100 Most Promising Microsoft Solution Providers

Enterprise technology is developing at breakneck speed and Microsoft is making sure that it creates an impact that will last for years to come. Mobility, cloud, social, big data, and security are the five major areas where the Redmond giant is heavily invested in. Ambitiously put by Satya Nadella, Microsoft is on a mission to reinvent productivity to empower individuals and companies. "We will build platforms and experiences of productivity for a world mobile-first and cloud-first," states Nadella. The road taken by Microsoft and its outcome is evident in the slew of innovative products and solutions that have come out of Redmond in the last one year—with many more yet to come, as we learnt from the recent Ignite 2015 Conference.

Microsoft has unveiled a raft of new enterprise products and services to help CIOs lead their companies in the new era of enterprise computing. This shows Nadella's attempt to not just entice consumers with the upcoming release of Windows 10 and new version of Office, but also refocus Microsoft's efforts on its business clientele, with a particular emphasis on corporate IT departments. The new lineup includes the next generation of Windows management, Microsoft Office, hybrid cloud infrastructure and SQL Server.

The new Azure Stack brings the Azure user experience and both infrastructure and platform-as-a-service capabilities into customers' data centers. Built on the same core technology as Azure, IT teams can leverage Azure Stack to easily blend enterprise apps with modern, distributed apps and services while maintaining centralized oversight. Windows Server 2016 and SQL Server 2016 have also taken major leaps forward in providing breakthrough performance for mission-critical apps and deeper insights on any data across on-premises and cloud.

Moreover, there is more to Window 10 than meets the eye. What does it have in store for Microsoft partners? A great potential to boost their bottom lines and grow their customer base. Window 10 includes security features that fight data leakage and let administrators restrict data from being copied and pasted outside of corporate applications. Besides Edge—the long awaited IE replacement—and Cortana—the voice assistant—Windows Update for Business is a new management option for Windows 10 designed to keep devices up to date with the latest security updates and Windows features. This gives administrators more control over what updates their company receives and when, allowing for continual updates through the month as an option.

With Microsoft firing on all cylinders, Microsoft partners play a key role in this drive towards IT innovation. To help CIOs find the right Microsoft Solution Provider, a distinguished panel comprising of CEOs, CIOs, CMOs, VCs, analysts and the CIOReview editorial board has selected top players from over thousand Microsoft solution providers. The companies listed here demonstrate an ability to develop innovative technologies, methodologies, and outstanding customer service.

In our selection, we looked at the vendor's capability to fulfill the burning need for cost-effective and flexible solutions that add value to the complex Microsoft landscape. We present to you CIOReview's 100 Most Promising Microsoft Solution Providers 2015.

Company:
F5 Networks

Key Person:
Jeff Bellamy,
Senior Director, Business Development

Description:
Provides solutions for an application world. The company helps organizations successfully deliver applications to anyone, anywhere, at any time
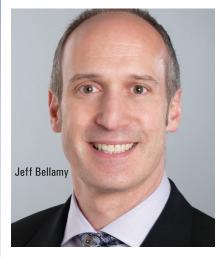
Website:
www.f5.com

F5 Networks

Network Virtualization: Microsoft and F5 Work Together to Empower Customers

Jeff Bellamy

For more than a decade, F5 and Microsoft have collaborated to develop joint solutions that help organizations get the most value from their technology investments. Deep integration, expert deployment guidance, and a vibrant support community enable F5 products to enhance key Microsoft applications—including Exchange Server, SharePoint Server, and Lync Server—with maximum availability, performance, and security.

F5 and Microsoft are always finding new ways to enable organizations to maximize efficiency and stay ahead of the competition. For instance, the Microsoft Hyper-V Network Virtualization (HNV) with F5 solution enables organizations to secure and optimize applications running in a virtualized network environment.

Network virtualization with Microsoft HNV and F5

Software-defined networking (SDN) is transforming the traditional data center and creating a "new reality" in which a virtual network infrastructure can be easily set up, managed, and scaled. Organizations adopt Microsoft's SDN solution, Hyper-V Network Virtualization, because it's policy-based and software-controlled. This eases the management burden and enhances operational flexibility and scalability to deliver a higher ROI.

However, organizations that virtualize their networks with HNV must provision a gateway between their virtualized and non-virtualized networks. In addition, in a virtualized environment, traditional security devices such as web application firewalls and intrusion prevention systems become ineffective because they don't have visibility into encapsulated packets.

To solve this problem, organizations need a high-speed, hyper-scalable HNV gateway that also allows them to deploy a host of traditional application services—including granular security policies, application acceleration, and load balancing—on their virtualized networks. "F5 is well-positioned to further enhance the capabilities of Microsoft's cloud infrastructure offerings to deliver greater agility, flexibility, and security to our joint customers," says Jeff Bellamy, Senior Director, Business Development, F5.

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An agile, secure, and scalable solution

F5 has collaborated with Microsoft to develop a highly scalable gateway that enables the virtualized networks in an HNV environment to communicate with non-virtualized networks and the Internet. In addition, an F5 plug-in enables the command center and brains of the virtual network—Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager (SCVMM)—to instruct the F5® BIG-IP® system about network policy changes. With this level of granular control over their virtualized networks, organizations can maintain a robust security posture, increase efficiency by managing network resources, and prepare for growth with seamless scalability.

Bridging virtual and physical networks

Large organizations and government agencies often manage hundreds of distinct child networks across their organizations. But, bringing these networks together in a traditional data center could cause IP address conflicts and confusion. By decoupling virtual networks from the physical network infrastructure—and removing the constraint to assign hierarchical IP address when provisioning virtual machines (VMs)—organizations can now easily move VMs into and out of cloud networks without manually reconfiguring IP addresses. One powerful use case involves acquisitions in which an organization running a virtualized network can quickly and seamlessly onboard an acquired company's existing networks and application suites.

Continuing the legacy of the F5-Microsoft collaboration to help organizations achieve their operational goals, the Microsoft HNV with F5 solution provides the gateway they need. It also enables organizations to harness the full power of the BIG-IP system—which includes a robust suite of application services that can keep virtualized networks running efficiently—and to securely deliver the application services users demand. CR