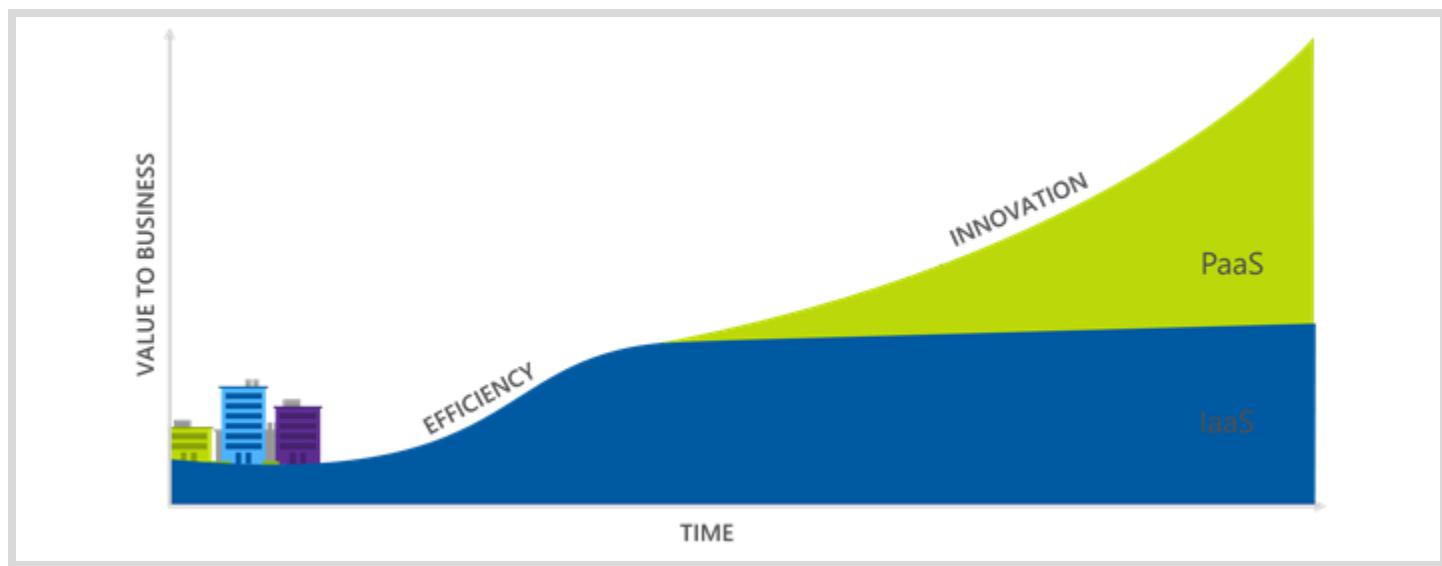
## Why choose Microsoft?

A trusted global leader, committed to partners, a leading applications 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.

### FOR MAXIMUM GAINS, FOCUS ON PAAS

While adopting more agile DevOps methods, and moving your applications to the cloud will save you money and make your complex app deployments more efficient, you will make the biggest gains by focusing the majority of your developers back on coding.



Virtualization has been amazing technology for the datacenter, enabling efficiencies and cost savings through increased density and decoupling workloads from physical server hardware. But 10 years later we're starting to run out of workloads to virtualize leaving businesses wondering where IT should look for the next wave of business value.

For the answer, IT needs to look to where the business is investing. Research shows more business departments spending on so-called "shadow IT"; public clouds offering IaaS and higher level services through a consumer-style self service provisioning portal that delivers IT resources more rapidly and easily than using the internal IT department. Some organizations already recognize this threat and have chosen to create a new, more agile IT alternative within the organization. Looking higher up the stack, businesses are growing their investment in applications at a much faster rate compared with infrastructure investment.

IT organizations need to get back into the game by looking to new innovations that support applications and services that drive the business forward. The good news is that Microsoft has been delivering applications and services in this model in Microsoft Azure for several years and has developed a series of innovations from that experience.

#### LET'S EXAMINE THE BENEFITS OF THIS APPROACH.

- Before virtualization IT was considered a cost center and TCO was the most important attribute for Businesses
- Virtualization helped IT reduce TCO by consolidation and better utilization of Infrastructure thereby adding value to the business
- Most enterprises have optimized their infrastructure using Virtualization - 70% of all x86 architecture workloads are virtualized There is not a lot of scope left for IT to add value through virtualization alone
- Businesses now want to use this virtualized Infrastructure to power their innovation agenda and TCO, although still important, is second to innovation for Businesses. This has opened a door for IT to provide enormous value to the Business and become part of this innovation agenda
- This innovation is happening through applications and infrastructure optimization alone is insufficient to power this innovation
- Businesses are starting to recognize this. Spending on Enterprise software and applications is projected to increase by 7.2% CAGR in next 4 years as compared to 4.4% in overall IT spending -- that means software and application spending is projected to grow nearly twice as fast as overall IT spending

Building apps using Azure Functions, Azure App Service, PowerApps, and others, eliminates the need for your developers to maintain the underlying system software or virtual configurations. This burden is lifted from your developers by shifting those responsibilities to Azure, freeing them to focus entirely on business value. PaaS brings you real business benefits.

How much, you ask? In its latest [Total Economic Impact Study](#), [Forrester Consulting](#) interviewed a number of current customers of Azure's PaaS services and concluded that **migrating to PaaS from IaaS resulted in a 466% return on investment**. For customers migrating from on-premises environments to PaaS, the return on investment can be even greater. **Time to market also improved by as much as fifty percent**, because of the efficiency and speed of deploying applications with PaaS services.

#### THE REWARDS, AS FORRESTER HAS SHOWN, ARE SIGNIFICANT:



466%  
Return on  
Investment



\$5.91M  
Net Present  
Value



80%  
IT Time  
Saved



50%  
Faster Service Deployment  
Time to Market

Source: The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Azure Platform-As-A-Service, Forrester, June 2016

## 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 Cloud Application Development.

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*

## LOOKING AHEAD

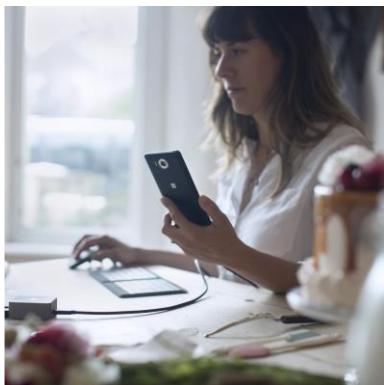
In addition to the accomplishments and accolades, it is important to look ahead to what is coming next from Microsoft by using Microsoft's [Cloud platform roadmap](#). You and your customers can get a sense of the new technologies that are on the horizon, and be well prepared to launch innovative efforts in concert with new capabilities from the Microsoft Cloud.

## SOURCES:

1. Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Application Platform as a Service, Worldwide – 24 March 2016 | ID:G00277028
2. Magic Quadrant for Cloud Infrastructure as a Service, Worldwide – 03 August 2016 | ID:G00278620
3. Magic Quadrant for Public Cloud Storage Services, Worldwide – 26 July 2016 | ID:G00281297
4. Magic Quadrant for Server Virtualization Infrastructure – 03 August 2016 | ID:G00289889

# Understand the Cloud Application Development Practice

## Resources



You have a passion for developing applications and services, and want to take advantage of the enormous growth potential of the cloud. You are excited by the new capabilities you can provide due to the rapid innovation of cloud-based services and infrastructure. Now it's time to turn that passion and excitement into a profitable practice that you can be proud of.

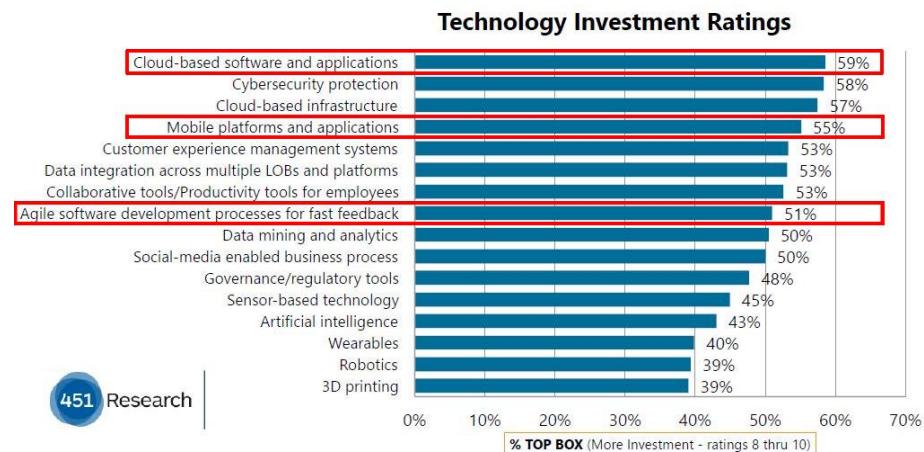
## RESOURCES

- ➔ [The Digital Revolution, Powered by Cloud \(PDF\)](#)
- ➔ [Understanding Azure – a guide for developers](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft's vision for DevOps](#)

## The Application Development Opportunity

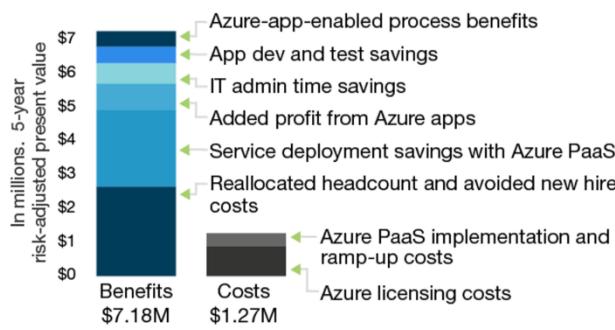
Expect a fast growing, profitable segment

The largest (59%) percentage of large, midsize, and small business decision makers predict that cloud-based software and applications will be their most significant investment over the next 5 years to reach business goals.



More companies are investing money in the cloud, with a projected \$107.2 Billion growth for worldwide cloud services spending by 2017, at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.1%. Developers are seeing their largest gains by building upon PaaS vs. IaaS or SaaS. In the recent [Worldwide Semiannual Public Cloud Services Spending Guide](#), IDC estimated that PaaS will grow at a faster rate than Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS) with a five-year CAGRs of 30.6%. IDC states that "PaaS is important because it's the focus at many companies for rapid application development and mobile app development, using the DevOps approach."

In a five-year period, Azure PaaS enables a number of specific IT and business improvement, cost saving, and revenue opportunities on top of existing IaaS benefits



"Developing our app without [Azure] PaaS? Well, we wouldn't have done it. Frankly, the extra time and resources required would have wiped out any profit that we have generated."

Strategist and founder of a US IT services firm

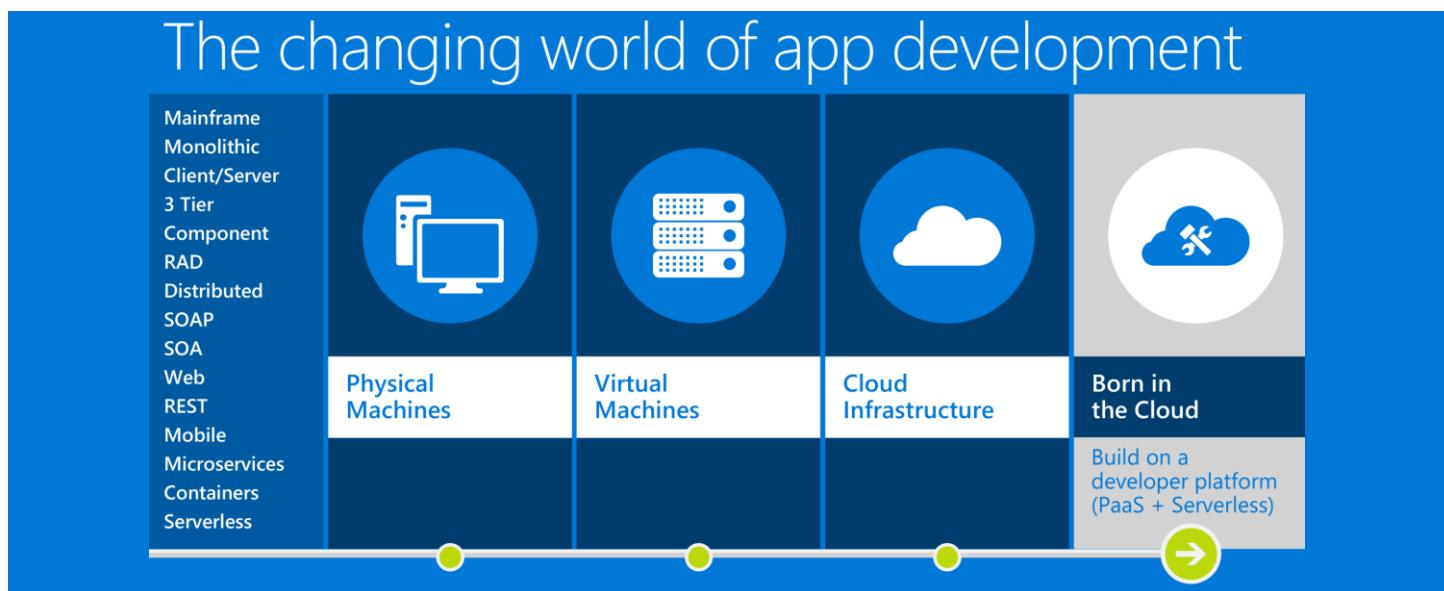
## APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT TODAY

In the beginning, there were physical machines. They were expensive and developers loaded them up with multiple applications to save costs. This caused no end of conflicts and unexpected bugs, yet effective machine utilization was still low. Developers struggled to make sure changes to one application didn't break an unrelated application.

Next up: virtual machines. Since multiple VMs could be run on a single physical box, developers installed their applications in contained VMs, which reduced conflicts and improved utilization. The downside of this was dealing with shared memory and unpredictable performance. Furthermore, since provisioning had to be made for the largest loads, "scaling in" wouldn't really save money.

Enter the cloud. Companies could rent the virtual machines they needed, when they needed them. They could scale applications up and down on demand. You still needed to install and configure OS level patches and updates, and you still had to contend with low-level networking.

Today, more businesses are increasingly evaluating PaaS (Platform as a Service) and Serverless approaches to application development, moving beyond cloud-hosted VMs, removing the need to manage servers and scalability challenges, and increasing the speed of the iterative development process. In the Microsoft Cloud OS Partner Economics Research report (2014), it was found that companies can expect a 40% gross margin by using Microsoft Azure PaaS for app development services.



CUSTOMER NEEDS	PARTNER OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To deliver the right applications for the business faster, with higher levels of quality and accountability</li><li>Integrated development tools and an approach that drive productivity and agility—across development teams, apps, and release cycles.</li><li>A flexible way to connect legacy applications with new—to interoperate, securely—to proactively support new business opportunities.</li><li>To infuse data into applications and business so it works and doesn't just pile up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver end-to-end solutions on a comprehensive and enterprise-proven platform and expand offerings on a hybrid cloud platform</li><li>Cross-sell by delivering end-to-end solutions with a comprehensive portfolio: mobile, media, M2M, big data, etc.</li><li>Realize simplified app development with "build once" unified applications for cross-platform deployment</li><li>Profit with differentiated offerings by using Microsoft Azure services to support mobile, media services, IoT, machine learning, etc.</li><li>Drive longer engagements and recurring business</li></ul>

## ENTERPRISE WEB AND MOBILE APPS OPPORTUNITY

The following are three areas in which you can build long-term, value-added services for application innovation:

PROJECT SERVICES	MANAGED SERVICES	PACKAGED IP
 Average Revenue: <b>\$150-\$275K</b> Margin: <b>35%</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Custom App Dev</li> <li>Business Opportunity Identification</li> <li>Solution Analysis, Scope, &amp; Design</li> <li>Proof of Concept</li> <li>User Experience Consulting</li> <li>Workflow Creation in SharePoint</li> </ul>	 Average Revenue: <b>\$50-\$100K</b> Margin: <b>45%</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Response Support</li> <li>Reactive Help Desk Support (Office, Lync, Intune, CRM Online)</li> <li>Performance &amp; Application Troubleshooting</li> <li>Application Lifecycle Management (design, development, testing, production, errors corrections, updates, bug fixes, new versions)</li> </ul>	 Average Revenue: <b>\$100K</b> Margin: <b>70%</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertical Solution Subscriptions</li> <li>Industry-specific Mobile Apps</li> <li>Industry-specific Workflows</li> <li>Function-specific Workflows (eg HR, Procurement)</li> <li>Customer Self-Serve Portals</li> <li>e-Commerce Functionality</li> <li>Automated Load Balancing</li> <li>Turnkey BI Portals</li> </ul>

\* Note: The average revenue and margin figures above are provided to you for illustrative purposes only, and should not be considered or relied upon as the actual or potential income, sales, profits, or earnings which you will realize, in whole or in part, as a result of deployment of Microsoft products and technologies. Some of the assumptions and figures provided are based on partner interviews and a survey conducted by MDC Research of over 1,100 partners in November 2016, which you may find useful in assessing your own numbers.

Here are some insights to help maximize the profitability of these opportunities:

- ➔ Focus on industries that have highly mobile workforces that need coordination
- ➔ Key on connectivity and security
- ➔ Integrate appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup> Party apps

Azure App Service allows you to build powerful web and mobile apps, for any platform and any device, that connect to data anywhere, in the cloud or on-premises. Built for developers, it allows you to create the following app types from a single development experience:

- **Web Apps**—Quickly create and deploy mission critical web apps that scale with your business.
- **Mobile Apps**—Build mobile app back ends with notifications, data sync, and authentication.
- **API Apps**—Easily build and consume cloud APIs.
- **Logic Apps**—Automate the access and use of data across clouds without writing code.

App Service provides an integrated set of enterprise capabilities through a single development and management experience offering you the following benefits:

- **Build web and mobile apps fast.** Rapidly build, deploy and manage web and mobile back end apps for employees or customers. Use your existing languages skills—.NET, Java,

NodeJS, PHP, or Python. Accelerate development with access to a rich gallery of APIs, connectors, and logic available in the Azure Marketplace.

• **Connect to any service and unlock your data.** Connect your web or mobile app to enterprise systems or SaaS in minutes with built-in connectors. Choose from more than 50 connectors for enterprise systems such as SAP, Siebel, and Oracle to popular enterprise SaaS services like Salesforce and Office 365 to popular internet services such as Facebook, Twitter, and Dropbox.

• **Integrate more easily.** Logic Apps lets you integrate data across clouds and automate business processes in minutes using a visual design experience. Easily integrate your logic with any mobile or web app via standard REST APIs. Build sophisticated enterprise application integration, B2B solutions using Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and business policies (rules engine).

• **Increase developer productivity.** Optimized for DevOps, with continuous integration support for Visual Studio Team Services and GitHub, so you can focus on rapidly improving your apps without worrying about infrastructure. Deploy app updates with built-in staging, roll-back, and in-production testing capabilities.<sup>26</sup>

• **Rely on Enterprise-grade services** – App Service has full enterprise-grade security and management. Provide delegated and role-based administration; easily secure and manage data flowing to your mobile apps; and protect your assets with built-

in backup and restore capability. Fully PCI-compliant with dedicated environments, and the ability to deploy across public and private clouds.

As a single integrated service, App Service makes it easy to compose the above app types into a single solution, allowing you to easily build apps that target both web and mobile clients using the same back end and integrate with on-premises systems as well as popular SaaS services.

A term you may have heard that often comes up in conversations about cloud-based development is microservices. Microservices are an application development and deployment approach perfectly suited to the agility, scale, and reliability requirements of modern cloud applications. In a microservices model, you individually build and deploy small, independently-executing services or “microservices,” that collaborate using published API calls across the network to deliver the overall application’s functionality. This results in a fine-grained, loosely coupled application that can easily be distributed across multiple host machines for scale and reliability. Contrast this with the monolithic three-tier approach common in many applications today.

The term “microservice” emphasizes the fact that applications should be composed of services small enough to truly implement a single role. Each has well-defined contracts (API contracts) for other microservices to communicate and share data with it. Microservices must also be able to version and update independently of each other. This loose coupling is key to supporting rapid and reliable evolution of an application. What would have been a single tier of a monolithic application decomposes into many discrete microservices, each independent and isolated.

[Azure Service Fabric](#) is a mature, feature-rich microservices application platform with built-in support for lifecycle management, stateful and stateless performance at scale, hybrid deployments, 24x7 availability, and cost efficiency.

Another term that is used when discussing cloud-based solutions, and is rising in popularity, is “serverless” computing. This term can be confusing at first, because servers are still used to execute code, but an additional layer of abstraction is added to remove the developer from any sort of server configuration. Once you add your code, the service handles all the capacity, scaling, patching, and administration of the infrastructure to run your code. You are only charged for the compute time you use, and scaling is automatically handled to meet load demands. Azure Functions is our serverless, event-driven service offering that extends the existing Azure application platform with capabilities to implement code triggered by events occurring in other Azure services, SaaS products, and on-premises systems.

[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)

Azure Functions extends our [market leading](#) PaaS platform, building on the existing WebJobs infrastructure to let developers easily implement code that reacts to events generated from across the breadth of Azure. Whether you want to respond to changes in Azure storage containers, events emitted in SaaS products that support Web Hooks, or by calls to an HTTP endpoint, they’re all easy to set up and require minimal configuration.

You can implement your functions in a variety of languages including JavaScript, C#, Python and PHP. In addition, you can choose scripting options like Bash scripts, PowerShell scripts, or Windows batch files. Azure Functions provides an intuitive web-based code editing experience or you upload and trigger pre-compiled executables built in the development tool of your choice. You can quickly and easily iterate on your Azure Functions with continuous deployment using Visual Studio Team Services, GitHub, or BitBucket. Monitor and troubleshoot your Azure Functions using the embedded logging environment.

You can’t have a discussion on cloud computing without talking about containers and the Docker toolset. Organizations across all business segments want to understand what containers are, what they mean for applications in the cloud, and how to best use them for their specific development and IT operations scenarios.

The combination of instant startup that comes from OS virtualization and reliable execution that comes from isolation and resource governance makes containers ideal for application development and testing and developers can quickly iterate. Because its environment and resource usage are consistent across systems, a containerized application that works on a developer’s system will work the same way on a production system. The instant-start and small footprint also benefits cloud scenarios, since applications can scale-out quickly and many more application instances can fit onto a machine than if they were each in a virtual machine, maximizing resource utilization.

[Azure Container Service](#) provides a way to simplify the creation, configuration, and management of a cluster of virtual machines that are preconfigured to run containerized applications. Using an optimized configuration of popular open-source scheduling and orchestration tools, Container Service enables you to use your existing skills or draw upon a large and growing body of community expertise to deploy and manage container-based applications on Microsoft Azure.

