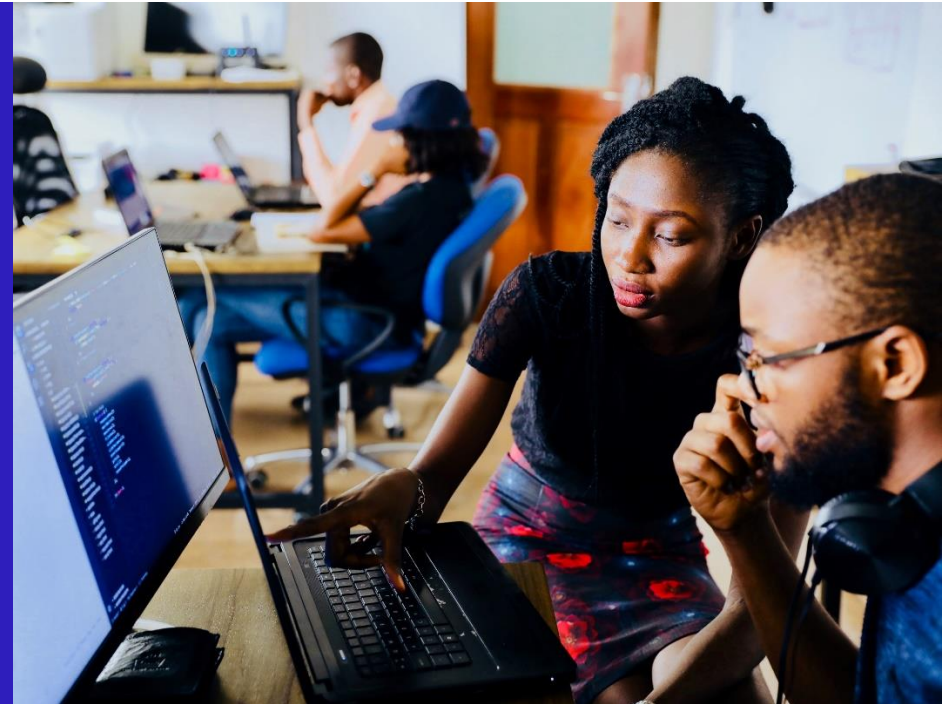


How to become a Microsoft Partner

Your guide to building and growing a successful Microsoft practice



If you are an independent software vendor, or provide services around Microsoft products, becoming a Microsoft Partner will give you access to a wealth of professional tools and resources that will help you to grow your business.

Through the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN), you will get access to support, training and software for your company. You will also get access to recognition for your success through competency programs.

More information: see Microsoft's [Why partner with us?](#) page on the MPN.

If you are new to the Microsoft ecosystem, you might be feeling a little bit overwhelmed with the amount of information and resources that are available to Microsoft Partners. This guide breaks down the process of becoming a Partner into 10 easy steps, from the initial registration to the tools you'll need in order to grow and be successful.

Step 1 - Join the Microsoft Partner Network

[Partner Network](#)[Membership](#) ▾[Solutions](#) ▾[Training](#) ▾[Connect](#) ▾[Inspire](#) ▾[Support](#)[Partner Center](#)[Search](#) 🔍[Sign in](#) *

Join the Microsoft Partner Network

As a Microsoft partner, you'll gain instant access to exclusive resources, programs, tools, and connections. Join a community designed to foster business growth.

[Become a partner](#)[Sign in](#)

The [Microsoft Partner Network](#) is your first stop on your journey to becoming a Microsoft Partner. It's a hub filled with invaluable information and resources to support you every step of the way. It's also your gateway to the Microsoft Partner Center, which is the portal on which you will be managing every aspect of your membership.

How to join the MPN

Click Become a partner on the [Microsoft Partner Network](#) homepage, or go directly to the [Partner Centre Enrolment](#) page.

Follow the steps and provide the requested information.

This will create a free account for you on MPN and Partner Centre.

Get familiar with MPN and Partner Centre

Take a look around the [Microsoft Partner Network website](#): it's full of resources around all aspects of building and growing your Partner practice.

Log in to [Partner Centre](#) – this is where you can update your business profile and see your membership options.

Learn how to use Partner Centre by reading through the [Partner Center Documentation](#) on Microsoft Docs.

Step 2 – Choose your Solution Area(s)

Microsoft offers a wide range of software products and services, which gives you many options for working as a Microsoft Partner. There are 3 major solution areas for you to choose from, based on your existing knowledge and business interests.