## TESTING MOBILE APPS AT SCALE

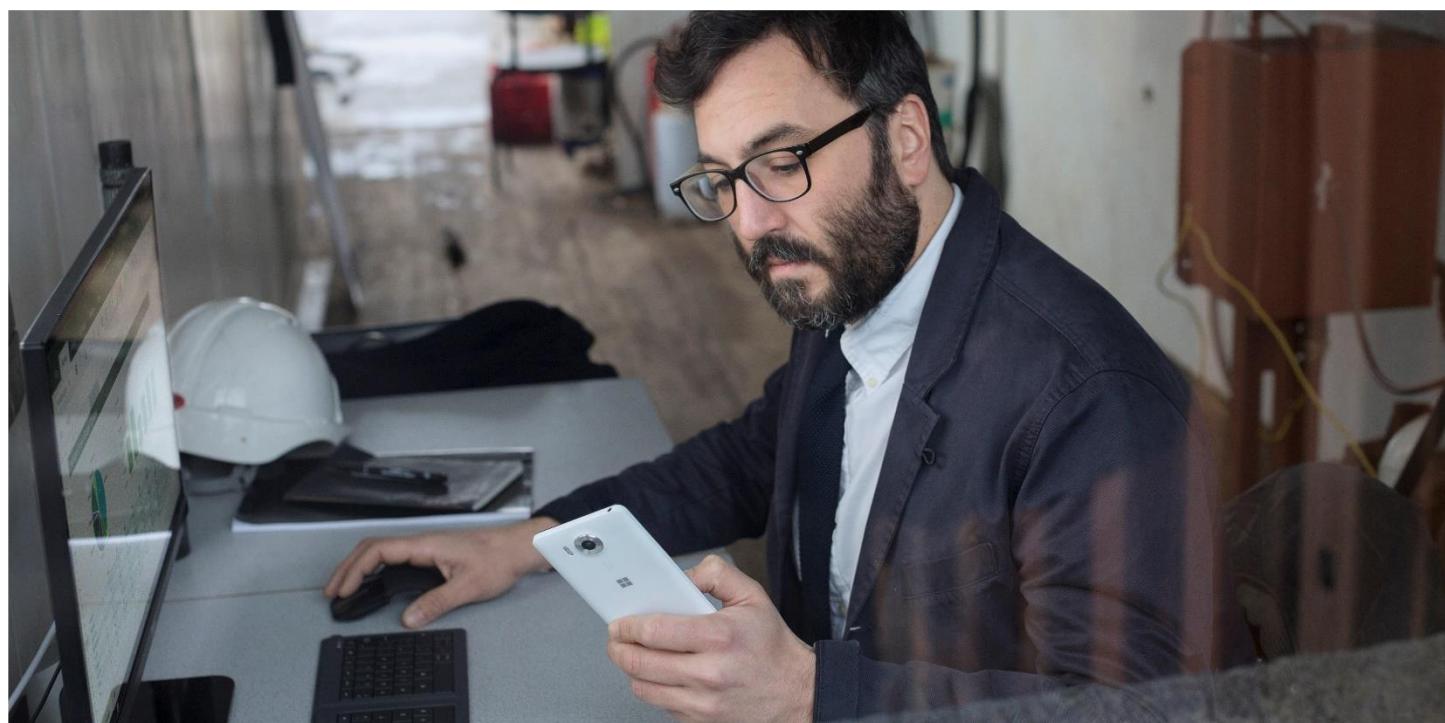
One service you can offer is cloud-scale mobile testing. Help your customers prepare automated tests for their mobile applications that are developed in any programming language.

Write UI tests in C#, Ruby, or Java, that automate real-world user actions, such as tapping, swiping, rotating, pinching and zooming, change GPS location, pressing physical buttons, activating the device camera, etc. Prepare the test cases and test locally on emulators and simulators, then send them to [Xamarin Test Cloud](#), where thousands of iOS and Android devices are ready to run your test scripts. You can select devices by operating system, form factor, platform, market share, and other variables. What you'll see as a result of the tests, are full-frame screenshots for every step of every test, performance data (memory, CPU, duration, etc.), and reports you can compare against previous runs to find regressions and bottlenecks.

There is a cost that comes with using Xamarin Test Cloud, so make sure it makes financial sense for you or your customers to use the service. You should always test your mobile applications in every case, at a local level at minimum. Having a mobile application that is tested properly ensures that your first-time customers will become your long-term ones. If the app you are testing is very simple with limited features and a small number of users, Xamarin Test Cloud might be overkill. However, if you have an enterprise mobile app, or a complex app with many

users, Xamarin Test Cloud is a highly recommended, and proven way to cost-effectively test on all of the potential mobile devices in an automated way that does not require a large team of testers to manually do the work. Device prices cost hundreds of dollars apiece, and are constantly refreshed with new versions. It is costly and difficult to keep track of new devices, maintain old ones, and coordinate tests across all of the devices you may have on-hand. Xamarin Test Cloud simplifies this by maintaining a large collection of thousands of devices that can run fully automated tests on your app at any time. Furthermore, with automated testing, you can see how much of your code is covered by tests. Changes to your tests can be made instantly and tested immediately. Couple automated mobile tests with Visual Studio Team Services or any number of CI systems, to ensure a rock solid mobile application that you can quickly iterate upon.

Learn how to effectively use Xamarin Test Cloud through [Xamarin University](#), [Lynda.com](#), and [Pluralsight](#).



# Understand the Cloud Application Development Practice

## Resources



In a dev-ops world, customers expect you to provide continuous integration, deployment, and automation for all their applications. Everything from code deployment to testing, staging to release, can be automated. This is an opportunity for you to help your customers leverage the full dev-ops experience of developing on Azure.

### RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure Automation](#)
- ➔ [Azure Automation DSC](#)
- ➔ [Azure PowerShell](#)
- ➔ [Azure CLI](#)
- ➔ [VSTS DevOps and ALM](#)
- ➔ [Chef, Puppet, Docker and Linux VMs](#)
- ➔ [Using Jenkins and Storage for Continuous Integration](#)

### 3RD PARTY RESOURCES

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

## The DevOps Partners Opportunity

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

# Understand the Cloud Application Development Practice

## Resources

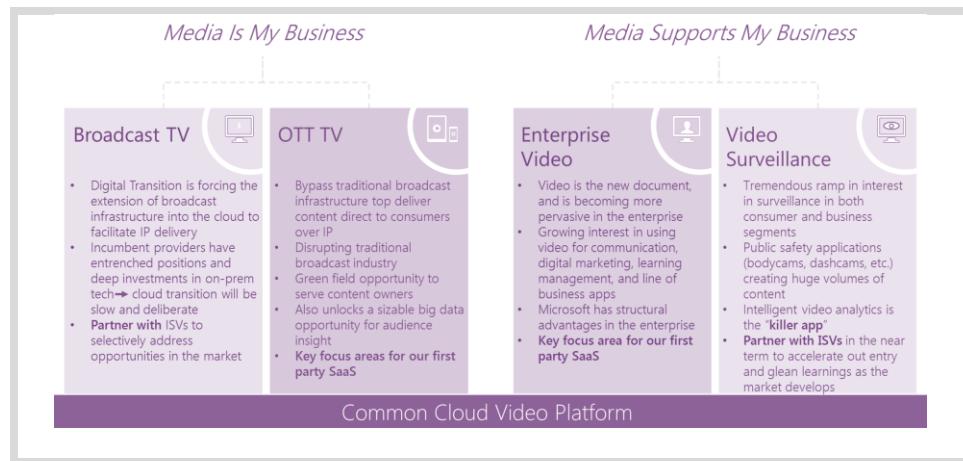


Build, manage, and deploy media apps/content with higher performance and reliability for any device.

## Digital Media Opportunity

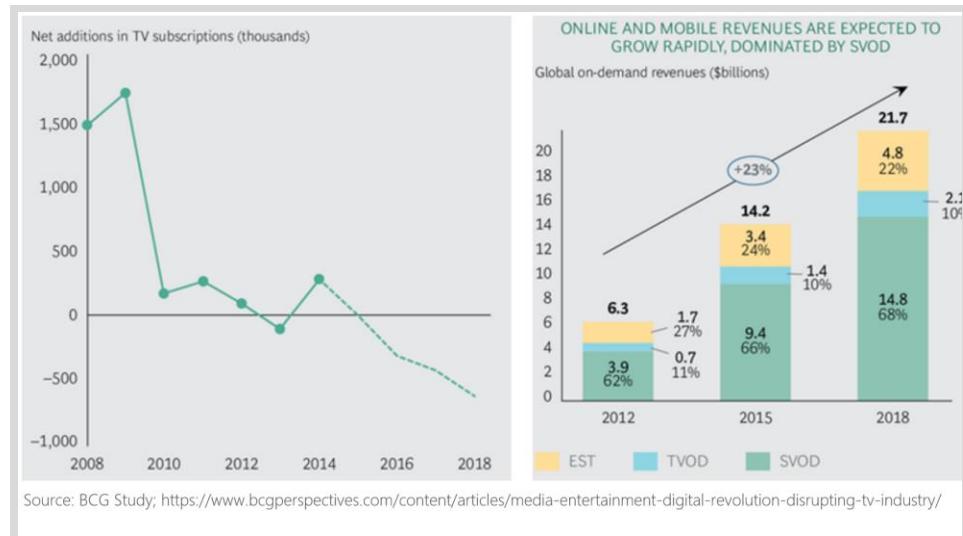
The media opportunity landscape is expanding.

Whether media is your business, or media supports your business, opportunities that benefit from a common cloud video platform are increasing in number.



Increased digital disruption of media & entertainment.

Broadcasters face several challenges, including an increasingly demanding and fragmented audience with an appetite for more content on more devices.



## DIGITAL VIDEO IN BUSINESS IS GROWING.

Business are using media as part of everyday work. Organizations are increasingly using video for internal communications as well as for external communications, such as marketing. Also, new opportunities in media analytics are being driven by the growth in video data feeds. For example, the increase of surveillance and other video feeds creates new opportunities for video analytics.

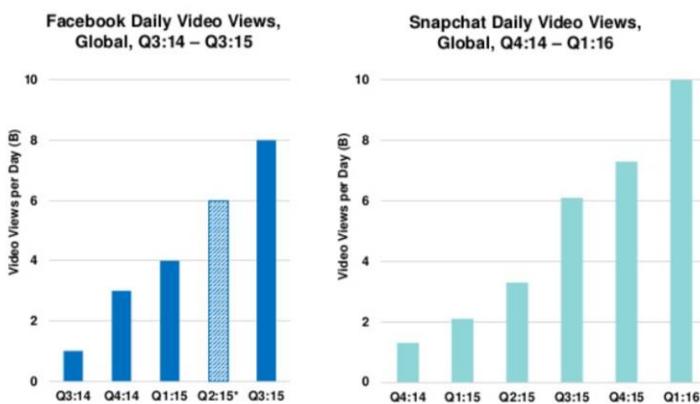
The Enterprise Video Market is expected to be worth \$32B by 2020, at an estimated CAGR of 19%<sup>(1)</sup>



Video Surveillance is expected to be worth \$71.28B by 2022, at an estimated CAGR of 16.56%<sup>(2)</sup>



## User-Shared Video Views on Snapchat & Facebook = Growing Fast



Video is a key driver of user engagement in apps, with rapid growth year-over-year

# 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 in this playbook.





# Define Your Strategy

Cloud Application Development  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)



# Executive Summary

## Define Your Strategy

Now that you understand the opportunity before you in building a cloud application development practice, we will begin by helping you 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

# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Understand the Cloud Business Models

As you get started with your cloud practice, it's key to understand that not all revenue streams are equal.

There are four primary ways to make money selling and delivering cloud services:

- Resale
- Project Services
- Managed Services
- Packaged Intellectual Property (IP)

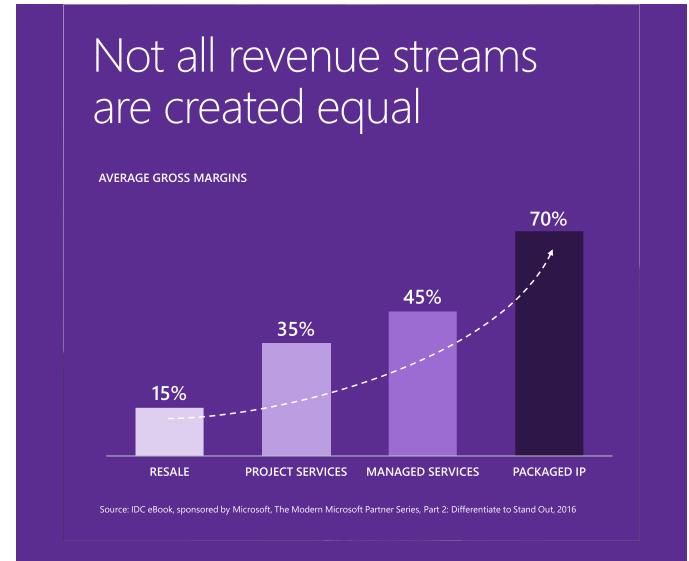
Partners that focus almost entirely on product revenue have the biggest barrier and typically see margins in the range of 5-20%. This is due to the margins for this revenue line being tied to vendor incentives. These partners are subject to changes in strategy and desire to fund programs and have the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

Project services typically drive 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%.

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. This IDC report highlights the importance of cloud based professional and managed services.

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.



# 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.

\*Source: IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Cloud 2016 Predictions — Mastering the Raw Material of Digital Transformation, doc #259840, November 2015

# 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

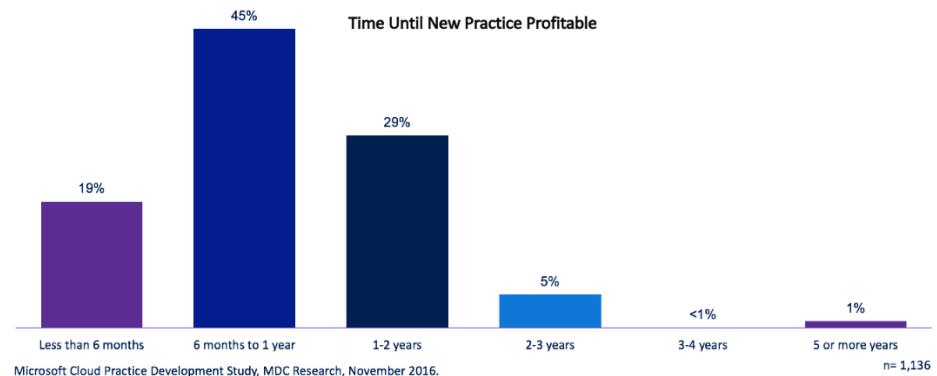
Using the Cloud Financial Models available, outline your core anticipated financial impact from executing on your plans.

### ANTICIPATED VALUATION IMPACT

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

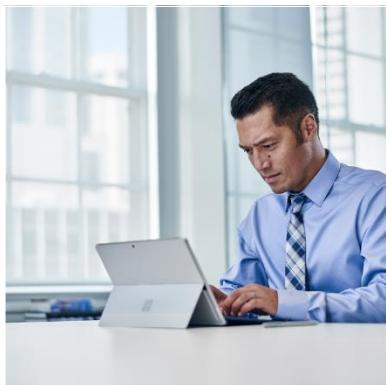
### RISKS AND MITIGATION

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](#)

## 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 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 as 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.



# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Project Based Services

Your solution offer is what you will ultimately sell to your customers. It can take differing forms depending on the type of service you plan to offer.

Project based services are services you offer to help your customers design, configure, implement or support a solution and are typically charged on one time or non-recurring revenue basis. According to our research, surveying 486 partners having a cloud application development practice, the top three project services most commonly offered were Custom Application Development, Proof of Concept, and Systems Integration. Consider this ordering when prioritizing which project services from the aforementioned menu to include in your offer.

PROJECT SERVICES	
<b>Custom Application Development</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Proof of Concept</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Systems Integration</b>	<b>50%</b>
Solution Analysis, Scope, & Design	45%
Solution Configuration/Customization	45%
Deployment Services	45%
Data Architecture Design	43%
Database Infrastructure Development	40%
Solution Support & Training	36%
Backup & Storage Deployment	33%
Virtualization Migration & Deployment	30%
User Experience Consulting	29%
Cloud Solution Costing & Spend Optimization	29%
	Training 29%
	Cloud Readiness Assessment 26%
	Scalability & Load Testing 25%
	Disaster Recovery Deployment 24%
	Health Checks 20%
	Mentoring 20%
	Security & Compliance Enablement 18%
	Security & Compliance Assessment 17%
	Bandwidth Planning 13%
	Network readiness assessment 13%
	Security- Penetration Testing 11%
	We do not offer any of these project services 5%

REVENUE	
<b>Total Median (n=566)</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
SMB (n=407)	\$150,000
Enterprise (n=159)	\$275,000

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

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

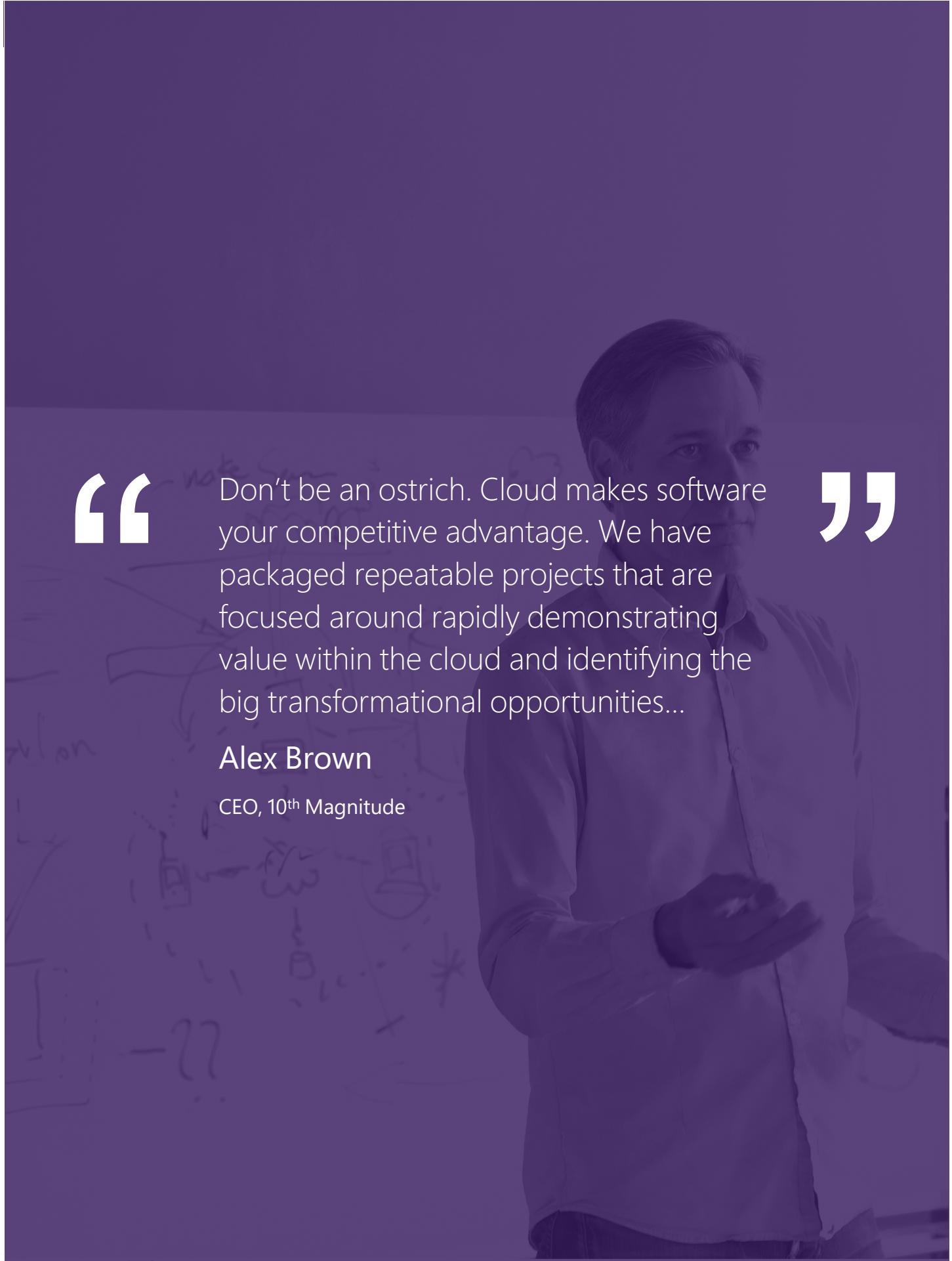
“

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, 10<sup>th</sup> Magnitude



# Define & Design the Solution Offer

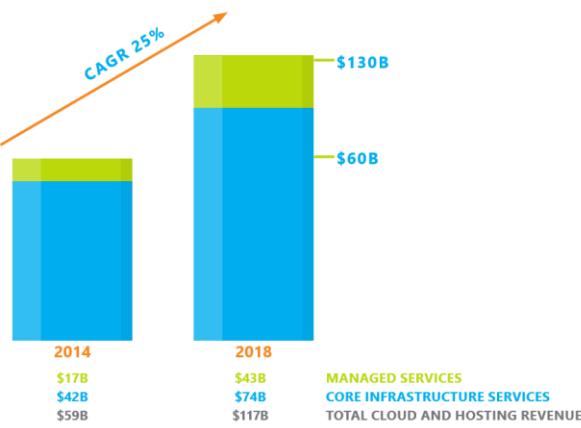
## Managed Services

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 and day-to-day operations.

### Why cloud managed services?

Managed service market size



Managed services can help to **DEEPEN YOUR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP**:

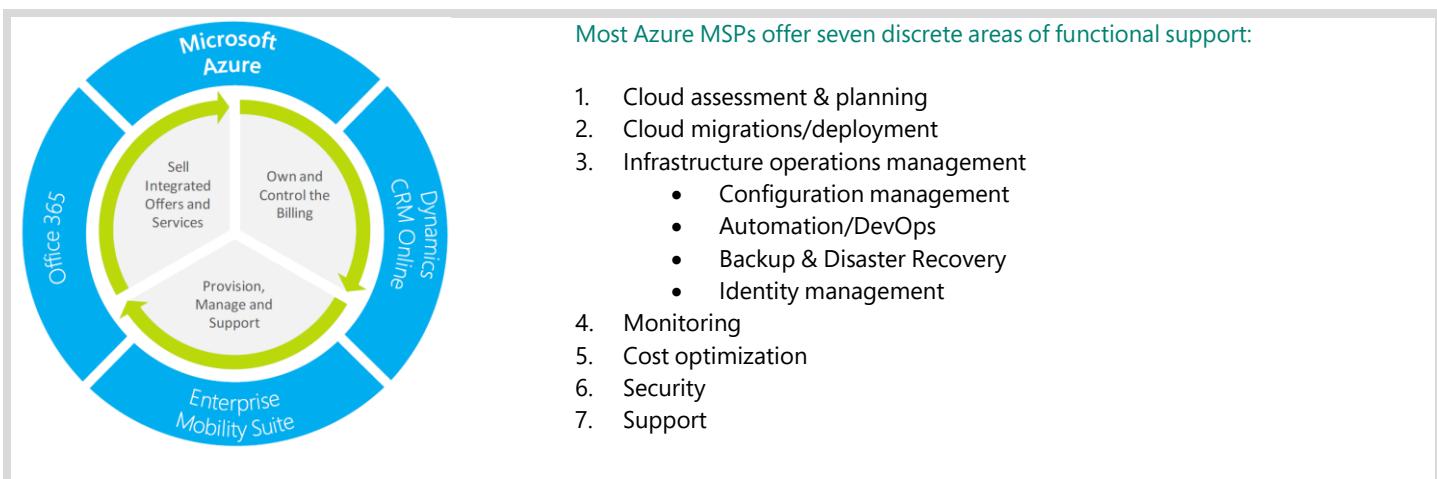
- Truly engage with customers, meet their needs, and solidify relationships
- Deep relationships unlock further revenue opportunities – especially with cloud migration and net new app development
- With CSP - Microsoft partners can offer managed services not just for Azure, but for all Microsoft cloud services products including Office 365, EMS, and Dynamics CRM Online
- Managed services provide your practice with **recurring revenue**:
- Month in, month out billing to customers for managed services packages
- Ensures a constant revenue stream as opposed to a project based method • Revenue grows as customer cloud spend grows

Managed services yield **HIGHER MARGINS**:

- Typical managed services gross margins (45%) higher than professional services (35%) and resale services (15%)
- Margins increase with scale and automation

Managed services **UNLOCK PORTFOLIO OPPORTUNITIES**:

- Diversify your managed services portfolio with Azure
- Add new offers like cloud dev/test, cloud backup and data recovery, cloud native app design, etc. to your practice
- Serve global customers with Azure's geographic presence.

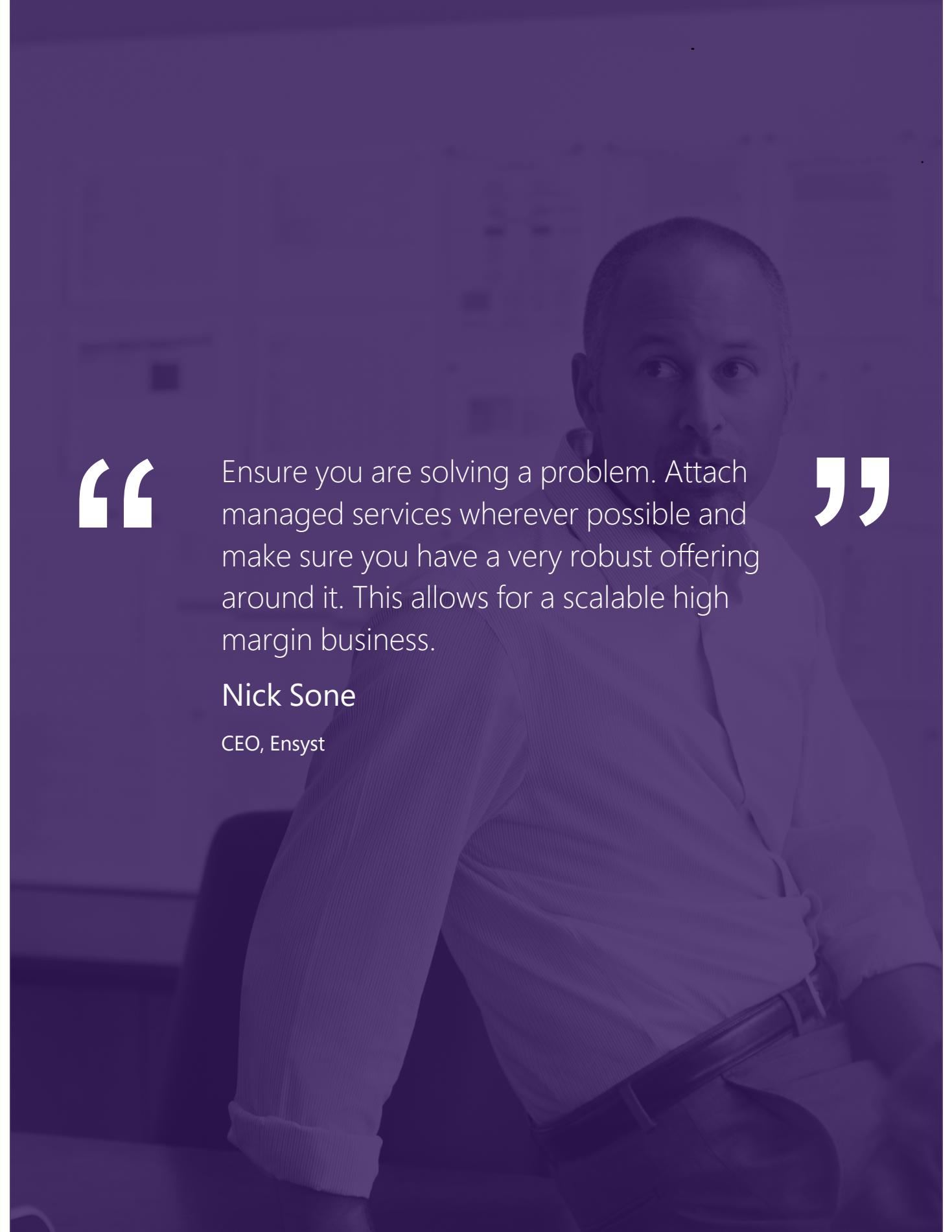


According to our research, surveying 486 partners having a cloud application development practice, the top three managed services most commonly offered were Application Lifecycle Management & Support, Application Support/Help Desk, and Configuration Management. Consider this ordering when prioritizing which managed services from the aforementioned menu to include in your offer.

 MANAGED SERVICES			
<b>Application Lifecycle Management &amp; Support</b>	<b>43%</b>	Reactive Help Desk Support	22%
<b>Application Support/Help Desk</b>	<b>40%</b>	Reports & View Adjustments	21%
<b>Configuration Management</b>	<b>32%</b>	Workload Performance Monitoring	20%
Reporting and Analytics	30%	Mobile Device Connectivity & Management	18%
Single Sign-On Management	29%	Network Monitoring	18%
Troubleshooting	29%	Data Center Performance Monitoring & Optimization	17%
Azure Consumption Monitoring & Optimization	29%	Security Management & Identity Protection	16%
Microsoft support (interface between MSFT & customer)	27%	Identity as a Service	15%
Performance Monitoring and Reporting	26%	Online Training and Self-Paced learning	13%
Virtual Database Administration	26%	Anti-Virus Monitoring	13%
Reports and Dashboard Maintenance	25%	Web defense (restricting URLs, phishing, malware, spam)	12%
PowerShell Script Automation	24%	<b>We do not offer any of these managed services</b>	
Critical Response Support	23%	22%	

 REVENUE		
<b>Total Median (n=467)</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	When targeting your managed services, our research with partners emphasized the importance of targeting the enterprise customer to attain significantly higher managed revenues.
SMB (n=338)	\$50,000	
Enterprise (n=129)	\$100,000	

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

A medium shot of a man from the waist up. He is wearing a light-colored, ribbed button-down shirt under a dark jacket, and dark trousers with a belt. He has short, light-colored hair and is looking towards the right of the frame with a neutral to slightly thoughtful expression.

“

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, Ensys

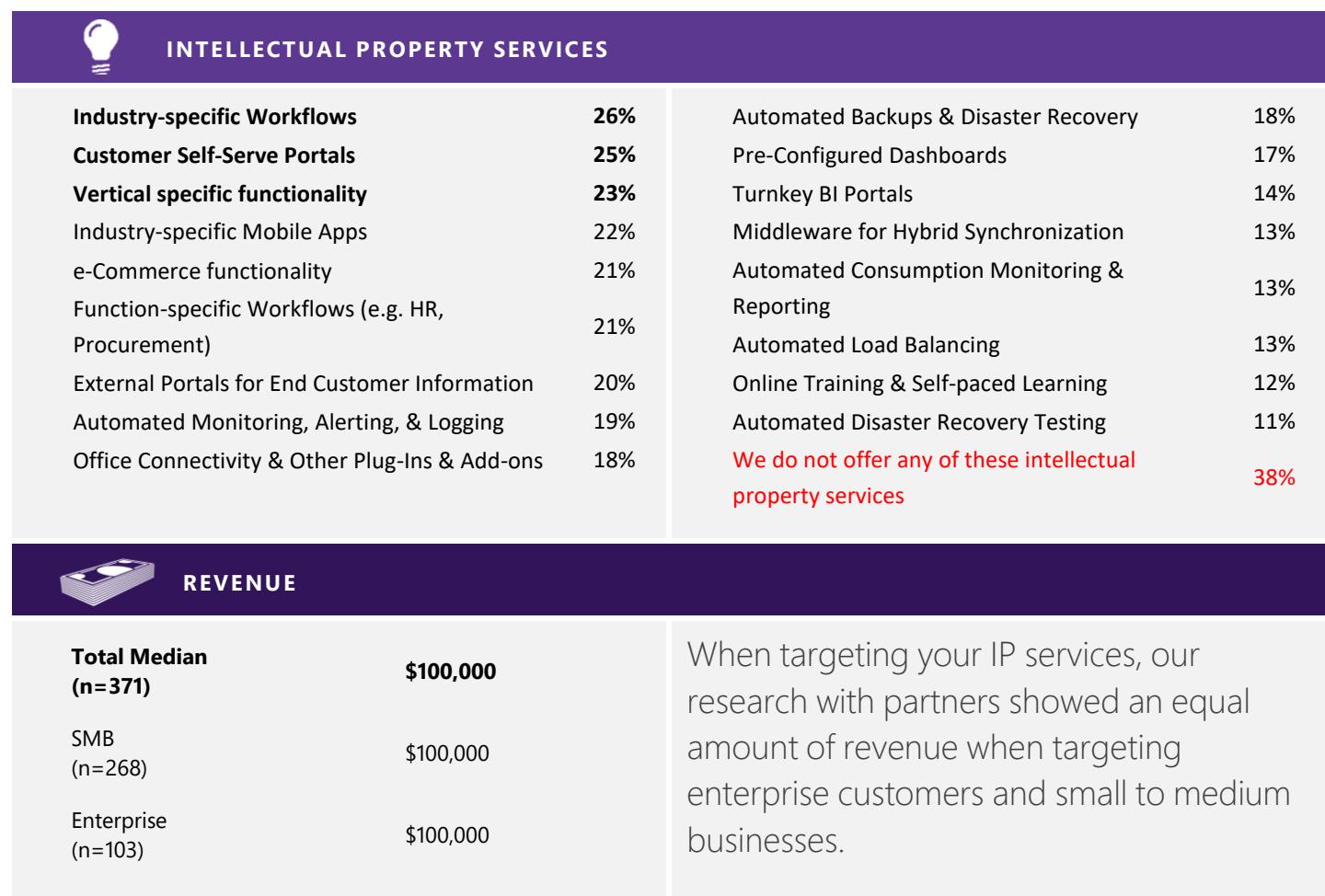
# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Intellectual Property

Intellectual property (IP) includes the proprietary elements you develop in-house, own, maintain and sell directly or as value add to project and managed services.

According to our research, surveying 486 partners having a cloud application development practice, the top three intellectual property services most commonly offered were Industry-specific Workflows, Customer Self-Serve Portals, and Vertical-specific Functionality. Consider this ordering when prioritizing which managed services from the aforementioned menu to include in your offer.

It may surprise you to see that 38% do not offer any of these intellectual property services. In our conversations with partners this translated into one of two scenarios—they either did not have IP based services or they had very differentiated services from the list we provided. This wide variability means there is an opportunity for providing your own IP to differentiate your practice in the market.



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

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.

## The Importance of Developing Intellectual Property

Implementing IP in your Cloud Offerings



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

1. **DEFINE YOUR SOLUTION.** Through our research process, when we asked partners how they determined what IP they were going to build, we often got 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.** It is critical that you maintain the IP rights to the solutions and get customers to agree to the terms through your customer agreements
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.
6. **CONSIDER SOURCING STRATEGY.** In order to develop IP, it is not necessary to build your own development organization. There are thousands of companies in the world that do software development as a service. But remember to secure rights to your IP in this case.

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! Resources: [IP Development](#) and [Create Stickiness with IP](#)

# 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	$39 \times 49 = 2301\$$
From 50 to 100 users	$29 \times 100 = 2900\$$

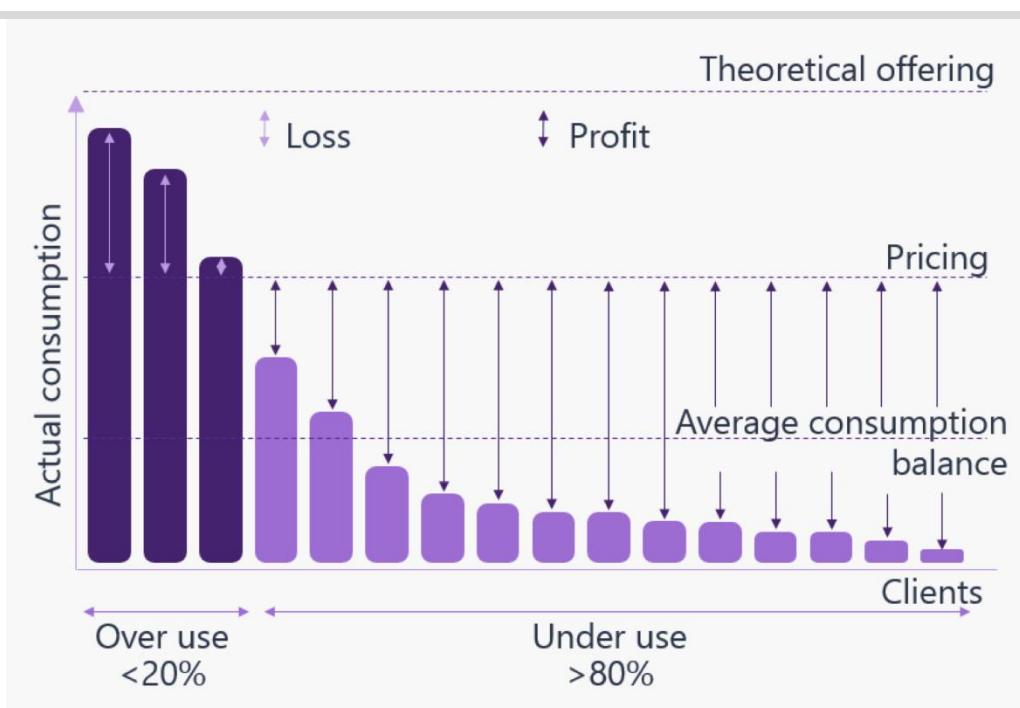
(\*)Theoretical User Price (T.U.P.)

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.

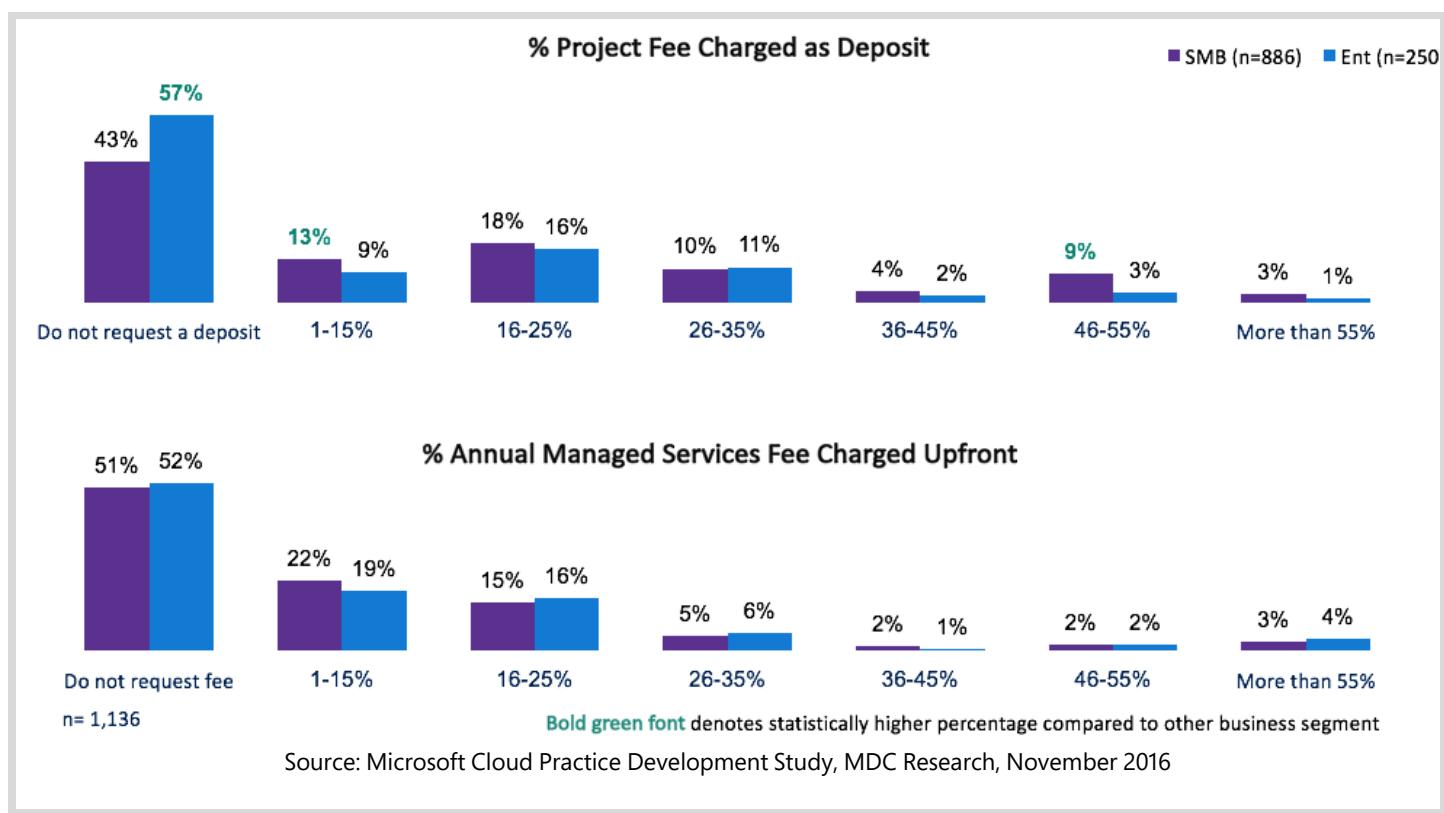


© 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

## 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).

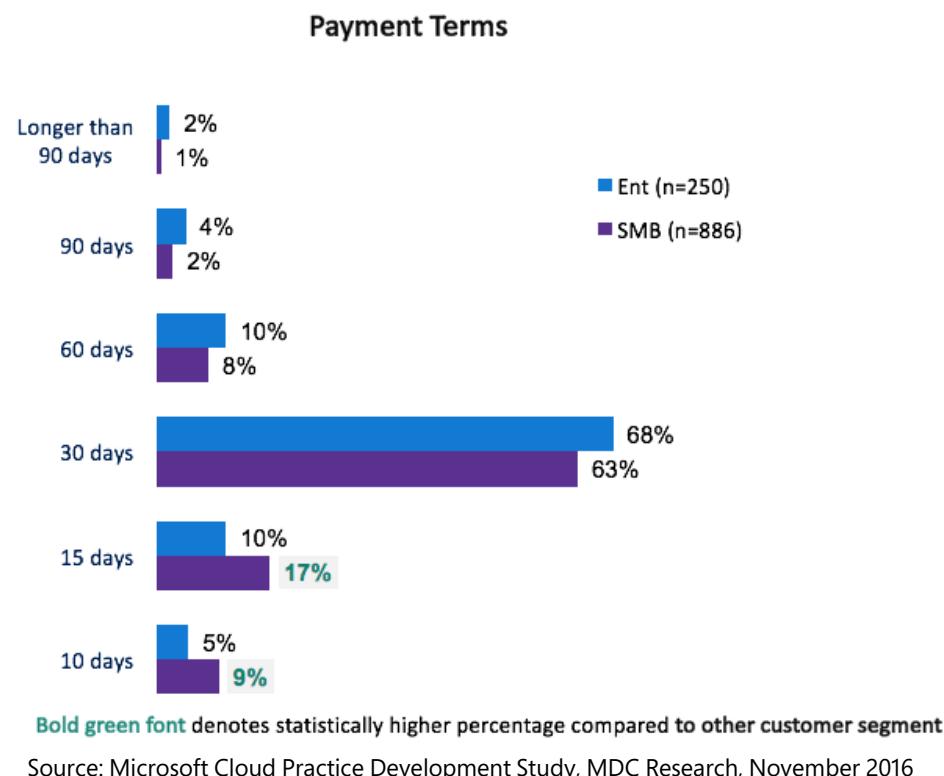
In our recent survey of 1,136 Azure partners, we found that only about half charged an upfront fee for project or managed services. When an upfront fee was requested it was typically less than 25% of the total project or managed services fee.



## 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

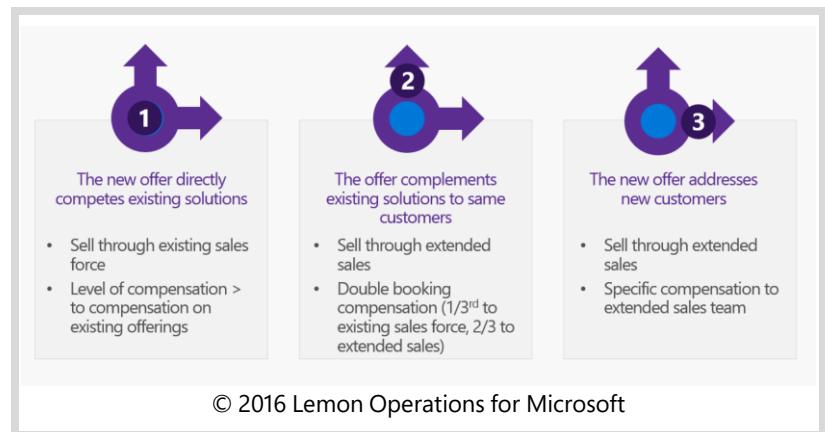
Always keep it simple. Sales people are brought on for their ability to communicate, engaging ways, skills in educating and the always important act of closing. Don't overly complicate sales actions required to be compensated. Drive the behavior that you know leads to closing business. Reward that behavior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



© 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

### 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.

# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Resources



In a dev-ops world, customers expect you to provide continuous integration, deployment, and automation for all their applications. Everything from code deployment to testing, staging to release, can be automated. This is an opportunity for you to help your customers leverage the full dev-ops experience of developing on Azure.