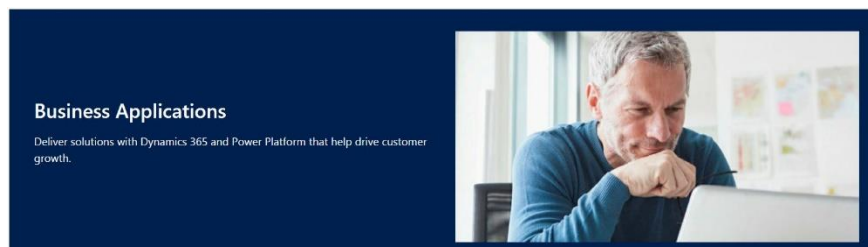
Modern Workplace is a set of solutions geared towards employee productivity and satisfaction, as well as collaboration. It includes solutions like Microsoft 365, Teams and Security.

[Learn more about Modern Workplace Solutions](#)



Azure is the Microsoft Cloud platform. It includes infrastructure solutions, data management, AI and IoT.

[Learn more about building Azure solutions](#)



Business Applications support and enhance your customer's business processes with Dynamics 365 and Power Platform.

[Learn more about Business Applications](#)

The steps to defining your solution

1. **Opportunity** – Which products and areas of Microsoft opportunity are right for you? Use the resources on the previous page.
2. **Business Problem** - What is the business problem you are solving?
3. **Solution** - What is your solution to this business problem?
4. **Benefits** - What are the benefits of your solution? Can you quantify them?
5. **Value Proposition** - What is your unique value proposition?
6. **Door Opener** – What gets you through the door at the customer?
7. **Target Customer** - Who is it aimed at? Which industry? Who is your perfect customer?
8. **Commercials & Profit** – Is your solution project-based or an ongoing managed service?
9. **References** - Are there transferable capabilities or references to support it?

Step 3 – Get your membership

The MPN offers four levels of membership on top of the free MPN registration. Each membership comes with its own level of benefits and services. You learn more about memberships on the [MPN Partner Offer page](#).



Microsoft Action Pack

The Microsoft Action Pack is an affordable yearly subscription designed to help you grow your practice in the early stages. This is the level you will need to start with, unless you qualify for the more advanced packages.

It comes with software licences, support and branding resources to get you started on your Partner journey.

[Learn more](#)



Solutions Partner Badges

Solutions Partner Badges become available to you once you have met a specific set of performance criteria.

They highlight your expertise in a specific Solution Area and open up more opportunities for you.

[Learn more](#)



Advanced Specializations

Advanced specializations are for Partners who demonstrate deep knowledge in a specific solution area.

They further increase your visibility to customers by showing that you are meeting exceptionally high standards in your area of specialization.

[Learn more](#)



Expert MSP Programs

This level is for top Azure Managed Services Providers (MSPs). It gives you the highest level of support from Microsoft, top priority for customer referrals, access to training, and sales support.

To reach this level, you will need to meet a set of advanced prerequisites.

[Learn more](#)

How to pick your membership level

Because of the rewards and exposure that come with the more advanced levels of membership, it is beneficial to pick the highest level of membership you can achieve in the current state of your Partner journey.

The criteria for reaching the more advanced membership levels include revenue, amount of new customers, amount of Microsoft-certified employees, customer success.

For new Partners

If you are entirely new to delivering Microsoft solutions, chances are you will need to start at the Action Pack membership level. To get started with your purchase, check this guide from Microsoft: [How to purchase or renew your competency or Microsoft Action Pack](#).

For existing Partners

If you have already been working with Microsoft solutions, you may qualify for a Solutions Partner Badge. If you do, you will be able to find this out in Partner Centre. The platform will tell you which badge(s) you qualify for, and provide you with the link to use to purchase or apply for the badge you want.

Additional Notes

Membership levels work per solution area, so you can have more than one if you are involved in several solution areas.

Step 4 – Find the right licensing agreement

In order to sell Microsoft solutions, you will need to either establish a reseller account (Direct Partner), or partner with a Microsoft Distributor (Indirect Reseller).



Microsoft offer a variety of licensing agreements for their Partners, depending on the type of software and services they provide. To find out which licensing agreement is right for you: [Microsoft licensing agreements](#). This page lists all the licensing agreements available to Microsoft Partners, and contains links to the information you need both for becoming a reseller and for finding a distributor.

Step 5 – Build your team

Once you have established which solutions to sell and picked your licensing agreement, you're going to need to build a team to sell, deliver and support your Microsoft solutions. Here are a few important steps to do this.