### RESOURCES

- ➔ [Azure Automation](#)
- ➔ [Azure Automation DSC](#)
- ➔ [Azure PowerShell](#)
- ➔ [Azure CLI](#)
- ➔ [VSTS DevOps and ALM](#)
- ➔ [Chef, Puppet, Docker and Linux VMs](#)
- ➔ [Using Jenkins and Storage for Continuous Integration](#)

### 3RD PARTY RESOURCES

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

## Include Automation

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.

Some of the key customer challenges and questions you may face include:

- 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

## Continuous Innovation through DevOps

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

# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Consider Verticalizing the Offer

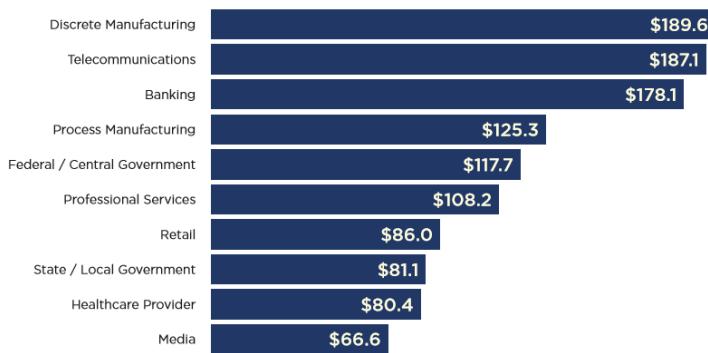
Through our research we found that a key best practice among top performing partners is that they are targeting industries or verticals as a part of their go to market strategy. The following are examples of these types of specialization:

- 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 the primary differentiator between you and your competition. This can erode your margins and trap you in a business you can't afford to invest in as prices race to the bottom in order to win customers.

Once you have identified a primary vertical or set of verticals to focus on, it will be important for you to establish your company as an expert in your selected areas. This can be achieved through the hiring of subject matter experts, attendance and participation in industry events and online forums, blogging about the chosen topic, sharing customer stories oriented to each vertical and creating content that speaks to the specific needs of customers in each vertical. 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 for additional ideas see the [Differentiate to Stand Out](#) ebook.

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

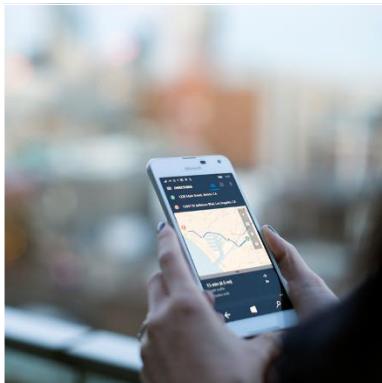


Source: IDC #257386, Worldwide Vertical Markets IT Spending 2014–2019 Forecast.

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.

# Identify Partnership Opportunities

## 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](#)

## 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 by filling in gaps you do not offer
- Build credibility
- Provide infrastructure you do not offer
- Leverage joint marketing
- Increase revenue by expanding the services & products in your offer
- 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

Progressing your application or solution can be a delicate balance between keeping your customers happy, and sticking to your roadmap. One of the major challenges software developers face is having customers request new features that will only benefit a few, but fulfilling those requests costs valuable time spent on features that benefit many customers.

Typically, this puts you in a difficult position where you have one of two choices: stop working on critical roadmap features in favor of keeping customers happy in the near-term, or strictly sticking to your roadmap, keeping the quality high, but potentially losing some sales. Ideally, it would be best to be able to do both; keep your customers happy with requested features, and continuing work on your roadmap for long-term success and wide customer appeal. Start saying "yes" to customers more often. This ideal balance can be achieved through a strategic partnership.

Think about ways you can engage with other MSPs and businesses to either supplement your own development efforts, or to help others win big with their customers.

[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

[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.

### ADDITIONAL PARTNER SOURCES

There are other great sources for getting the names and contact information of resellers, so you can build your database of prospective partners:

[IAMCP](#) (International Association of Microsoft Channel Partners) can be a good place to find likeminded services partners. The [Microsoft Partner Community](#) is a new, partner-facing resource that Microsoft is building out. As it grows it will be a great place to share experiences and find other partners. Microsoft's [Partner Center](#), the evolution of what used to be called Pinpoint, is the best source of detailed information on partners worldwide.

Additional web sites of companies with complementary or competing technologies, as well as ones that maintain searchable databases of companies, are as follows:

<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>	<a href="#">InsideView</a>	<a href="#">Data.com</a>	<a href="#">Dun &amp; Bradstreet</a>
<a href="#">Hoovers</a>	<a href="#">Info USA</a>	<a href="#">CompuBase</a>	<a href="#">Capterra</a>

## Build a Business Case

You have located a prospective partner, but how do you convince them to take the first step? The reality is that prospective partners don't really care about your objectives. They are in business to make money for themselves, and whatever you ask them to do is likely to be a distraction from what they are currently doing. For them to be interested in even talking to you, they need to understand how the value proposition you are presenting will help them grow their own business.

The value proposition should be built to answer that question. Contacting prospective partners to tell them how wonderful you are as a company, or how fantastic your technology is, or how great your client is won't have much of an impact. But contacting a company to explain how partnering with you can help them grow their business is much more likely to get their attention.

This means that you need to build a business case that describes how the transaction(s) they will be involved in will generate revenues for them. For example:

<p>You are a services partner that needs a local deployment partner. What is involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How large is the project in terms of billable days?</li><li>• What skillsets and certifications are required?</li><li>• Will the partner need any up-front training from you?</li></ul>	<p>You are a services partner with clients that want to move to the Cloud, but You do not currently have Azure skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the specific skills that a partner will need?</li><li>• How large is the initial project?</li><li>• Will the partner get all of the downstream work with that client, or do you intend to build the skills needed to bring the client back?</li><li>• Will you do the billing and sub-contract to the partner?</li><li>• Will the partner be responsible for the Service Level Agreement (SLA)?</li></ul>
--	--



There are three main benefits to working through building the case ahead of time:

1

2

3

It gives you a clear idea of the value that you can bring to a partner. It gives you a clear idea of the value a partner produces for you. It provides the basis for creating a profile of the ideal partner.

## GETTING THE RIGHT PARTNERS INTO THE AZURE BUSINESS

Matching the right partners with an Azure practice sometimes takes help from Microsoft.

First you want to look at the different types of Azure Partners Microsoft has. Do you have strength in one or more of these areas today? Can you build muscle in other areas? Where do your interests and professional contacts lie? Microsoft offers Partnership opportunities in these four areas.

- [Cloud Application Development](#)
- [Cloud Infrastructure & Management](#)
- [Data Platform & Analytics](#)
- [Mobility & Security](#)

**46%** of solution providers collaborate with other channel partners to target a vertical and enhance their total solution.

Instead of trying to develop all the vertical expertise in-house, work with other partners to complete vertical solutions.

If there is a leading provider(s) in your vertical market, figure out how to work with them. You can better serve your customer by working together. Alliances that allow customers to continue to utilize legacy components can streamline projects for both you and your customer.

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.

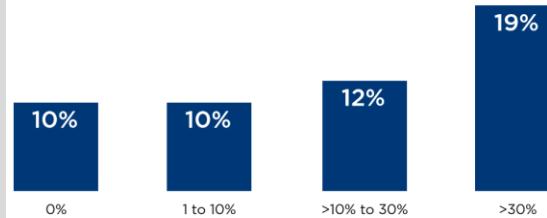
There are many ways that a Partner to Partner (P2P) relationship may help you specialize. You probably will need separate partnerships for each vertical focus. If one or two verticals become dominant, consider developing your own internal expertise.

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 is value in partnering.

In a 2013 IDC study of IT solution providers, we found that those companies that had been involved with the most partner-to-partner activity, also had some of the best business metrics. Our study showed that the group of partners who associated 30% or more of their revenue with partner-to-partner collaboration were also the ones who were growing the fastest: 19% growth versus 10-12% for the rest. As with other statistics we've shown, this may not be causal (that partnering directly leads to growth). But we do know there is a strong correlation with high growth and partnering. Basically, the best solution providers value partnering as a strategy.

**COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS AND REVENUE GROWTH**



Source: IDC #243921, Partner-to-Partner Collaboration: The Current Landscape, 2013, n = 389

Some strategies to make the most out of your partnerships:

- Identify the vertical market pain point you would like to solve and identify the various players that contribute to current practices.
- Next determine if there is a player (or two) that you can work with to build a solution more efficiently than starting from scratch.
- Analyze the opportunity by developing a plan and a deep cost analysis to make sure it will be profitable before jumping in.
- Identify the verticals where you have opportunities for your horizontal IP.
- Look for partners that have the vertical expertise you need by utilizing [Microsoft Partner Center](#) and other ecosystem resources.
- Clearly define your joint strategy and roles so the customer sees a unified force.

# Define Engagement Process

## Resources



- [Hybrid and Cloud Briefing Deck](#)
- [Dev and Test Pitch Deck](#)
- [Development and Test Solution Architecture](#)
- [Line of Business Pitch Deck](#)
- [SAP on Azure Technical Pitch Deck](#)
- [Microsoft Apps Technical Pitch Deck](#)
- [Java Apps Technical Pitch Decks](#)
- [Consistent Hybrid Cloud Pitch Deck](#)
- [Software Define Data Center Pitch Deck](#)
- [Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Pitch Deck](#)
- [Backup and Archival Technical Data Deck](#)
- [Disaster Recovery Technical Data Deck](#)
- [Technical presales and deployment services](#)

## Pre-Sales & Post Sales

Define the technical effort required before the sale (pre-sales) and required in support of a sale and after the sale (post-sales). You will need to decide for your solution offer the technical pre-sales and post-sales requirements.

### PRE-SALES

The technical effort required to make the sale typically involves the following steps:

- Discussion of the customer requirements and objections.
- Technical pitch deck
- 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".

A pre-sales bill of materials should be prepared before meeting your first customer that addresses these items.

### 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

Do not wait until after you have closed the first deal to think thru the aforementioned post-sale items. A profitable practice results from having repeatable processes- the more you can have at the ready after closing the sale the closer you are to payment. For guidance with these sales efforts, consider the Microsoft Partner University learning paths:

- [Data Platform Solutions \(SQL Server 2016\)](#)
- [Application Development](#)
- [Application Integration](#)

Also, consider that Microsoft provides support for technical presales and deployment services. See [Partner Advisory Hours](#) in this document.

# Define Engagement Process

## Resources



### RESOURCES

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

## Implementation

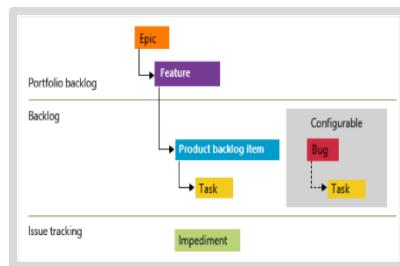
The process you follow in delivering your solution to your customer is just as important as the technologies you use to deliver it.

When it comes to delivering solutions for a Cloud Application Development Practice, choose from among the following (or incorporate the aspects from the below) that best fit your needs and your team

### TEAM DATA SCIENCE PROCESS

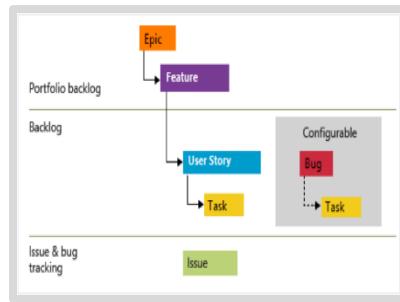
The [Team Data Science Process](#) (TDSP) provides a systematic approach to building intelligent applications that enables teams of data scientists to collaborate effectively over the full lifecycle of activities needed to turn these applications into products.

### SCRUM PROCESS



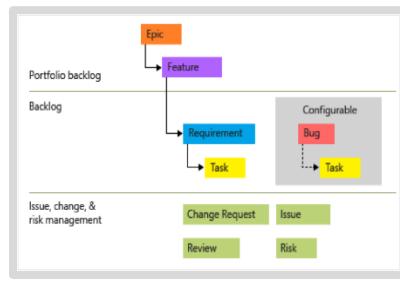
The [Scrum](#) process works great if you want to track product backlog items (PBIs) and bugs on the Kanban board, or break PBIs and bugs down into tasks on a task board. This process supports the Scrum methodology as defined by the [Scrum organization](#). Tasks in this process support tracking remaining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

### AGILE PROCESS



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 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.

### CAPABILITY MATURITY MODEL (CMMI) PROCESS



Consider [CMMI](#) when your team follows more formal project methods that require a framework for process improvement and an auditable record of decisions. This process supports [formal change management activities](#). Tasks support tracking Original Estimate, Remaining Work, and Completed Work.

## Agile as a Presales tool

For projects in a Cloud Application Development practice, agile methodologies are not only a means for executing project delivery, but also a pre-sales tool. Consider taking the following approach:

- Qualify the customer to ensure there is budget, interest and involvement of the appropriate stakeholders. This is not something you offer to every lead as it incurs costs. Focus on customers who are further along in their purchasing evaluation of your practice.
- For qualified customers, consider performing rapid prototyping to ideate with the customer and create a vision of what the results could be like.
- Take an agile approach to developing the prototype. Leverage short sprints during the prototype development by implementing the minimal set of requirements that will help clarify the vision with the customer, collecting feedback from the customer and refining the prototype.
- The tangible outcome of a prototype or proof of concept demonstrates to the customer your capabilities to understand their requirements.
- Your ability to quickly deliver tangible results builds trust in your ability to execute. It is a great opportunity to highlight your practice's unique capabilities and identify potential follow-on projects you could assist the customer with.
- The process of iterating on the prototype with the customer is a great way for the customer to experience what it would be like to work with you on the larger project.
- Once a customer has the sense of a tangible, working prototype in hand, it becomes more difficult for them to select competitors who have only provided written proposals.



# Define Engagement Process

## Identify Engagement Resources

The technical team for a Cloud Application Development practice consists of the following members.

- Technical Sellers: Technical individuals with strong communication skills and competency in the technology being presented to the prospective customer.
- Customer Success Managers: Individuals who will be present throughout the sales process and act as a primary point of contact for the customer.
- Solution Delivery: The resources that will help implement the solution for the customer.
- Support: The resources that assist the customer outside of solution delivery.

## Identify the technical team

TITLE	SKILLSET	CERTIFICATIONS	EXPERIENCE
Cloud Architect	Broad skillset across cloud, data, app development, infrastructure, networking and security Strong, customer facing communications skills	Azure 70-534 Azure 70-533	
Senior Software Developer	In-depth understanding of the full software development cycle, from architecture to testing Makes technical decisions, has experience developing for the cloud	Azure 70-532 Azure 70-534 Azure 70-487	
Software Developer	Designs, builds, and maintains efficient, reusable/reliable code Avid learner, and works equally well on a team or individually	Azure 70-532 Azure 70-534	

## IDENTIFY AND FILL THE GAPS

Now that you understand the skills required by the technical team you need to deliver your solution, examine your current team and identify what skills are missing. With this list of skills in hand, consider which to hire and which to train. In other words, some of these skills would represent incremental learning for an existing team member or they could be quickly acquired. For these skills, you should consider training the existing team. Some skills may be completely foreign to your team, and may require significant training prior to engaging with customers. For these skills, you should consider hiring either additional full time staff or contractors to fill the skills gap.

For guidance on hiring resources, see the [Hire Resources](#) section of this playbook.

# Join the Microsoft Partner Network

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Partner Network](#)
- [Join the Microsoft Partner Network](#)
- [Microsoft Action Pack](#)
- [Cloud Platform Competency](#)
- [Explore All Competencies](#)

## About the Microsoft Partner Network

The Microsoft Partner Network is the start of your journey.

As a Microsoft partner, you gain tools, resources, and support to build your business.

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**

This no-cost, basic level is your first step to receiving relevant information and exploring Microsoft's resources. You will receive a set of no-cost introductory benefits to help you save time and money.

### **ACTION PACK**

Access developer tools, support, training, and software to run your business. 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. Action Pack includes all the benefits of a Network membership.

### **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.

# Join the Microsoft Partner Network

## Resources



### RESOURCES

→ [Microsoft Partner Network](#)

## Microsoft Partner Programs

Join the Partner Programs Designed for your Cloud Application Development Practice

The following programs all build upon your membership in the Microsoft Partner Network and provide you with additional benefits and incentives as you prove your practice by earning competencies, passing assessments and winning customers in your practice focus area.

### CLOUD SOLUTION PROVIDER

CSP rewards partners for driving cloud revenue through the CSP model, which enables you to drive deeper customer engagement with greater profitability as you get to combine high-margin service offerings with Microsoft cloud products and retain the ability to provide customer support and manage billing for your customer. You get to become your customers' single solution provider and trusted advisor by servicing all their cloud services needs. (See [CSP description](#) in this document).

### P-SELLER PROGRAM

P-Sellers are Microsoft's "go to" partner resources across the customer lifecycle, and act as an extension of Microsoft in working with customers. As a Business Intelligence Solution Partner, you will receive sponsorship for your admission to the P-Seller program.

# MPN to Resource Alignment

## Align Individuals to MPN Requirements

For maximum benefit, your engagement resources should align with MPN competency requirements

The competencies applicable to the Cloud Application Development Practice are:

- [Application Development competency](#)
- [Application Integration competency](#)
- [DevOps competency](#)
- [Cloud Platform competency](#)

One of the next steps is to ensure you align the technical team to the MPN competency for your practice.

The following table summarizes 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 REQUIREMENTS	GOLD REQUIREMENTS
APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCY		
Option 1: Application Builder	Two people must pass one of the following exams: <a href="#">Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-487: Developing Windows Azure and Web Services</a> *	Four people must pass one of the following exams: <a href="#">Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-487: Developing Windows Azure and Web Services</a> *

	SILVER REQUIREMENTS	GOLD REQUIREMENTS
APPLICATION INTEGRATION COMPETENCY		
Option 1: Application Integration	Two people must pass one of the following exams: <a href="#">Exam 70-487: Developing Windows Azure and Web Services</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-483: Programming in C#</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-462: Administering Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Databases</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-464: Developing Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Databases</a>	Four people must pass one of the following exams: <a href="#">Exam 70-487: Developing Windows Azure and Web Services</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-483: Programming in C#</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-462: Administering Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Databases</a> <a href="#">Exam 70-464: Developing Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Databases</a>

	<a href="#">Exam 70-412: Configuring Advanced Windows Server 2012 Services</a>	<a href="#">Exam 70-412: Configuring Advanced Windows Server 2012 Services</a>
Option 2: Learning Partner	<p>Two people must pass the following assessments:</p> <p><a href="#">BizTalk Technical Competency Assessment for Application Integration (BizTalk Server 2013)</a></p>	<p>Four people must pass the following assessments:</p> <p><a href="#">BizTalk Technical Competency Assessment for Application Integration (BizTalk Server 2013)</a></p>

	SILVER REQUIREMENTS	GOLD REQUIREMENTS
<b>DEVOPS COMPETENCY</b>		
Option 1: DevOps Partner	<p>Two people must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-496: Visual Studio Team Foundation Server, Administration</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-498: Delivering Continuous Value with Visual Studio Application Lifecycle Management</a></p> <p>One person must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-497: Software Testing with Visual Studio</a></p> <p><a href="#">PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Professional Scrum Master level 1 (PSM I)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Master</a></p>	<p>Four people must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-496: Visual Studio Team Foundation Server, Administration</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-498: Delivering Continuous Value with Visual Studio Application Lifecycle Management</a></p> <p>Two people must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-497: Software Testing with Visual Studio</a></p> <p><a href="#">PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Professional Scrum Master level 1 (PSM I)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Master</a></p>
Option 2: Learning Partner	<p>Two MCTs must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-496: Visual Studio Team Foundation Server, Administration</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-498: Delivering Continuous Value with Visual Studio Application Lifecycle Management</a></p> <p>One MCT must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-497: Software Testing with Visual Studio</a></p> <p><a href="#">PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Professional Scrum Master level 1 (PSM I)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Master</a></p>	<p>Four MCTs must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-496: Visual Studio Team Foundation Server, Administration</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-498: Delivering Continuous Value with Visual Studio Application Lifecycle Management</a></p> <p>Two MCTs must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-497: Software Testing with Visual Studio</a></p> <p><a href="#">PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Professional Scrum Master level 1 (PSM I)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Master</a></p>

	SILVER REQUIREMENTS	GOLD REQUIREMENTS
CLOUD PLATFORM COMPETENCY	<p>One person must pass one of the following assessments:</p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Datacenter Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure Remote Desktop Service</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Data Analytics and Data Platform Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Application Development</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Internet of Things Solutions</a></p> <p>Or, one person must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-473: Designing and Implementing Cloud Data Platform Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-475: Designing and Implementing Big Data Analytics Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">MCSA: Linux on Azure</a></p>	<p>Two people each must complete one of the following assessments:</p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Datacenter Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure Remote Desktop Service</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Data Analytics and Data Platform Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Microsoft Azure for Application Development</a></p> <p><a href="#">Technical Assessment for Using Azure for Internet of Things Solutions</a></p> <p>Or, two people each must pass one of the following exams:</p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-473: Designing and Implementing Cloud Data Platform Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exam 70-475: Designing and Implementing Big Data Analytics Solutions</a></p> <p><a href="#">MCSA: Linux on Azure</a></p>

# 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.

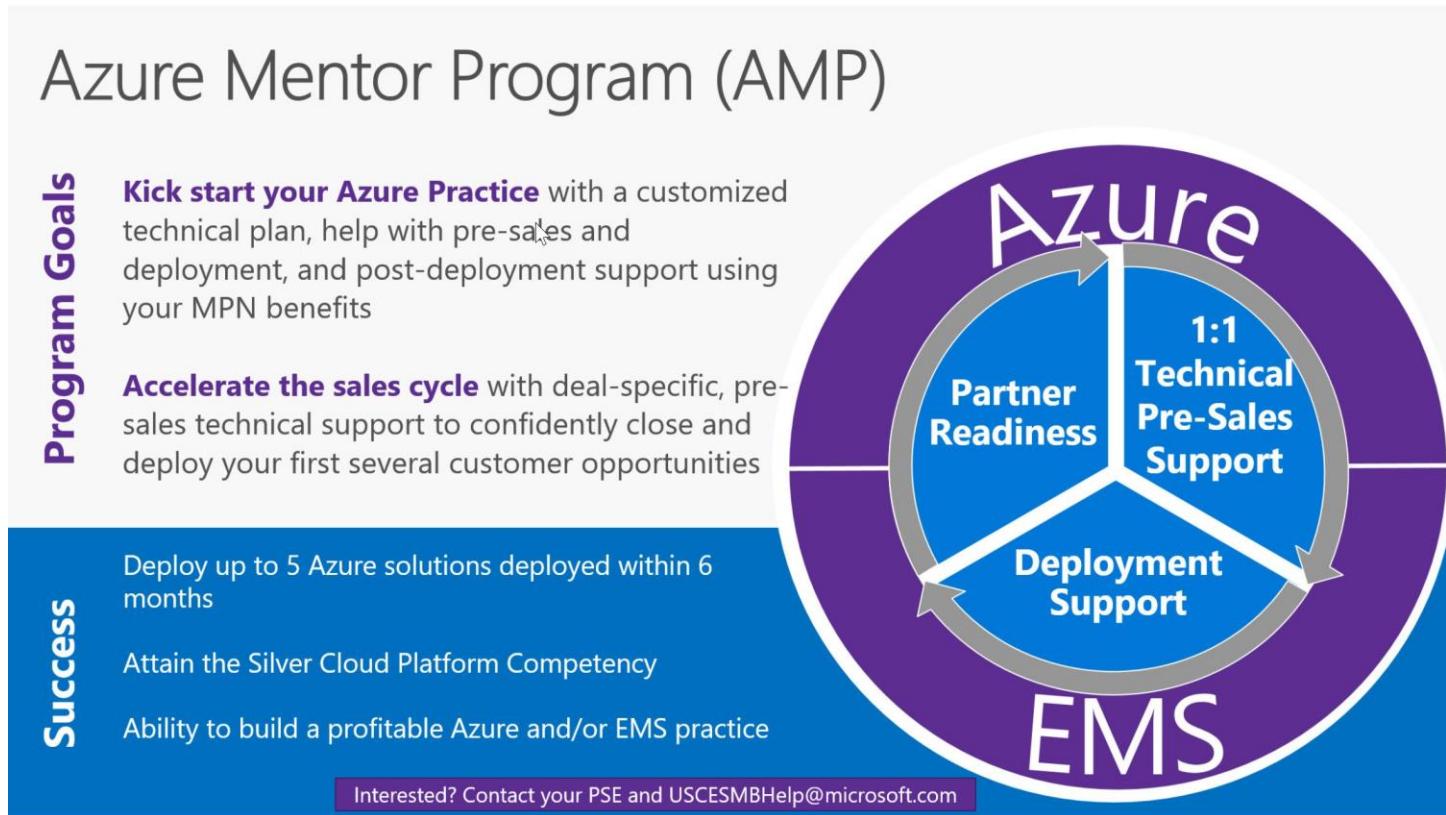
The program is designed to provide partners with customized technical training, and pre-sales to deployment deal-specific support. The program provides free access to partner Technical Consultants (PTCs) with deep technical expertise to support a partner across enablement through deployment support.

## 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 Enterprise Mobility Suite (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



# Define Engagement Process

## Resources



One way you can acquire some of the listed 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](#).

### RESOURCES

- [Microsoft Internal User Rights](#)
- [License Table for Competency Partners](#)
- [Add or change Azure administrator roles](#)

## Identify Equipment, Services, and Tools

Equip your team for success

For a Cloud Application Development practice, the following tools are recommended:

### AZURE SUBSCRIPTIONS

You can [add your team members as administrators](#) to your company's Azure subscription. There are various admin levels, depending on your needs. Make good use of resource groups to group Azure resources together for each solution, or even development phases. This helps you keep track of costs, which resources are logically related for a solution/phase, and implement role-based security for your administrators.

### DEVELOPER TOOLS

Your developers, testers, database administrators, and even SE/SAs can make good use of development tools. Some of the most popular tools are Visual Studio, Visual Studio Code, Eclipse, IntelliJ IDEA, etc. You will likely use a combination of these tools, plus 3<sup>rd</sup> party plug-ins, depending on the breadth of technologies you employ, and the needs of your team.

### VISUAL STUDIO TEAM SERVICES (VSTS)

[VSTS](#) is a great web-based resource that allows you to manage your source code, track issues and milestones, and perform other useful functions like automated, server-side load testing. You can use Team Foundation Services (TFS) or Git repositories, and integrate automated build processes/CI as part of your development workflow.

### APPLICATION TELEMETRY AND TESTING TOOLS

Whether you are distributing early builds of your mobile application to testers, collecting user telemetry and error reporting, load testing, or tracking key user interactions within your apps, the quality and usefulness of your solutions will greatly benefit from telemetry and testing tools such as [Application Insights](#), [HockeyApp](#), and [Xamarin Test Cloud](#).

### LINUX, WINDOWS OR MAC OSX WORKSTATIONS

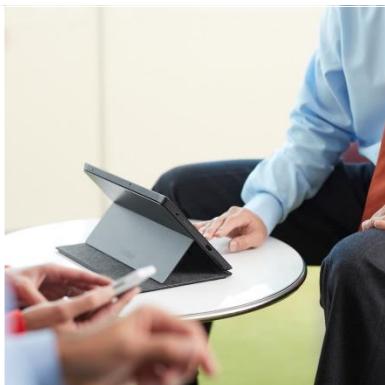
When you are developing solutions for the cloud, you have virtually unlimited potential to reach millions of users around the globe. Coinciding with this great diversity of customers is a technically diverse set of hardware and software platforms. Much of today's modern development consists of multi-platform native applications, or multi-browser web applications. The major development frameworks and languages, such as .NET, Java, Python, and JavaScript can target these major platforms. Whether you are developing for these platforms natively, or testing your web or hybrid solution, it is beneficial to have access to as many as your budget will allow.

### BROADBAND INTERNET CONNECTION

Naturally, any work on cloud applications requires performant and stable internet connectivity.

# Practice Cost Calculation

## Resources



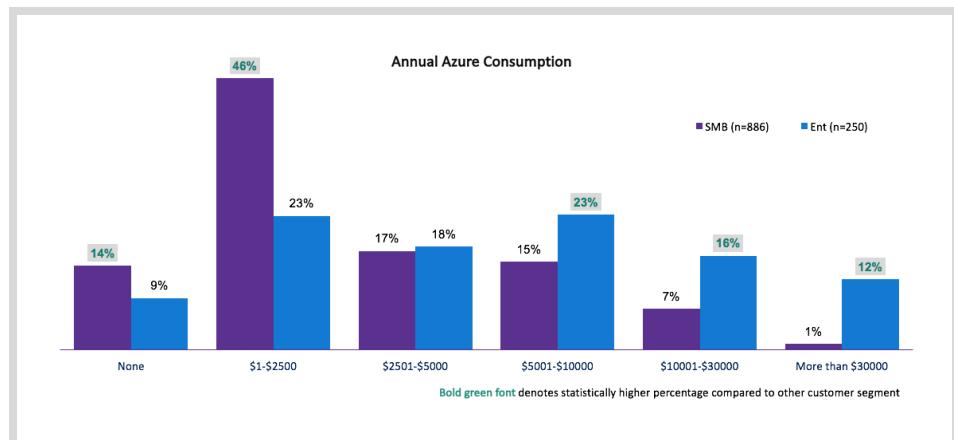
### RESOURCES

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

## 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?

In our research of 1,136 Azure partners, we found that enterprise focused partners spent a median of \$8,107 in Azure for research and development annually, whereas SMB focused partners spent a media of \$1,933 annually.



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

Use the [Azure Pricing Calculator](#) to estimate Azure costs. 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:

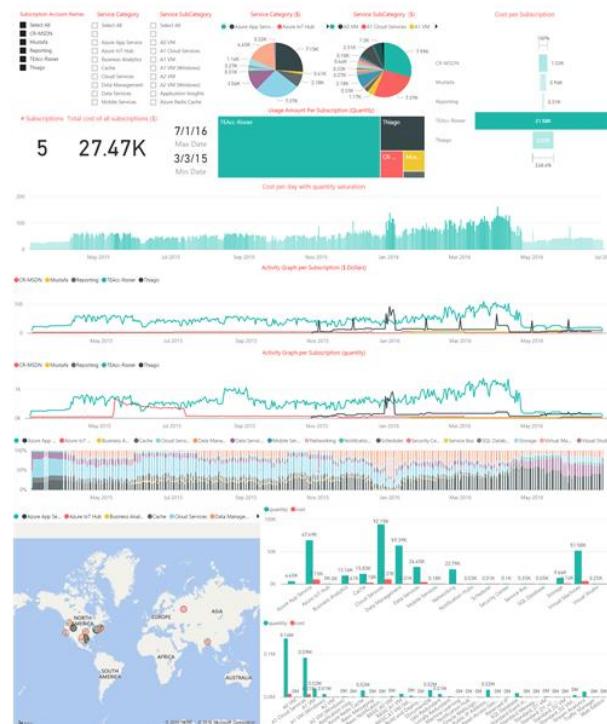
- Graduated Pricing: Services like Azure Storage have tiered pricing based upon the volume used. For example, if you use less than 100 TB per month it costs \$0.024 per GB per month, but if you use significantly more it can drop to \$0.223 per GB per month).
- Enterprise Agreement: By making a 3-year 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.

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,

- Elastic: SQL Data Warehouse used only during month end calculations. It can be paused the rest of the month. Another example of elastic use is to leverage auto-scale capabilities of the resource, such as auto-scaling the number of App Services instances down in the evenings and back up during the work day.
- 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. When it comes to measuring your Azure consumption, particularly across multiple subscriptions (as is likely for any practice), you should consider deploying the [Azure Usage and Billing Portal](#). This portal is an open source project you can acquire from GitHub and deploy into your own subscription, configure it to report on multiple subscriptions and view the results within a Power BI Dashboard.



Example Dashboard from the Azure Usage and Billing Portal

“

Atea Global Services focuses 100% of our Cloud R & D efforts on Microsoft Azure. This gives us a unique in-depth expertise in all Azure technical capabilities and allows us to maximize value and efficiencies for our managed services customers.

”

**Mareks Zirdzins**

CTO, Atea Global Services

# Identify Potential Customers/Pilot

## Engage your existing customers

As always, your best potential customers are your existing customers.

When you have a good relationship with your customers, they are more open to you helping improve their business processes, due to an established level of trust. To start, dig deep into their needs, challenges, business objectives, and priorities. Then you need to work with them to create a vision that combines tactical projects with strategic initiatives that include a clear definition of customer experience goals.

Partners that have done this recommend starting this conversation with a planning engagement that builds confidence that there is a way forward and what it might look like. Ask big picture questions. For example, ask the customer "If one of your staff wanted to go into competition with you, what could they do to disrupt your business?". If you can help executive-level leadership, all the way down to the company's implementers who will do the actual work, realize the vision and its potential, and how it can help fill their technical and business gaps, you will get the support you need.

### PROVIDE LIFETIME VALUE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

Lifetime value does not happen without a plan. You need to map out the cloud journey in collaboration with your customer. What should they do first? Where will they be in two, three or five years? Once you have the plan, you can work with the customer to make potential business benefits a reality. Everything doesn't need to happen at once, but it does need to happen in a thoughtful and logical way. Always be thinking about what's next: would complementary or incremental functionality be a good fit at your customer's stage in cloud maturity? 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, as well as areas where the customer may benefit from incremental project or advisory services. For example, if you notice SharePoint usage is low, you could launch an outreach campaign about best practices in organizing projects and teams.



## 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:

### PERFICIENT

Based in St. Louis, Missouri, Perficient is an information technology and management consulting firm serving Global 2000 and enterprise customers from offices throughout North America and delivery centers in Eastern Europe, India, and China. Perficient now finds 90 percent of their Microsoft business tied to Microsoft cloud, and 85 percent of their revenue coming from repeat business.

[Read the case study](#)

# 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 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.

At a fundamental level, there are three big items you need to define:

### 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.



### 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 4 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.



**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

# Maintaining your solution

In addition to providing the customer avenues for receiving support, handling maintenance and on-going feature requests should become a lucrative part of your practice.

## MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Before your effort with the customer begins, a critical contract to include is the maintenance contract which defines how you will address fixing issues discovered within the application as well as keeping the application up to date.

There are two approaches a maintenance contract can take:

- Recurring maintenance fee: In this approach, your maintenance contract is written to provide up to a certain number of hours of maintenance efforts for a recurring price. For example, you might charge the customer \$4,000 per month for up to 40 hours of maintenance each month. This maintenance would be used to address either break/fix issues or could be applied to new feature requests.
- Time and materials fee: Alternately, you could offer the customer the option of paying for break/fix and new feature work on a time and materials basis. Effectively, you create new projects for each set of new work items and bill accordingly.

In either situation, the goal is to keep a satisfied customer using your solution and both approaches provide additional revenue. However, a recurring fee model provides an increased likelihood that the fee is paid but not always fully consumed by maintenance efforts on your part- thus increasing practice profits.

When maintenance contracts expire, companies face the risk of disruptions to their critical application services. Therefore, they are incented to ensure they receive timely notification of any pending contract expirations from you and respond to them accordingly. Ideally, this leads to timely renewals and perpetual fees for your practice as well.



# Define Customer Support Program and Process

## Support Options from Microsoft

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

*Notice: Details on Microsoft programs, offers, and support are subject to change.*

### 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](#)
- ➔ [Premier Support for Partners](#)
- ➔ [Azure Paid Support Plans](#)

# Define Customer Support Program and Process

## Submitting Azure Support Requests

Leverage Microsoft's Azure support when you need help with Azure.



At some stage, you will need to access support from Microsoft. 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.

The process to request support for Azure is as follows:

1. Log in to the Azure Portal with your credentials
2. Select either the "?" in the top right, or the "Help+Support" tile
3. Select Create Support Request
4. Complete the step by step instructions to create your incident.

### RESOURCES

→ [Submit Azure Support Requests Step by Step](#)

# Define Customer Support Program and Process

## 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
<a href="#">Signature Cloud Support</a>	LESS THAN 2 HOURS
<a href="#">Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners</a>	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
<a href="#">Microsoft Premier Support for Partners</a>	LESS THAN 1 HOUR
<a href="#">Partner Advisory Hours</a>	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 Application Development  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)



# Executive Summary

## Operationalize & Get Trained

In the previous section, you evaluated the various services your business can pursue in Azure, as you set up or build your Cloud Application Development 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** compliments 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) drive 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, 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.



# Hire Resources

## Job Descriptions

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 Cloud Architect (CA) drive 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. Five or more years of architecture, design implementation and/or support of distributed applications designed to run in the cloud or across hybrid cloud and on-premises environments. Experience in consultative sales, design and deployment of projects strongly preferred. A computer science or related engineering degree is required.

Technical Skills	Advanced analytics, agile, application architecture, application development, application design, application lifecycle management (ALM), capacity planning, cloud archival, cloud data analytics, cloud disaster recovery, cloud storage, cloud systems management, cloud systems operations, cloud transformation, compliance (PCI, HIPPA, etc.), data architecting, data migration (cross platform / upgrade), database and server virtualization, database architecture, database lifecycle management, database management, DevOps, diagnostics, distributed application design, distributed application development, distributed database design, event sourcing, HADR / replication, health checks, identity and security, information architecture, modern applications, monitoring, networking, performance tuning, polyglot resiliency, predictive analytics, resiliency (clustering, etc.), scalability (up and out, high performance), scrum, security architecture, security compliance, software design, storage, systems operations/management, technical migration upgrades, technology architecture, virtualization
Non-Technical Skills	Consultative sales, collaboration, stakeholder management, relationship management, technical oversight, technical recommendations, problem solving, risk management, architecture design session, program management, proof of concept design, technical demonstration
Technologies	AML, Analytics, APS, AWS, AWS RDS, AWS EC2, AWS Redshift, AWS S3, Azure Active Directory, Azure Data Factory, Azure Data Lake, Azure Storage, Azure API Apps, Azure API Management, Azure DocumentDB, Azure SQL Data Warehouse, Azure Import/Export, Azure HDInsight, Azure Logic Apps, Azure Machine Learning, Azure Mobile Apps, Azure SQL Database, Azure Search, Azure Stream Analytics, Azure Event Hubs, Azure IoT Hub, Azure Virtual Machines, Azure Web Apps, Azure Web Jobs, Azure Cognitive Services, BizTalk, Business Objects, Cassandra, Cloudera, Cognos, Cortana Intelligence, CouchDB, Data warehouse, Database, DB2, Docker, Excel, IBM Bluemix, Google App Engine, Greenplum, Hadoop, HANA, HBase, Hive, Hortonworks, IBM, IBM Teradata, Informix, IoT Solutions, Java, Kafka, Machine Learning, MapR, MapReduce, ML, MongoDB, MariaDB, MySQL, Netezza, Networking, NoSQL, Oracle, Oracle Exadata, Oracle SOA, PBI, Pig, Power BI, PostgreSQL, Python, Qlik Tech, REST, Samza, SAP HANA, SAS, Security, Spark, SQL Server, SQL Server IaaS, SQL Server Integration Services, Storage, Storm, Streaming, Sybase, Tableau, Teradata, TSQL, Virtualization, webMethods, WebSphere, YARN

**Programming/Scripting Languages:** C++, C#, Java, JavaScript, PHP, Perl, Python, Ruby, Ruby on Rails, Pig/Hive, SQL, T-SQL, Scala, PowerShell

Certifications	MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, MCSE Data Management and Analytics, AWS Certified Solution Architect, AWS Certified Developer, AWS Certified Developer
Project Experience Types/Qualities	Advanced analytics (including machine learning), database modernization, coordinate and execute pilots, burst to cloud, hybrid deployments, prototypes or proof of concepts, provide validation on specific scenarios, document and share technical best practices, further customer investment, hybrid solutions on premises or in the cloud, industry-visible, large project relative to size of customer, lift and shift, migrations and upgrades, on-premises to cloud, production environment, projects where data is born in the cloud, size of project team (complexity), significant challenges..

## SENIOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

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. The ideal candidate will have experience in customer facing roles and success leading deep technical architecture and design discussions with senior executives. Eight plus years of experience with deep understanding of web technologies, API consumption/development, full lifecycle application development, database development (relational and/or NoSQL), and enterprise/cloud architecture. Technical BS degree in Computer Science desirable.

Technical Skills	API development, Application architecture, application development, application lifecycle management (ALM), caching, capacity planning, cloud archival, cloud disaster recovery, cloud storage, cloud systems management, cloud systems operations, cloud transformation, compliance (PCI, HIPPA, etc.), data architecting, data migration (cross platform / upgrade), data modeling (physical and logical), data movement, data transformation, database and server virtualization, database architecture, database design, database lifecycle management, database management, dev ops, diagnostics, distributed application design, distributed application development, distributed database design, event sourcing, HADR / replication, health checks, identity and security, information architecture, information management, IoC, mission critical DB design and architecture, modern applications, monitoring, package management (npm, NuGet, etc.), performance tuning, polyglot resiliency, reporting services design and deployment, responsive design, RESTful services, resiliency (clustering, etc.), scalability (up and out, high performance), security architecture, security compliance, source code repository management (git, TFS, svn, etc.), technical migration upgrades, technology architecture, testing / TDD, unstructured data formats (e.g. JSON), structured data formats (e.g. XML), UI / UX
Non-Technical Skills	Collaboration, stakeholder management, relationship management, technical oversight, technical recommendations, problem solving, risk management, architecture design session, program management, proof of concept design, technical demonstration, excellent communication skills

Technologies	<p>AWS API Gateway, AWS EC2, AWS SWF, AWS, AWS RDS, AWS VM, AWS Redshift, AWS S3, Angular, Aurelia, Azure Active Directory, Azure App Service Environment, Azure Data Catalog, Azure Data Factory, Azure Data Lake, Azure Logic App, Azure Mobile App, Azure Storage, Azure DocumentDB, Azure SQL Data Warehouse, Azure Functions, Azure Import/Export, Azure SQL Database, Azure Search, Azure Event Hubs, Azure Web App, Azure Web Jobs, Azure Cognitive Services, BizTalk, Business Objects, Cassandra, CDN, Cortana Intelligence, CouchDB, Data warehouse, Database, DB2, Docker, Excel, IBM Bluemix, Google App Engine, HTML, IBM, IBM Teradata, IoT Solutions, Java, Media Services, MongoDB, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft SharePoint, MySQL, MVC, MVVM, Mobile Development, Networking, Node.js, NoSQL, Oracle, Oracle Exadata, Oracle SOA, PostgreSQL, Python, REST, Security, SQL Server, SQL Server IaaS, SQL Server Integration Services, Storage, Sybase, T-SQL, UWP, Virtualization, Web Services, WCF, WPF, XML</p> <p><b>Programming/Scripting Languages:</b> .NET (C#, F#, VB.NET), Java, Python, JavaScript, Scala, Go, Ruby, PHP, SQL, T-SQL, PowerShell</p> <p><b>Platforms:</b> Linux (Red Hat, Ubuntu, Debian, etc.), Windows</p>
Certifications	MCSE Enterprise Devices and Apps, MCSE Business Intelligence, MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, Certified ScrumMaster, AWS Certified Solution Architect, AWS Certified Developer
Project Experience Types/Qualities	API consumption and development, coordinate and execute pilots, prototypes or proof of concepts, provide validation on specific scenarios, document and share technical best practices, further customer investment, hybrid solutions on premises or in the cloud, industry-visible, CI / Continuous Deployment, large project relative to size of customer, lift and shift, migrations and upgrades (SQL, etc.), on-premises to cloud, production environment, projects where data is born in the cloud, cross-platform SQL Server migration, server-side/desktop development, service architecture, size of project team (complexity), significant challenges, source code repository management, team lead / scrum master, web application development

## SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

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. Five plus years of experience with deep understanding of web technologies, API consumption/development, full lifecycle application development, database development (relational and/or NoSQL), and enterprise/cloud architecture. Technical BS degree in Computer Science desirable.

Technical Skills	API development, Application architecture, application development, application lifecycle management (ALM), caching, cloud storage, cloud systems management, cloud systems operations, cloud transformation, compliance (PCI, HIPPA, etc.), data architecting, data migration (cross platform / upgrade), data modeling (physical and logical), data movement, data transformation, database and server virtualization, database architecture, database design, database lifecycle management, database management, dev ops, diagnostics, distributed application design, distributed application development, distributed database design, event sourcing, health checks, identity and security, information architecture, information management, IoC, mission critical DB design and architecture, modern applications, monitoring, package management (npm, NuGet, etc.), performance tuning, polyglot resiliency, reporting services design and deployment, responsive design, RESTful services, security architecture, security compliance, source code repository (git, TFS, svn, etc.), technical migration upgrades, technology architecture, testing / TDD, unstructured data formats (e.g. JSON), structured data formats (e.g. XML), UI / UX
Non-Technical Skills	Collaboration, problem solving, architecture design session, proof of concept design, technical demonstration, good communication skills
Technologies	AWS API Gateway, AWS EC2, AWS SWF, AWS, AWS RDS, AWS VM, AWS Redshift, AWS S3, Angular, Aurelia, Azure Active Directory, Azure App Service Environment, Azure Data Catalog, Azure Data Factory, Azure Data Lake, Azure Logic App, Azure Mobile App, Azure Storage, Azure DocumentDB, Azure SQL Data Warehouse, Azure Functions, Azure Import/Export, Azure SQL Database, Azure Search, Azure Event Hubs, Azure Web App, Azure Web Jobs, Azure Cognitive Services, BizTalk, Business Objects, Cassandra, CDN, Cortana Intelligence, CouchDB, Data warehouse, Database, DB2, Docker, Excel, IBM Bluemix, Google App Engine, HTML, IBM, IBM Teradata, IoT Solutions, Java, Media Services, MongoDB, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft SharePoint, MySQL, MVC, MVVM, Mobile Development, Networking, Node.js, NoSQL, Oracle, Oracle Exadata, Oracle SOA, PostgreSQL, Python, REST, Security, SQL Server, SQL Server IaaS, SQL Server Integration Services, Storage, Sybase, T-SQL, UWP, Virtualization, Web Services, WCF, WPF, XML  <b>Programming/Scripting Languages:</b> .NET (C#, F#, VB.NET), Java, Python, JavaScript, Scala, Go, Ruby, PHP, SQL, T-SQL, PowerShell <b>Platforms:</b> Linux (Red Hat, Ubuntu, Debian, etc.), Windows
Certifications	MCSE Enterprise Devices and Apps, MCSE Business Intelligence, MCSA Cloud Platform Solutions Associate, MCSA Linux on Azure Solutions Associate, MCSE Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, AWS Certified Solution Architect, AWS Certified Developer
Project Experience Types/Qualities	API consumption and development, collaborate on and execute pilots, prototypes or proof of concepts, provide validation on specific scenarios, hybrid solutions on premises or in the cloud, industry-visible, CI / Continuous Deployment, large project relative to size of customer, migrations and upgrades (SQL, etc.), production environment, projects where data is born in the cloud, cross-platform SQL Server migration, server-side/desktop development, service architecture, source code repository usage, web application development

# 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:

	<b>Total</b> (n=1136)	<b>SMB</b> (n=886)	<b>Enterprise</b> (n=250)
Referrals from employees or partnerships	70%	69%	73%
<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>	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%
<a href="#">GitHub</a>	8%	8%	7%
<a href="#">Stack Overflow</a>	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.

	<b>Total</b> (n=1136)	<b>SMB</b> (n=886)	<b>Enterprise</b> (n=250)
<b>Work history</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Cultural fit</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>47%</b>
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 median cost for each resource by region:

Annual Median Cost of Online/Cloud Service Resources 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

# Train Your Business Team

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Optimize your operations ebook](#)
- [Successful Cloud Partners](#)
- [Cloud Platform University Online](#)
- [Partner Learning Paths](#)
- [Microsoft Inspire Conference Recordings](#)
- [edX Courses from Microsoft](#)

## Training is Good for Business

### Best Training Practices

Sustaining and growing a Cloud Practice requires investment in skill development, and per research conducted by IDC and Microsoft, our most successful Cloud Partners are doing just that. Some of the training areas you should consider include:

Use standardized tests, such as exams, to test aptitude in new, often junior, hires to place them in the right role and set them up for success.

As long as new hires are ready and willing to learn, the rest can come with experience, education, and ongoing learning. However, to be successful, this approach requires structure. First, you need a predictable way to identify potential. This is where standardized tests come to play. Next, you need a formal skill development plan that's based on role. This plan must have milestones along a path of logical progression to becoming fully proficient. Underlying these efforts, your management staff and team members will need to play a part in helping entry-level staff move up the ladder.

Have structure and invest in skill development to keep experienced employees sharp on the latest technologies.

In addition to ensuring everyone is properly trained in the day-to-day work, you also need to keep their technical and delivery skills sharp. It is hard to carve out time for ongoing learning, but if you make it part of the daily, weekly or monthly work rhythm and work culture it will happen. The key is to make the learning extremely relevant. If you are able to increase skills and knowledge, you are typically also able to increase billing rates.

Avoid being overly reliant on single staffers with key knowledge. Build and maintain deep knowledge across the organization.

With today's cloud-based focus on solution development, projects tend to be short-lived and a greater influx of new customers enter the fold, requiring technical staff to be more versatile than ever. Versatility may not come easily to everyone. Expect some staff to weed themselves out. At the same time, the opportunity to become more versatile has a strong value proposition for many people. You need structure to foster versatility, but you don't need to go overboard. Start with determining the focus areas that make most sense for your business, then identify champions that will lead the charge. By doing these things not only will you have a more profitable Cloud Practice, you will increase employee retention and satisfaction, and give personnel skills that can expand their career opportunities. Microsoft provides numerous resources for self-guided training. The following resources are important sources to consider when looking to address your training needs.

## 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.

## C+E PARTNER CURRICULUM GUIDE

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.

## 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.



# Build staff on-boarding and mentoring plan

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- ➔ [Microsoft Virtual Academy](#)
- ➔ [IT Pro Cloud Essentials](#)
- ➔ [IT Pro Career Center](#)
- ➔ [Microsoft Azure Certification and Training](#)

## 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

IT staff members may feel anxious about their roles and positions as they realize that a different set of skills is needed for the support of cloud solutions. Agile employees who explore and learn new cloud technologies don't need to have that fear. They can lead the adoption of cloud services and help the organization understand and embrace the associated changes.

- [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 and partners offer a variety of options for all audiences to develop their skills with Microsoft Azure services.
- 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. We recommend turning knowledge of Microsoft Azure into official recognition with Microsoft Azure certification training and exams.

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/mcsd-azurearchitect-certification.aspx>.

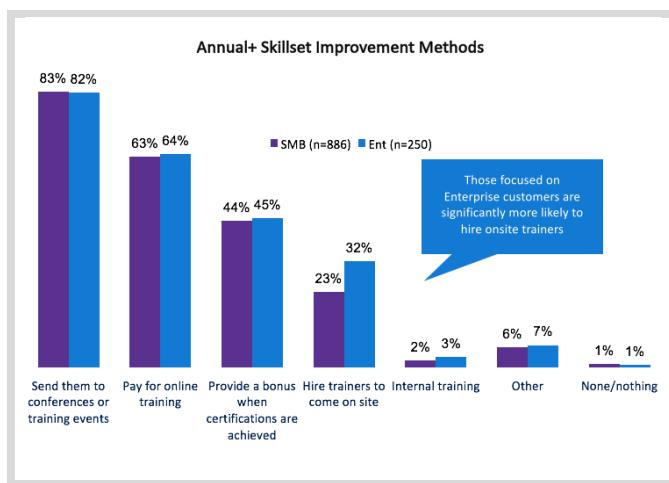
# Complete Training

## 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.

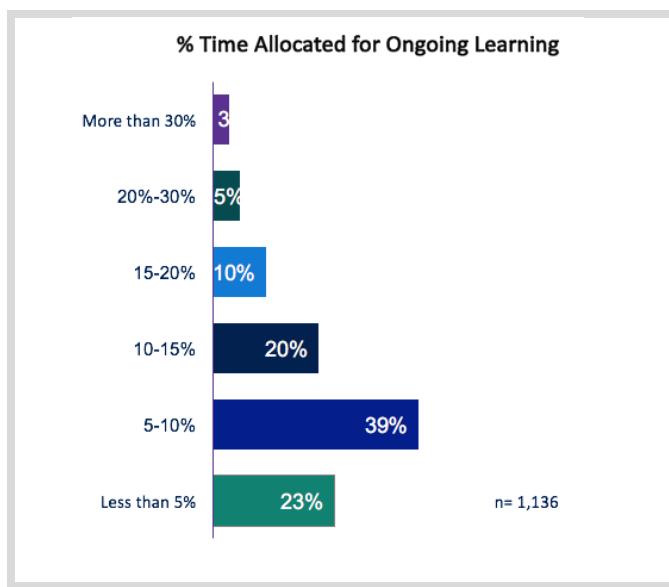
In our research, we found conferences and paid online training are the most common learning mechanisms.

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



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.



There are many on-demand training resources available, some require subscription fees and others are free for your resources. The following is a selection of in-person, instructor led and, self-guided technical training resources:

### AZURE SKILLS

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. 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, along with a digital certification of completion.

### MICROSOFT CONFERENCES

[Microsoft Ignite](#) and [Microsoft Build](#) are first party conferences that provide hands-on learning, industry insights, and direct access to product experts.

### SAFARI

[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.

### PLURALSIGHT

[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.

## OPSGILITY

[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.

## 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.

## MICROSOFT VIRTUAL ACADEMY

[MVA](#) 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.

## EDX COURSES

[edX courses, taught by Microsoft experts](#), let you learn through hands-on experience with broad reach, cutting-edge technologies in areas including cloud services, mobile development, and data sciences. Specific [courses on Azure](#) are available.

## 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, [Microsoft Inspire](#) provides many of its sessions as recordings you can view at anytime—no conference pass required. To access these trainings, all you need is to be an MPN member.

## AZURE SKILLS

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.

## MICROSOFT LEARNING ON DEMAND COURSES

[Microsoft Learning](#) offers a wide variety of official curriculum on-  
that, let you learn through hands-on experience with broad  
reach of Azure technologies.

## TECHNET VIRTUAL LABS

Immerse yourself in a virtual hands-on lab and experience the product first hand, or try our guided experiences, and click through a tour of the various product features.

## ATTEND A MICROSOFT AZURE COURSE

Microsoft Learning Partners can help you achieve your training goals, by offering a breadth of solutions to suit your training needs, from classroom training to online learning.

## MICROSOFT AZURE BOOKS

Download several free eBooks from the Microsoft Virtual Academy. Additional eBooks are available through the [Microsoft Press Store](#).

## CHANNEL 9

If video-based learning is a more effective tool for you or your team, Channel 9 offers a variety of content from the community of experts behind the products. There is a section on Azure, containing videos from webinars, online TV shows, and events.

## AZURE DOCUMENTATION

For examples based on building applications for Azure, using popular development frameworks such as .NET, Node.js, Java, and Python, be sure to check out the Azure Documentation. New content is regularly added, and readers are able to leave comments, or even contribute to the documentation for certain topics.

## STACK OVERFLOW

This wildly popular and active community of IT professionals, developers, and product team members is a great resource for those looking for help or advice.

## MICROSOFT LEARNING PARTNERS

[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

# Complete Certifications

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- ➔ [MCSA Cloud Platform Certification](#)
- ➔ [MCSA Linux on Azure Certification](#)

## Solutions Associate Certifications

Your team should complete certifications in alignment with your plan to meet Microsoft Partner Network Competency requirements, but that's not the only reason to get certified.

Sixty-four percent of IT hiring managers rate certifications as having extremely high or high value in validating the skills and expertise of job candidates. (CompTIA, Employer Perceptions of IT Training and Certification, January 2011). Certification, training, and experience are three of the top four most important characteristics when selecting a candidate for a cloud-related position. (IDC/Microsoft, Climate Change: Cloud's Impact on IT Organizations and Staffing, November 2012).

Currently there are six Azure specific certification paths that can lead to an MCSA or MCSE certification.

### 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](#)

### 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](#)

# Complete Certifications

## Solutions Expert Certifications

Currently there are two Azure specific solutions expert certifications.

### MCSE: CLOUD PLATFORM AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Required Exams

- [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](#)

### MCSE: DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYTICS

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.

Required Exams

- [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

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

## Solutions Developer Certifications

Currently there are two Azure specific solutions developer certifications.

### MCSD: APP BUILDER

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.

Required Exams

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

### MCSD: AZURE SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT

Note: This certification is retiring March 2017.

Required Exams

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

### RESOURCES

- ➔ [MCSD App Builder Certification](#)
- ➔ [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 Action 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

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

Keep your internal Azure costs down by maximizing your use of Azure credits and benefits.

### RESOURCES

- ➔ [Cloud Platform Competency](#)
- ➔ [Partner Azure Benefit](#)

In addition to providing Azure credits, 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.

With Microsoft's acquisition of Xamarin in 2016, [Xamarin](#) is included with all editions of Visual Studio 2015 and above. This is great news for mobile and cross-platform developers who wish to achieve between 75% and 100% code reuse between platforms.

### MICROSOFT PARTNER NETWORK

As a member of the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN) you may be entitled to Visual Studio licenses and even additional Azure credits for internal-use based on your competency. Check the Cloud Platform Competency page to see if you are eligible: <https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/membership/cloud-platform-competency>.

### 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.

# Set up Azure for internal use

## Resources



## Ways to Purchase Azure

There are two primary ways you can purchase Azure.

### 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.

### RESOURCES

- [Purchasing an Enterprise Agreement](#)
- [Azure EA Portal](#)
- [Azure Free Trial](#)

### 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.

# Identify and enroll into Azure Sell Incentives

## Resources



### RESOURCES

→ [Digital Partner of Record](#)

## Attaching a Digital Partner of Record (DPOR)

DPOR automates how partners are attached as the Partner of Record for the subscriptions you are actively managing for customers.

These include subscriptions for Microsoft Office 365, Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online, Microsoft Intune, Enterprise Mobility Suite (EMS), and Microsoft Azure.

As a partner, you are crucial to customer success in selling, implementing, deploying, or managing solutions based on Microsoft cloud services. At Microsoft, we strive to ensure every customer has the level of partner support they need to maximize their business outcomes from these solutions.

The customer's Global Admin for each cloud subscription can designate their lead services partner as the DPOR through their admin portal, which identifies the key services/lifecycle support partner who's engaged in providing ongoing support. DPORs have access to important information necessary to fully support customers and will be the contact for FastTrack services.

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.

# Identify and enroll into Azure Sell Incentives

## 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.

# Identify and enroll into Azure Sell Incentive Resources

## Cloud Solution Provider



### RESOURCES

- [Become a Cloud Solution Provider](#)
- [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](#)

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

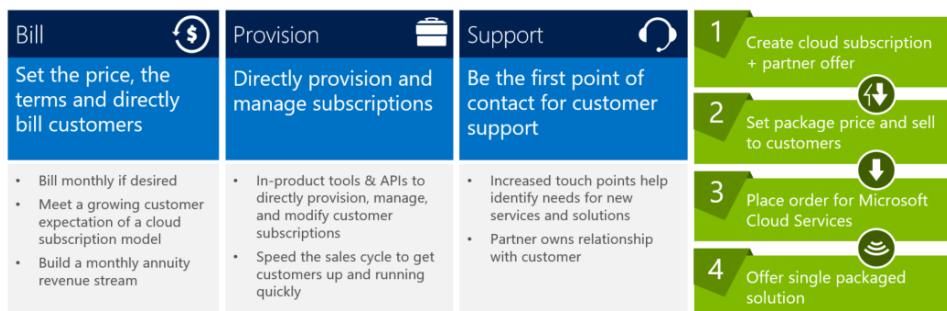
#### Key benefits for this offering include:

- 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

In order to qualify for CSP direct you can either build the capability yourself or recruit needed capabilities from CSP turnkey enablement companies who provide commerce platform, support organization services and business plan and go-to market frameworks usually via revenue sharing model.

### 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 an Indirect Provider](#).



# Identify and apply for Azure Investment Programs

## 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 [Leverage Investment Resources](#) in this playbook 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.



# Build materials to support sales and marketing efforts

## Resources



### RESOURCES

→ [MPN Sales & Marketing](#)

## Understanding Push vs. Pull Marketing

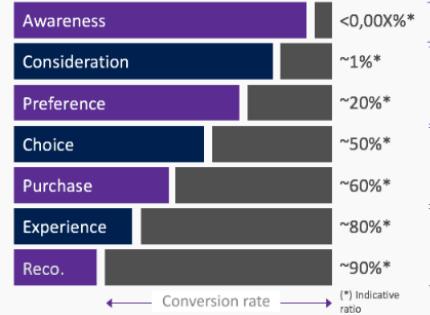
When considering the materials to support your sales and marketing efforts, it's important to be clear on how each approach yields customers.

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 selected- your customer's recommendation pushes over the choice hurdle quickly.

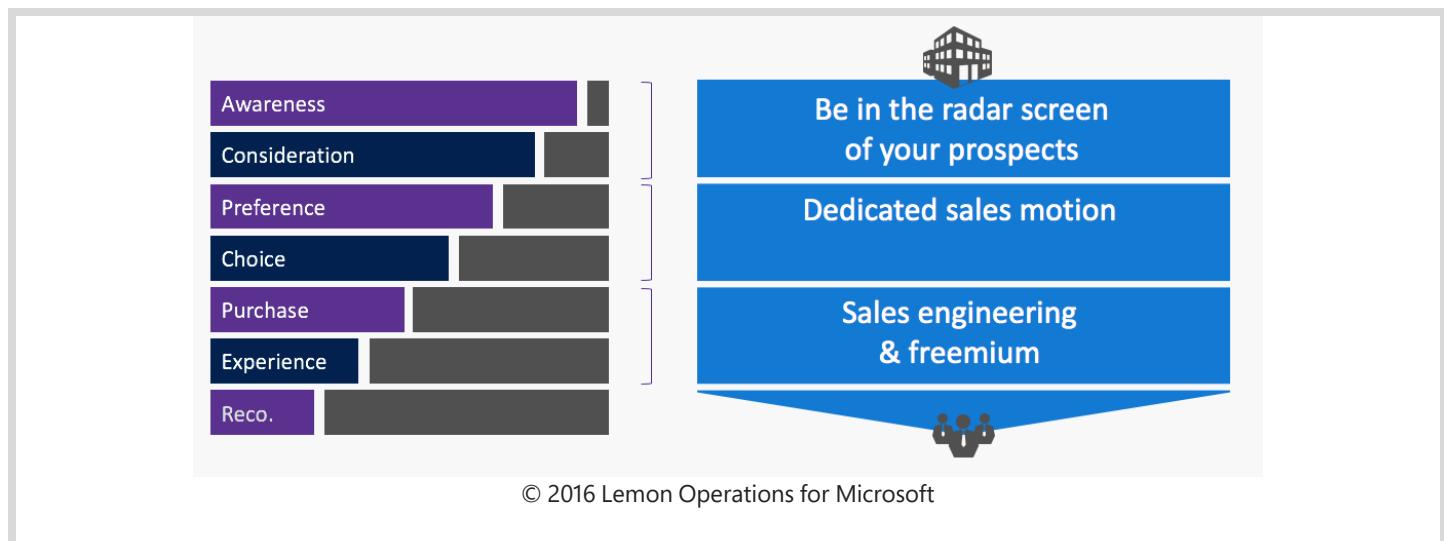


© 2016 Lemon Operations for Microsoft

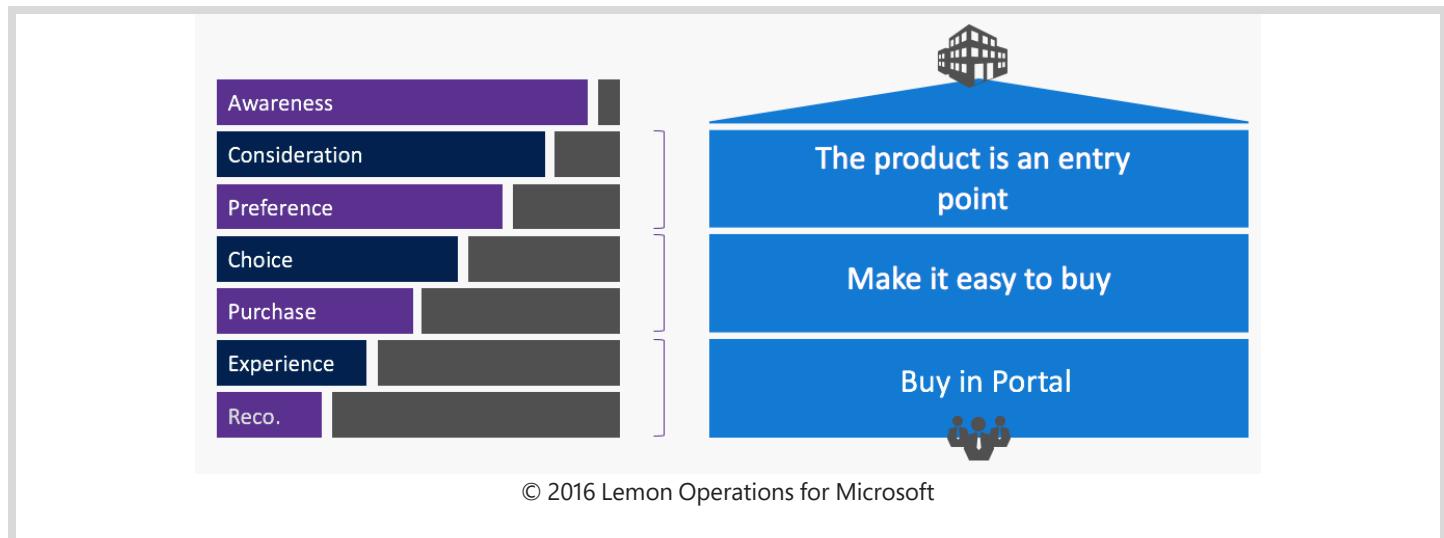
With this understanding in mind, let's examine the different approaches you use that favor either the top of the funnel or the bottom.

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



### RESOURCES

→ [MPN Sales & Marketing](#)

## 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.

For access to these resources, lessons on the why, what and how of marketing as well as best practice examples from partners doing it today, see the [Partner Marketing Center](#) and the [Smart Partner Marketing](#) sites.

# Create key contracts

## Resources



### RESOURCES

→ [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 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 & Systems

## Resources



### RESOURCES

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

## Project Management

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? Here are some tooling options.

### 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.

### 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.

Visual Studio Online provides a hosted team services environment on a subscription-based fee model.

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

### MICROSOFT PROJECT

The de facto standard in project management software. Product options include hosted and on-premises, according to your needs. Use Project to keep your projects, resources, and teams organized and on track. Features include pre-built templates to help you hit the ground running, powerful scheduling options, optimized task management, resource management, seamless integration with collaboration tools like Skype for Business and Yammer, project reports, and add-ins to expand functionality.

### 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.

# Setup Tools & Systems

## Resources



### RESOURCES

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

## 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.

# Setup Tools & Systems

## Resources



### RESOURCES

→ [Microsoft Dynamics 365](#)

## Customer Relationship Management

Manage the customer data of 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.

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.

Dynamics 365 delivers the full spectrum of CRM through five individual apps—Sales, Customer Service, Field Service, Project Service Automation, and Marketing—that work seamlessly together. You can buy just what your business needs now, and add others as those needs grow.

# 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.

# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Enterprise Cloud Strategy E-Book](#)
- [Azure Virtual Machines Readiness Assessment](#)
- [Azure Channel Pricing Calculator](#)
- [Azure IaaS Cost Estimator Tool](#)
- [Operations Management Suite Application Dependency Monitor](#)
- [Prioritization is key to a successful hybrid cloud strategy](#)

## Assessing for Readiness

Start by offering a cloud readiness assessment

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-and-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.

Some of the key customer challenges and questions you may face include the following:

- 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 readiness assessment usually covers topics such as:

- 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
- Hybrid cloud connectivity requirements

# Define & Design the Solution Offer

## Resources



### 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](#)
- [How to get moving in your migration to the cloud](#)

## Creating a cloud migration plan

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 including:

- What application components am I migrating?
- Are they storage data, web servers, databases, single virtual machines, N-tier apps, or entire datacenters?
- Will this be a lift-and-shift migration or will this involve any degree of re-platforming or code factoring? Which Azure region(s) will I migrate to?
- What kind of availability, scalability, security, and auto scaling patterns should I introduce in the apps?
- Will the entire migration process be automated or will it be a combination of manual and scripted effort?
- What automation tools will I use?
- How will I test the apps in cloud for performance and availability before turning over?
- How do I use my existing software licenses when migrating to Azure?
- How will connectivity back to on-premises be handled (if any)?

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.

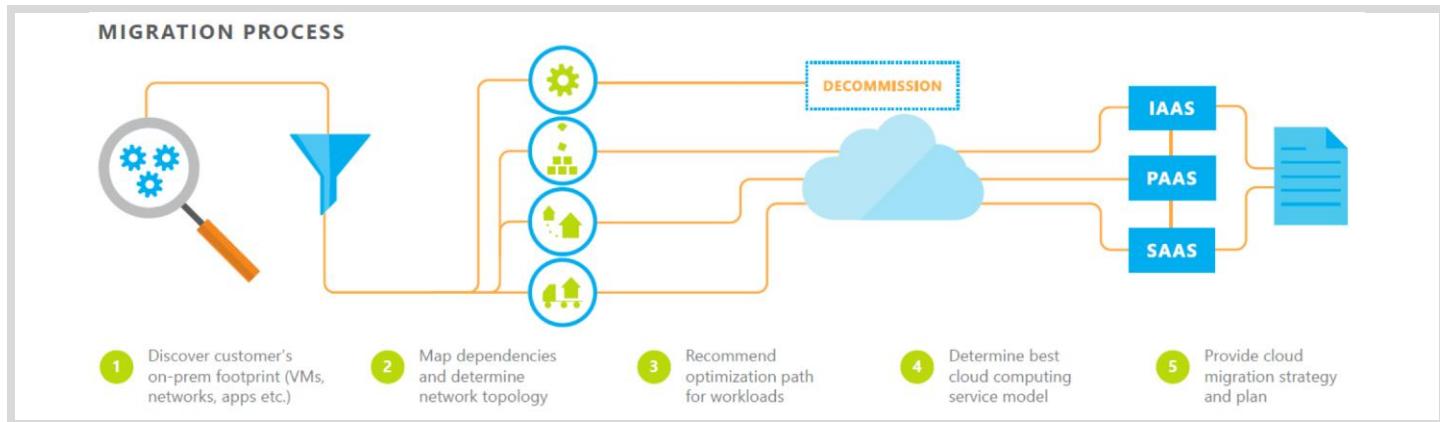
Ensure that your migration plan includes the following:

- 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

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

## MIGRATION PLANNING

Once you've determined what workloads will move to Azure, you need to come up with a migration plan that considers all the key steps of the migration process.



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-and-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"> <li>• Shut down inefficient or obsolete business applications</li> <li>• Retaining access to the historical data</li> <li>• Decommissioning has many steps that need to be followed for security and compliance purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As-is migration of applications and data from an on-premises datacenter to Azure</li> <li>• Often immediate benefits in cost, scalability, availability, elasticity, or management features</li> </ul>
RE-ARCHITECT	SUSTAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right-sizing" resources running an application</li> <li>• Opportunity to consolidate various app tiers (when possible) or re-architect the app for platform as a service (PaaS).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your customer's app is integral and efficient enough to continue in its current on premises deployment</li> <li>• No migration necessary</li> <li>• Often most mission-critical, data sensitive apps are last to move to cloud</li> </ul>

NEW DEPLOYMENTS	RE-PLATFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MSPs provide deployment, POC and provisioning assistance for new apps that are written for Azure</li><li>• Includes dev-test, staging and testing in the desired IDE</li><li>• Architecture design and solution design assistance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor architect or code changes on an application to work on a different platform</li><li>• Often minor code changes are required to remove performance bottlenecks and increase an app's operability on Azure</li></ul>
ORCHESTRATE	APPLICATION LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Orchestrate how the various app components will interact and move in the migration process</li><li>• Important for complex apps or for entire data center/rack migrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End to end management of application development lifecycle including governance, development, and maintenance of apps</li></ul>

# Decide on a Solution Marketplace

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Azure Marketplace<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Microsoft Azure Certified](#)
- [How to publish an offer in the Azure Marketplace](#)
- [Marketing campaigns](#)
- [Marketing planning tool](#)
- [Microsoft DigitalStride](#)

## Azure Marketplace

Microsoft provides multiple channels thru which you can promote your services and sell any packaged solutions you offer. The Azure Marketplace should be one of the first you consider.

[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

All of the steps required to publish your solution to the Azure Marketplace, for each type of offer, are outlined in the [Azure documentation site](#).

## 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

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 88 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](http://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.

When you publish your solution to the Azure Marketplace, you can establish any number of pricing tiers. You have complete flexibility in naming these available plans, adding a description, and setting the price. A good strategy for increasing your customer adoption rate is to do a combination of free trials and multiple pricing models. However, don't be confused between offering a free pricing tier and a free software trial (Try it now). The free tier is perpetually free, and you are not required to establish a payment instrument (like a credit card). The free software trial is free for a limited period of time, after which the customer will start being charged.

There are several options for establishing your product pricing. For instance, if you wish to handle licensing on your own, outside of the Azure Marketplace, you can use the BYOL Model (Bring-your-own-license). In this instance, you charge the customer on your own platform. Simplify your billing and reduce customer friction by having Microsoft manage billing for Usage-Based and Monthly Fee payment options. Microsoft will pay you quarterly via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) at the latest, if not sooner.

# Decide on a Solution Marketplace

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Cortana Intelligence Gallery](#)<sup>1</sup>
- [How to Contribute to the Cortana Intelligence Gallery](#)

## Cortana Intelligence Gallery

The Cortana Intelligence Gallery enables developers and data scientists to share their analytics solutions.

The gallery contains a variety of resources including:

### EXPERIMENTS

The Gallery contains a wide variety of experiments that have been developed in Azure Machine Learning Studio. These range from quick proof-of-concept experiments that demonstrate a specific machine learning technique, to fully-developed solutions for complex machine learning problems.

### JUPYTER NOTEBOOKS

Jupyter Notebooks include code, data visualizations, and documentation in a single, interactive canvas. Notebooks in the Gallery provide tutorials and detailed explanations of advanced machine learning techniques and solutions.

### SOLUTIONS

Quickly build Cortana Intelligence Solutions from preconfigured solutions, reference architectures, and design patterns. Make them your own with the included instructions or with a featured partner.

### TUTORIALS

A number of tutorials are available to walk you through machine learning technologies and concepts, or to describe advanced methods for solving various machine learning problems.

### COLLECTIONS

A collection allows you to group together experiments, APIs, and other Gallery items that address a specific solution or concept.

### COMPETITIONS

Competitions provide an exciting opportunity to compete with the community of data scientists to solve complex problems using Cortana Intelligence Suite.

# Decide on a Solution Marketplace

## 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.

## Power BI

Power BI offers two mechanism for partners to present their solutions.

### POWERBI.COM SOLUTION TEMPLATES

If you are developing BI solutions using Power BI, consider capturing that as intellectual property that can be offered as Solution Template on PowerBI.com. These Solution Templates provide end customers a self-service installable mechanism for deploying the solution into their own Azure Subscription, but leave room for the Partner to help the customer tailor the implementation to meet their needs because partners are recommended right alongside the Solution Template.

### POWERBI.COM PARTNER SHOWCASE

The Partner Showcase enables you to show the BI experience you have developed in Power BI as means to demo the end product of the services you can provide to end customers. Enthused customers can contact you directly from your Partner Showcase page.

### RESOURCES

- ➔ [AppSource<sup>1</sup>](#)
- ➔ [PowerBI.com Solution Templates](#)
- ➔ [PowerBI.com Partner Showcase](#)

## Increase your visibility

Once you identify and select the Marketplace to target for promoting or selling your services, plan your strategy to enroll and increase your visibility. Be sure to leave plenty of time- most marketplace efforts take weeks to months, so do not expect yourself to be listed overnight.

Each marketplace is different in their approach to performing the integration that gets you listed, 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, as appropriate to your service or the marketplace 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.

# Create Engagement Checklists & Templates

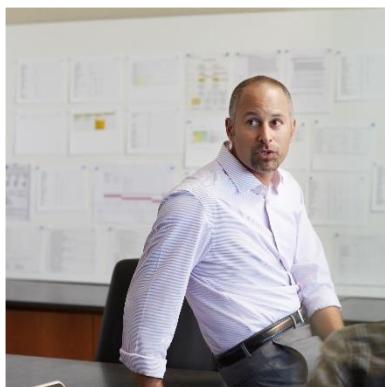
## Standardize Customer Engagement

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

- Conduct 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)
- Conduct a final handoff to customer
- Conduct project debrief with customer
- Conduct internal project post-mortem
- Customer conducts acceptance tests

# Execute Solution Integration Plan

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- <http://www.azure speed.com>
- [Intro to App Service Environments](#)
- [Load test using VSTS](#)
- [Azure Resource Groups](#)
- [Authoring Azure Resource Manager templates](#)

## Successfully Develop and Deploy the Solution

Follow best practices for an effective and robust deployment.

1. If you are working with data, make sure you choose the closest data center. To do this, test network latency to Azure Storage in worldwide data centers to determine the best region for your application and users. This is key to providing lower latency and faster throughput. This is more cut-and-dry if you have a regionally-bound customer. If this is the case, have them test the latency by using <http://www.azure speed.com>. You can also use this tool to check latency related to Media services, CDN, Traffic Manager, etc.
2. Implement continuous delivery of your solution. If you are building a web application, for instance, Visual Studio Team Services (VSTS) can be configured to continuously deploy from your source code hosted there or another location like GitHub. If you are working with Linux containers, you can make use of a combination of Azure Container Service (ACS) and VSTS to automate multi-container deployments, or any number of open source continuous delivery tools can be employed. Continuous integration and deployment allows you and your customers to innovate at a rapid pace to be competitive in the marketplace.
3. Choose the right size that fits. In other words, do not just throw big virtual machines at every problem. Test various configurations under load. Keep cost in mind when deciding scale-up and scale-out strategies. The bottom line is, run several load tests. If you implement continuous integration/delivery of your solution, this can help in scaling scenarios.
4. If possible, use an App Service Environment (ASE). If you are deploying Web Apps, Mobile Apps, API Apps, or Logic Apps, consider using an App Service Environment. An ASE provides a fully isolated and dedicated environment for securely running your apps. It is always created inside of a regional virtual network, enabling your apps to securely connect to other endpoints accessible only inside of a virtual network, including endpoints connected via Site-to-Site and ExpressRoute connections. It also enables an App Service Environment to be secured behind upstream appliances, firewalls, and network SaaS providers. Your apps running inside an ASE also have more scaling options available to them.
5. Load test all your web-facing components, using different scale configurations (combination of Instance size and number of instances) to understand the right scale configuration under regular load. Various tools like Visual Studio and Apache JMeter can be used to perform load tests. Learn more <https://www.visualstudio.com/en-us/get-started/test/load-test-your-app-vs>
6. Automate your infrastructure. A combination of Resource Groups and Azure Resource Manager (ARM) templates provides a simple, yet powerful way for you to define all the Azure components of your solution, while controlling costs and access control into the management platform. Since these various components make up the DNA of your application, it's only natural to treat them as interdependent parts of a single entity. Templates can also be used to deploy to your testing, staging, and production environments.



# Go to Market

Cloud Application Development  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)



# 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.

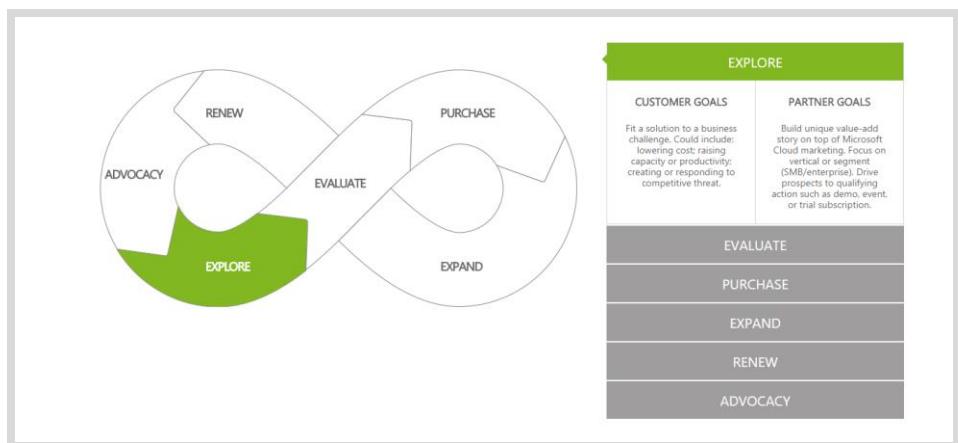
Define your value proposition and tell the world why to do business with your company.

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

## Build a modern, discoverable website

Your website is all-important.

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. Ensure you 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.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

While your website may be where customers go to learn about your business, social media (like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) is where customers discover and recommend your business and you need will need to have a presence there. Microsoft has created a three part video series you can watch to learn the basics of [Creating a Compelling Profile](#), [Growing Your Network](#) and using [Social Media for Marketing](#).

### CONTENT CREATION

Content is King and Context is Queen.

Survey your customers, ask them about their experience as they moved through the buying journey with your company, what did they like, what would they fix, what do they recommend? Be sure to visit the [Partner Marketing Center](#) for ready-made content you can customize.

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.

### DIGITALSTRIDE

Help your prospects and customers discover and engage with your company solutions online with Microsoft DigitalStride, allowing you to turn prospects into loyal customers who stay with you for years to come. Use our Digital IQ assessment to evaluate your online presence and determine which package fits your needs best. In addition to maximizing your discoverability, DigitalStride will provide you the necessary consulting, support and recommendations to help you succeed. We've worked with thousands of Microsoft partners over the last eight years and are award winning Microsoft Gold partners ourselves. Services available in English, Spanish Portuguese, German and French. Learn more about [DigitalStride](#).

### RESOURCES

- [Smart Partner Marketing](#)
- [Search Engine Optimization Video](#)
- [How to Build a Website](#)
- [Customer Journey](#)
- [Partner Marketing Center](#)
- [Digital Stride](#)

# Digital Transformation with Azure

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Digital Transformation on MPN](#)
- [Digital Transformation Blog](#)

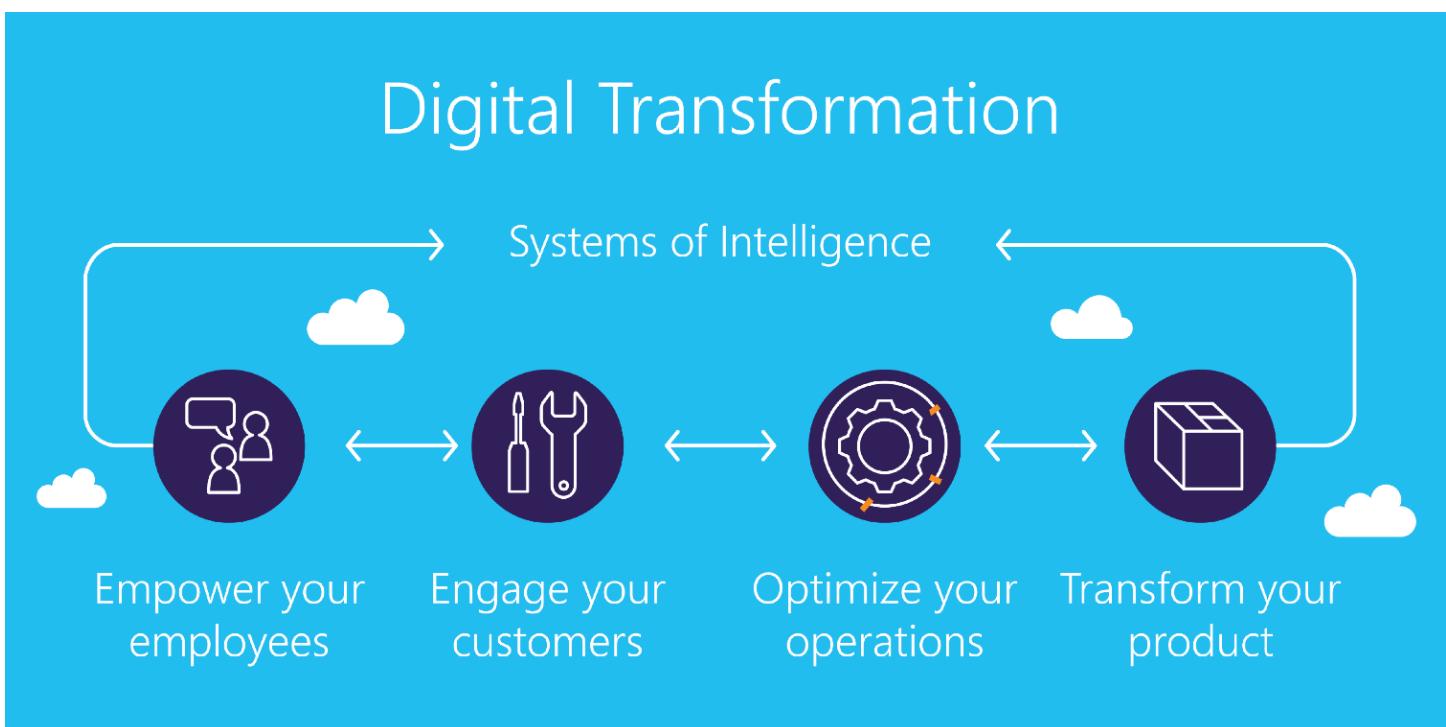
## Leading with Digital Transformation

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 CEOs (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

# Digital Transformation with Azure

## 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

# Engage with Customers & Prospects

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Meetup.com](#)
- [Microsoft Envision](#)
- [Microsoft Ignite](#)
- [Microsoft Build](#)
- [Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference](#)
- [DEVintersection](#)

## Engaging with the user community in different ways

This level of engagement goes beyond name recognition or branding. It builds trust and rapport with existing and prospective customers. It demonstrates that you are a serious contender in the marketplace, but also have something more than your product to offer. Attending meetups, for example, can provide a good opportunity to recruit new talent, because attendees usually participate on their own time because they are serious about improving their knowledge base and networking with others.

### MEETUPS

#### 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.

### CONFERENCES

#### 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.

# Engage with Customers & Prospects

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Azure Blog](#)
- [ZDNET Microsoft Blog](#)
- [Satya Nadella Twitter](#)
- [Microsoft Channel 9](#)
- [.NET Rocks](#)
- [Microsoft Cloud Show](#)
- [Microsoft Office Webcasts](#)

## Publications

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.

### WEBINARS AND PODCASTS

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
- [aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)

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



### RESOURCES

→ [Using the MTC](#)

## 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?

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.

# 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 buyer's 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%	56%	33% of them
Purchased the type of product	Say they still plan to buy	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



Authenticity



Relevance



Variety



Follow-up



Automation

1

2

3

4

5

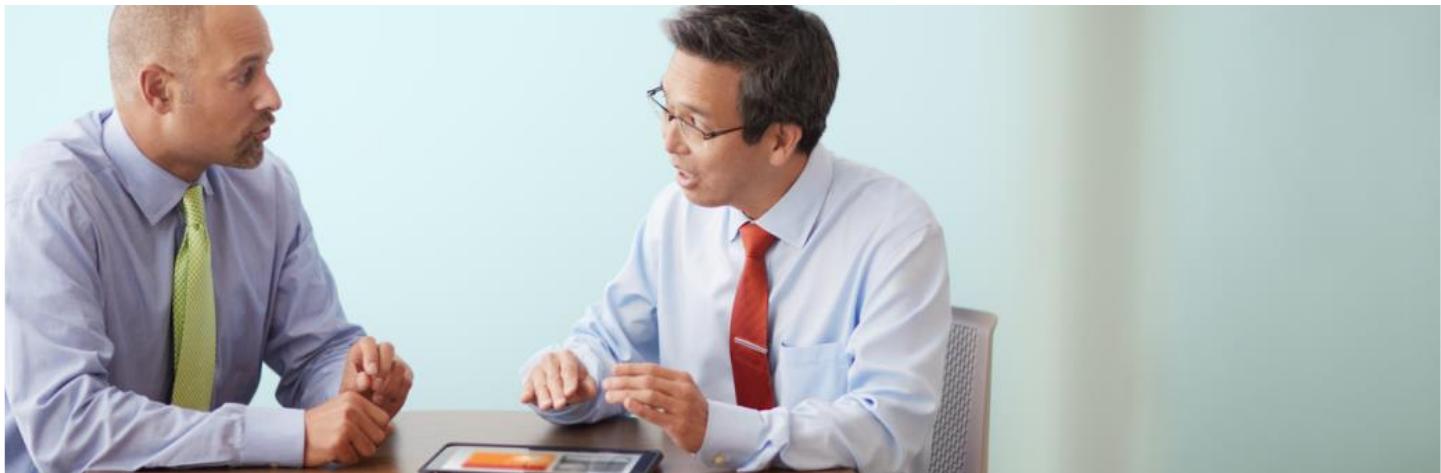
# Engage Technical Pre-Sales in Sales Conversations

## 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?

# 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

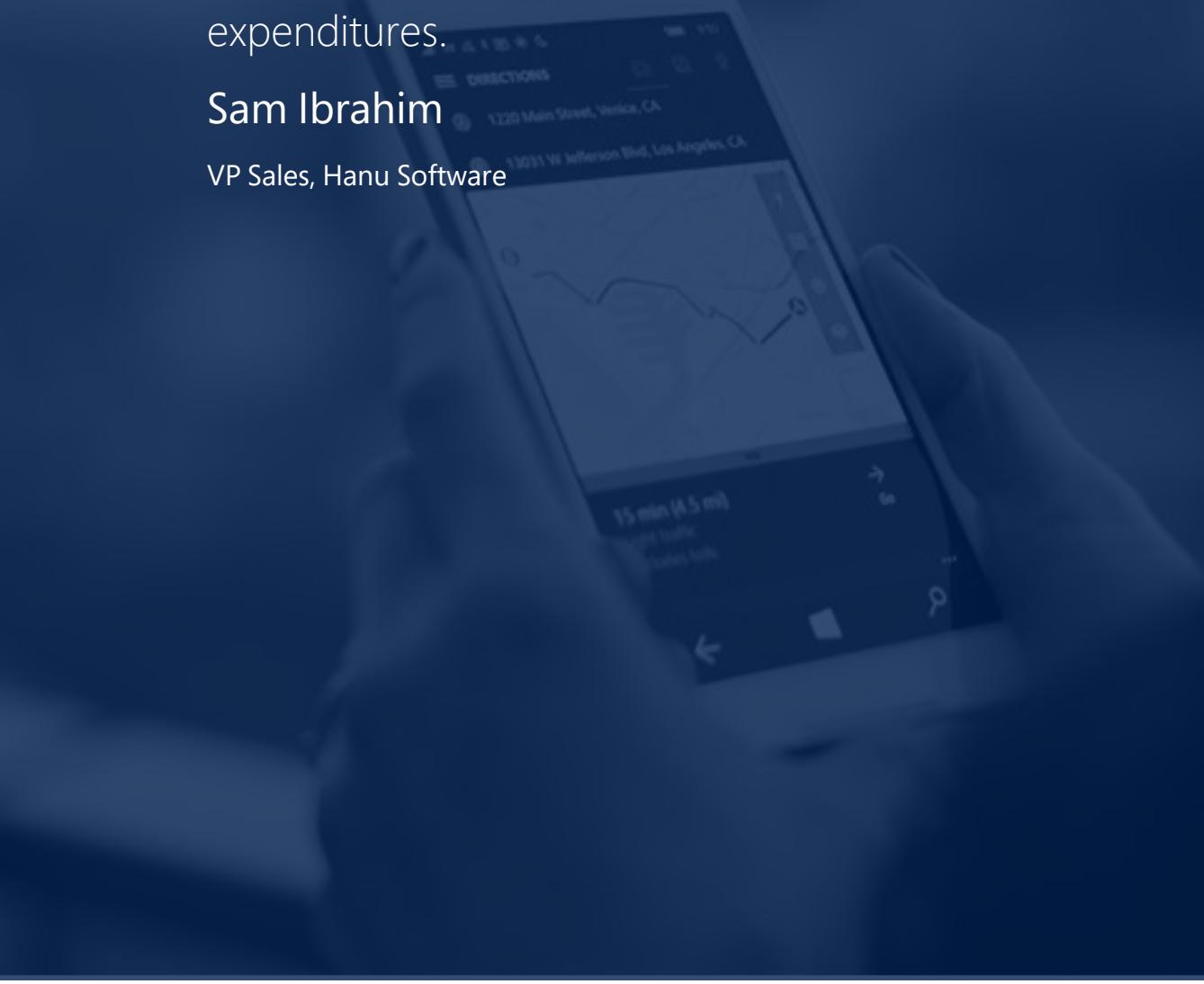
“

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

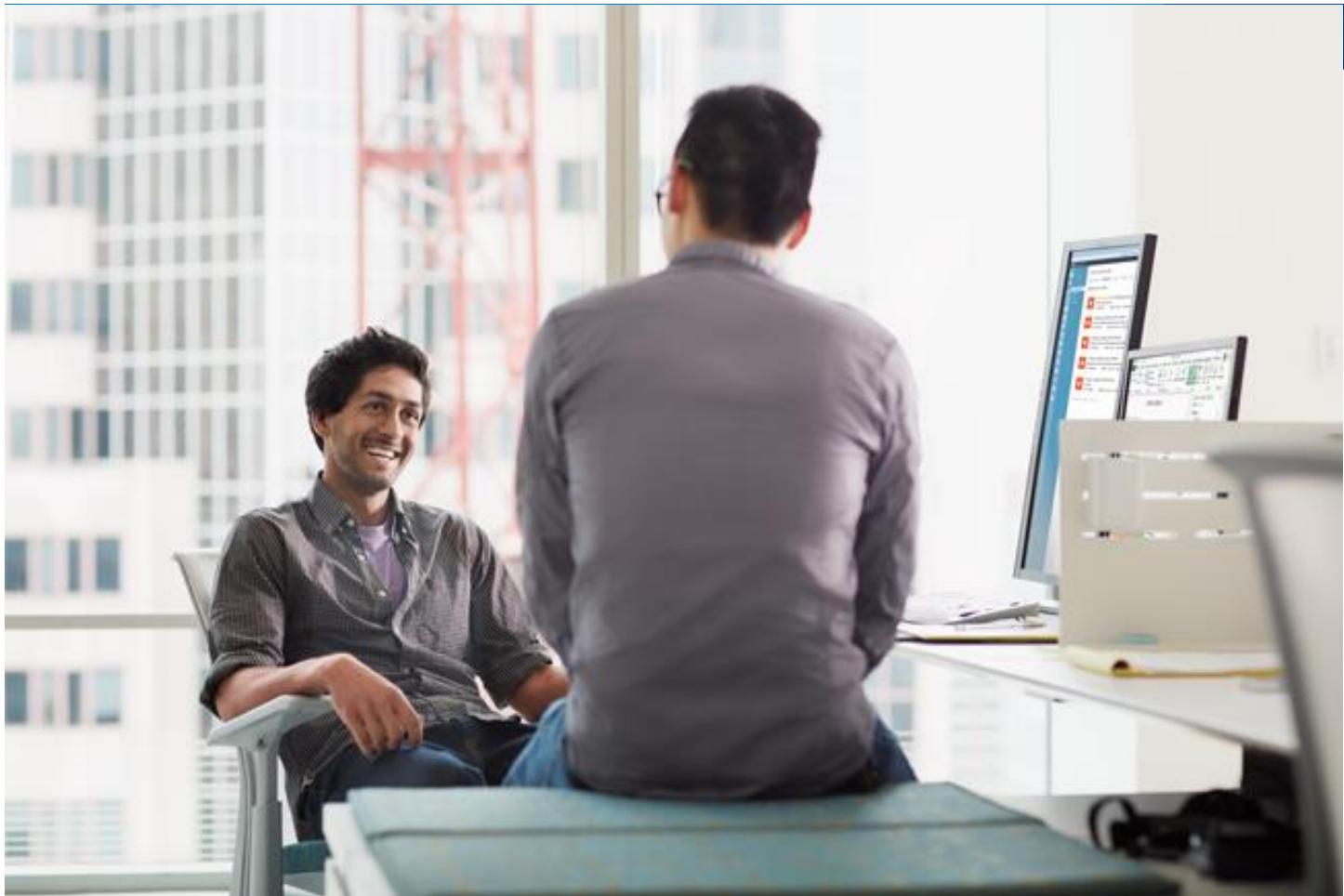
Marketing automation, an essential part of your marketing strategy, refers to software platforms and technologies designed for marketing departments and organizations to more effectively market on multiple channels online (such as email, social media, websites, etc.) and automate repetitive tasks. Marketing 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.



# Close & Execute Deals

Cloud Application Development  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://aka.ms/practiceplaybooks)



# Executive Summary

## Close & Execute Deals

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

# Develop Customer Adoption & Onboarding Plans

## Maximize customer lifetime value

Through our [research](#), we heard a number of best practices focused on how partners are setting themselves up for success to maximize customer lifetime value including the following investments across people, process and technology:



### 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.

# 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, Microsoft 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.

# 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”. That is to say, that 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. 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.

▲ Sales Boot Camp and Assessment (Enterprise): Get Started on Azure (MPN10743)  
[2h 17m] [Add to Plan](#)

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	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
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	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
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	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
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	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
Azure Sales Training - Module 5 - Microsoft Azure Pricing	This module provides an overview of Microsoft Azure pricing and licensing options.	8m	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
Azure Sales Training - Module 6 - Microsoft Azure Opportunities	This module provides an overview of the business opportunity for partners related to Microsoft Azure.	8m	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>
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	<a href="#">Add to Plan</a>

# 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 \(Published Sept 8\)](#)

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTNERS

Before accessing any content, a partner must be both associated to his/her company's MPN ID and must have on boarded 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.

See the [Standardize Customer Engagement Checklist](#) for an example checklist you can use to frame your solution delivery.

# Deploy/Implement Solutions

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [Agile Development](#)
- [Pair Programming](#)
- [Mob Programming](#)
- [Microsoft's Journey to Agile](#)
- [Agile Principles and Values](#)
- [Guidelines for Conducting Design and Code Reviews](#)
- [Test-Driven Development on Microsoft Virtual Academy](#)

## The Case for Agile

Customers expect rapid, stable releases.

Over the past decade, there has been a shift from companies working on long software release cycles, such as every few months or years, to as often as several times a day. In fact, as an organization, [Microsoft has shifted](#) from developing software using the waterfall method, which results in these long cycles, to an agile method. This is an inevitable consequence of moving to the cloud, where vendors are expected to provide constant software updates. Software teams that develop cloud software tend to use agile methodology, and test and fix their own bugs, rather than relying on a separate team of testers. In the simplest of terms, agile software development means that software can be quickly and easily changed and adapted, due to constant testing and functional development throughout two to four week sprints.

### CULTURAL SHIFT

The move to an agile development process doesn't only require a cultural shift for developers, but for organizations as well. One reason for this is that the typical agile process requires constant feedback and validation from the software's stakeholders at the beginning of, and/or the end of each two to four-week sprint. This helps ensure that the project is on track and the work performed does not stray too far from the stated requirements. Another organizational change sometimes involves flattening organizations, and increasing the span of control of managers. This means removing excess layers of management, both top down and sideways, to accelerate the flow of information and decision making.

### PAIR PROGRAMMING

There are many companies practicing agile software development, who are thinking outside the box in terms of team collaboration. One such collaboration method is [pair programming](#). This is when two developers work side-by-side on a single computer. Since there is only one keyboard, one person acts as the "driver" and writes code while the other observes or navigates the process. The navigator reviews each line of code as it is typed, and both programmers tend to frequently switch roles throughout the process. Another role of the navigator is to think about likely improvements, potential pitfalls, and strategic next steps, freeing the driver to focus all of their attention on the current task at hand. For some teams, pair programming is a great way to bring novice developers up to speed, or is a great way for two experienced developers to quickly work through difficult tasks. Another interesting strategy is to have a customer sit down and pair program with one of your developers. This tactic can be used to inspire confidence in using your cloud-based services, for instance, if they are using them for their own development efforts.

## MOB PROGRAMMING

A spinoff of pair programming is called [mob programming](#). This is where an entire team gathers around a single keyboard to collaborate on a project. This can be beneficial in merging code when people have been working alone and in pairs. It can also streamline the typical process of first agreeing on tasks, project goals, divvying up the tasks, learning new technology, and validating peers' code, by going through those steps while developing in the same session. Teams who successfully implement this method maintain control by requiring someone who has a new idea to give up the keyboard and whiteboard and discuss their idea with the team while someone else takes control of the keyboard.

## SCRUM

A crucial component of agile is Scrum. Scrum is a framework for running projects that is based on agile principles and values. It defines a set of activities that can help your team deliver more value to your customers faster. These activities provide your customers with the opportunity to review, guide and influence your team's work as it progresses. This approach does not attempt to define everything at the start of a project. Instead, your team works in short iterations (also called sprints) and refines the plan as the team makes progress. The positive byproduct of this approach is increased (and oftentimes improved) customer engagement, constant validation of the work in progress to avoid too many "course corrections", and greater communication between team members. To learn more about the agile principles and values upon which Scrum is based, please read [Agile Principles and Values, by Jeff Sutherland](#).

## CODE REVIEWS

Earlier, we mentioned pair programming, and mob programming, which can work well with certain development teams and projects. Code reviews, on the other hand, is a key industry practice that can help any style of team improve the quality of their delivered code, as well as stimulate learning across the code base. In fact, many development teams require all code be reviewed before merging upstream into the code base. This process can be integrated into your team's workflow, and has several benefits. One of the primary benefits is that not only one person knows a specific part of the code base. This helps prevent one person from being a critical point of failure. Another benefit is exposing your team members to new technology, allowing them to encounter these new ideas at work when reviewing code, and opening the opportunity for discussion. Senior and junior engineers can more easily share knowledge, since code reviews aren't restricted only to senior members. Oftentimes, a junior developer can help discover problematic areas of the code base that need a new perspective, while senior developers can offer guidance to junior members during a review, by sharing existing knowledge. Finally, code reviews can help evolve your development team's culture, by investing more in the product and keeping everyone engaged, sharing best practices. Engineers can connect on a more meaningful technical level, and become adept at finding logic errors that won't be found by automated testing processes.

## TEST DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

Automated testing is often the result of a popular practice known as test-driven development, or TDD. In simple terms, TDD means that you break down an idea into smaller components that you can express in the form of a simple test, then with production code. The tests are written from the perspective of a class's public interface. Since each test is written prior to the corresponding public code, programmers focus their attention on an interface's behavior, not implementation. This results in creating interfaces that are easy to use, rather than easy to implement, improving the interface's design. This process of creating tests before matching production functionality, provides some obvious, and unexpected benefits. For example, automated tests are run as part of the build process, whether the developer is compiling their code locally, or an automated build process initiates the build. If someone accidentally changes the code's behavior, the tests fail, alerting the mistake and pointing to the affected part of the code. Another example is that tests act as living documentation of the code. The intended behavior is well-defined, and within the tests, many examples of use cases are expressed, giving insight into the developers' mindset and reasoning for certain functionality. With the fast-moving nature of developing solutions for the cloud, test-driven development can act as a sanity check for your code, and help ensure maximum stability and resiliency needed to quickly and confidently add new functionality to keep up with demand.

# Deploy/Implement Solutions

## Architecture Design Session

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 ADS

- 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

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.

## DURING THE ADS

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 ADS

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.

Deploy/Implement Solutions

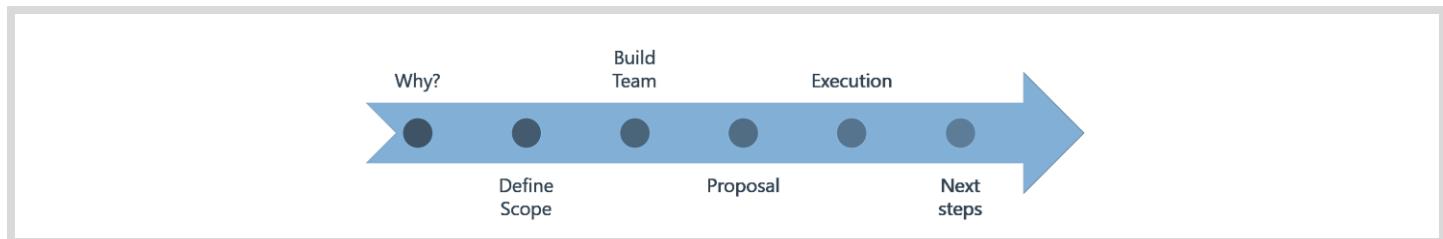
## Implement Proof of Concepts

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 Proof of Concept.

- 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.

### PROOF OF CONCEPT HIGH LEVEL FLOW



### HOW TO 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. See more information about [MTC](#) in this playbook.

### DEFINE SCOPE



A proper PoC is one that is defined with a clear and concrete scope. Conduct an application design session (see [ADS](#) in this playbook) 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 in 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 implement the learnings from the PoC in production.

## CREATING A CLOUD APP POC

In our research, 52% of partners having a Cloud Application Development practice indicated that they offer proof of concept services. In fact, it was the second most popular project service offered across the partners we surveyed, following closely behind custom application development. This shows that custom application development services oftentimes include a PoC.

The key to developing a successful PoC is to avoid common traps, such as premature optimization, and spending too much time hardening the application for rock solid performance and stability. The proof of concept is a level of complexity and usability below a minimum viable product (MVP), as it is used to validate the customer requirements and the proposed solution. If you can start your PoC from an available template, such as a [Visual Studio project template](#), or from pre-existing code from another of your projects, this will be a great way to jump start your development process. Bear in mind that the PoC lacks a lot of the functionality of the final delivered software. User interface elements, for instance, may be there just for illustrative purposes and lack functionality. APIs may have desired endpoints stubbed out that define the methods and functionality that it will provide, but the implementations are missing. Resist the urge to develop the final product atop the PoC, as you will likely alter your use of technology, the requirements may change, and you will likely start from a more stable development foundation.

The benefits of developing the PoC are twofold: it helps your development team fully understand the customer requirements, instead of just reading through the documents, and it also helps the customer truly understand what they want. Oftentimes, customers will have a concept in mind of what they want, but they aren't aware of what they don't know, that can influence their concept later in the development process. The PoC helps identify these issues early on. Having a PoC on hand gives you the opportunity to communicate to the user the look and feel of the final product much more vividly than using design documents and design reviews. Seeing the PoC allows the customer to adjust their requirements to match exactly what they want, and to better define their expectations for the final deliverable.

# Transition to Managed Services

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [FastTrack](#)
- [Digital Partner of Record](#)

## Pass the customer off to your managed service team

This is the stage where you transition to the service delivery management team. Depending on what was delivered this could be a simple as validation of expectations. However, in the transformative world of cloud there are 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 paves the way for charging for maintenance, which is typically a recurring revenue or annuity revenue stream. It is recommended you 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 build your recurring revenue 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](#) services questions or issues.

More information on see [Digital Partner of Record](#)

# Best practices for running an Azure project

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
<a href="#">Azure Guidance from Patterns and Practices</a>	Checklists for availability, scalability, security for a broad list of topics and services in Azure
<a href="#">Azure Reference Architectures</a>	A collection of documented best practices for deploying virtual machines and VPN connectivity in Azure.
<a href="#">Performance Best Practices for SQL Server running in Azure</a>	Performance tuning SQL Server in Azure Virtual Machines
<a href="#">Azure Resiliency Technical Guidance</a>	Best practices for building resilient solutions in Azure
<a href="#">Azure Security Best Practices and Patterns</a>	Best practices and patterns
<a href="#">Data Partitioning Guidance</a>	Strategies that you can use to partition data to improve scalability, reduce contention, and optimize performance.
<a href="#">Patterns for Designing ARM Templates</a>	Best practices with template design and deployment
<a href="#">Developing Big Data Solutions</a>	This guide explores the use of HDInsight for scenarios such as iterative exploration, as a data warehouse, for ETL processes, and integration into existing BI systems. It also includes guidance on understanding the concepts of big data, planning and designing big data solutions, and implementing these solutions.
<a href="#">Best practices for Azure App Services</a>	Best practices for deploying, monitoring and troubleshooting Azure App Service deployments.
<a href="#">Instrumenting applications using Application Insights</a>	Using Application Insights to instrument applications for troubleshooting, monitoring and telemetry capture.

# Troubleshooting 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.

## Cloud Application Development Troubleshooting Resources

SUBHEADER TITLE	
<a href="#">Troubleshoot Web App in App Service</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshoot Azure SQL Database</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshoot SQL Data Warehouse</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshooting DocumentDB</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshoot Stream Analytics</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshoot IoT Hub</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshoot Mobile App .NET Backend</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshoot Mobile App Node.js Backend</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshooting Azure Storage</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshooting Azure Data Factory</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshooting Azure Redis Cache</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshoot SQL Server Stretch Database</a>
<a href="#">Troubleshooting Power BI</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshooting Azure Notification Hubs</a>
<a href="#">End-to-End Storage Troubleshooting</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshooting Media Services Live Streaming</a>

# Leverage Investment Resources

## Resources



### RESOURCES

- [SQL Server Deployment Planning Services](#)
- [Azure Deployment Planning Services for Public Cloud](#)

## 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 APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Microsoft partners with Gold Competencies in Cloud Platform, Data Platform, or Business Intelligence can enroll to provide Microsoft-sponsored structured consulting engagements and build custom deployment plans for customers. Work with Software Assurance customers looking to create a business intelligence solution or migrate to the latest version of SQL Server 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.

# Leverage Investment Resources

## 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.

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 Resource

## 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



# Optimize & Grow Your Practice

Cloud Application Development  
[aka.ms/practiceplaybooks](http://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.

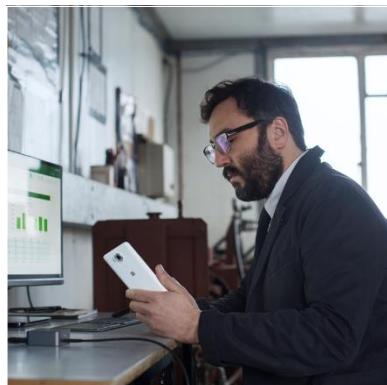
In addition to soliciting a quantitative measure of satisfaction, you should also provide customers with the opportunity to tell you why they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

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.

# Collect 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

# Collect Feedback

## 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 customer's 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 Application Development Practice

### LAND

Say for example the customer brought your practice in to help them build a custom line-of-business (LOB) web application. You successfully build, deploy, and make incremental improvements to their new web application.

### EXPAND

Using the knowledge gained about the customer's workflow and 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 changes that open their data and workflows up to business partners in the form of APIs, including controls such as rate limiting or identity and authorization. Perhaps you recognize the need for a mobile app that improves their field technicians' ability to manage data from occasionally or limited connectivity locations.

# 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

Having delivered to your customers, work with your customers, staff, partners and others with whom you engaged to better understand how you can improve your value proposition by asking them how you could do better, ask them 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?

Take the answers to these questions and refine your value proposition, and if necessary your offer.

# 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

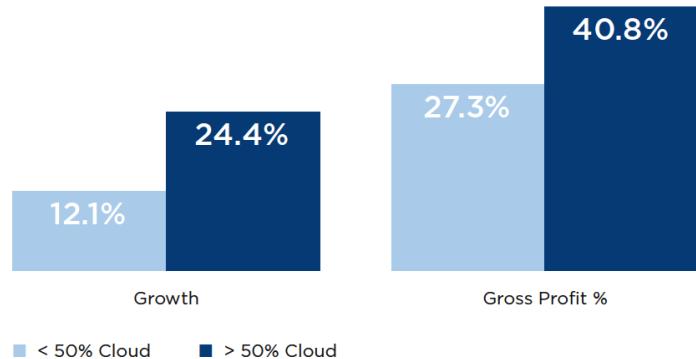
→ [Modern Partner Optimize Operations](#)

## 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.

The Value of Partnering In a 2013 IDC study of IT solution providers, we found that those companies that had been involved with the most partner-to-partner activity, also had some of the best business metrics. Our study showed that the group of partners who associated 30% or more of their revenue with partner-to-partner collaboration were also the ones who were growing the fastest: 19% growth versus 10-12% for the rest. As with other statistics we've shown, this may not be causal (that partnering directly leads to growth). But we do know there is a strong correlation with high growth and partnering. Basically, the best solution providers value partnering as a strategy.

**COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS AND REVENUE GROWTH**

Source: IDC #243921, Partner-to-Partner Collaboration: The Current Landscape, 2013, n = 389

Source: IDC #243921, Partner-to-Partner Collaboration: The Current Landscape, 2013, n = 389

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 Application Development 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 application development 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 partnerships.

## FEEDBACK

Share feedback on how we can improve this and other playbooks by emailing [playbookfeedback@microsoft.com](mailto:playbookfeedback@microsoft.com)