1 – Permanent employees vs freelancers

If you are just getting started, hiring freelancers to work on your projects is a great way to kickstart your implementation projects without risking having a lot of resources on the bench as you build your customer list.

If you are more established, having your own in-house consultants enables you to strengthen your own internal processes and your company identity, as well as encouraging loyalty and career development. This is also a safer way of securing your Silver and Gold competencies.

2 – Learn how to source talent in the Microsoft ecosystem

There is a shortage of skilled Microsoft technology experts. If you want to get a great team that will deliver optimal results to your clients, it's important to learn the specificities of sourcing candidates in this particular market: how to attract the right candidates, how to screen CVs and interview, how to build your employer brand.

A good place to start is our collection of expert article and guides about [Hiring Strategy in the Microsoft sector](#).

3 – Use the right hiring resources and partners

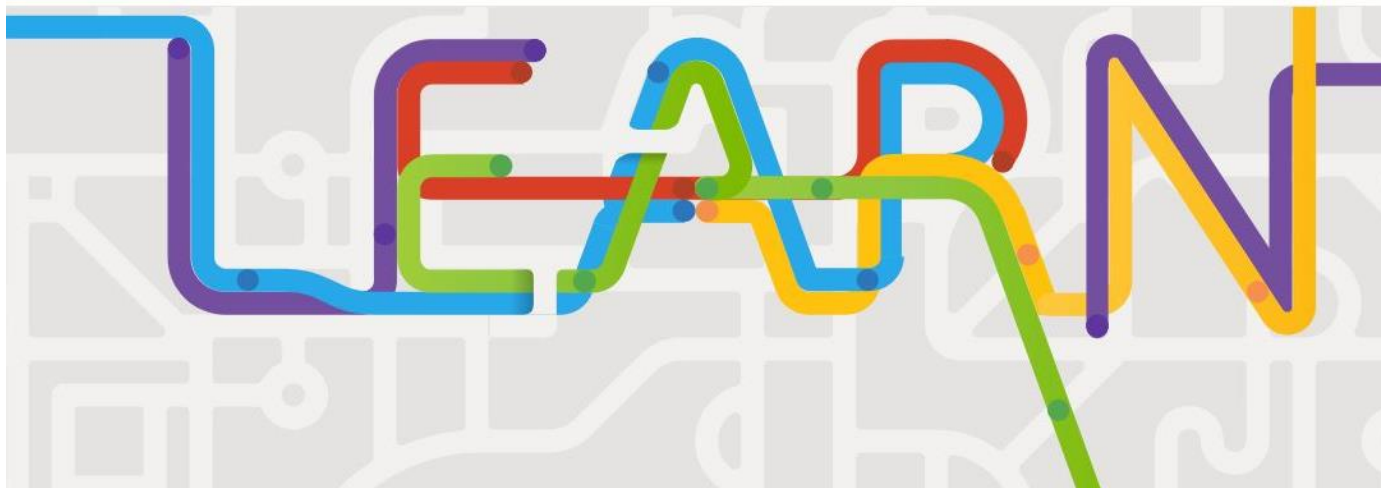
It takes a special set of skills to find good candidates in the Microsoft job market – and a solid network too. Having the right team members is essential to a successful implementation.

A reliable hiring partner with the right expertise can make a big difference for you. Take a look at how we can support you through our [expert Microsoft hiring services](#).

Step 6 – Train your team

Whether you are cross-training your team from another sector or working with already experienced collaborators, being in the Microsoft sector means needing regular training and certification updates to keep up with product updates. There are two main options to receive Microsoft training, and we recommend a combination of both.

Free training



[Microsoft Learn](https://www.microsoft.com/learn) is an amazing resource filled with loads of free training courses and learning paths, organised by solution and by role.

It's also the place you need to go in order to see what certifications are available and to book your exams. The site also recommends which training corresponds to which exam when you check the certification pages.

It's always a good idea to look through the training content available on Microsoft Learn to build more knowledge and prepare for exams.

Instructor-led training



[Instructor-led training](#) gives your team the knowledge and focus to prepare for their certification exams in the most effective way. They get to hear from an industry expert about real-life applications of what they are learning as well.

We know it can be challenging to free up your team for training, so we're offering open schedule registrations (where you can book one person at a time) as well as private sessions (where you decide the dates and times and we work around your commitments).

[View our Business Applications Courses](#) | [View our Azure Courses](#)

Building your Learning Path

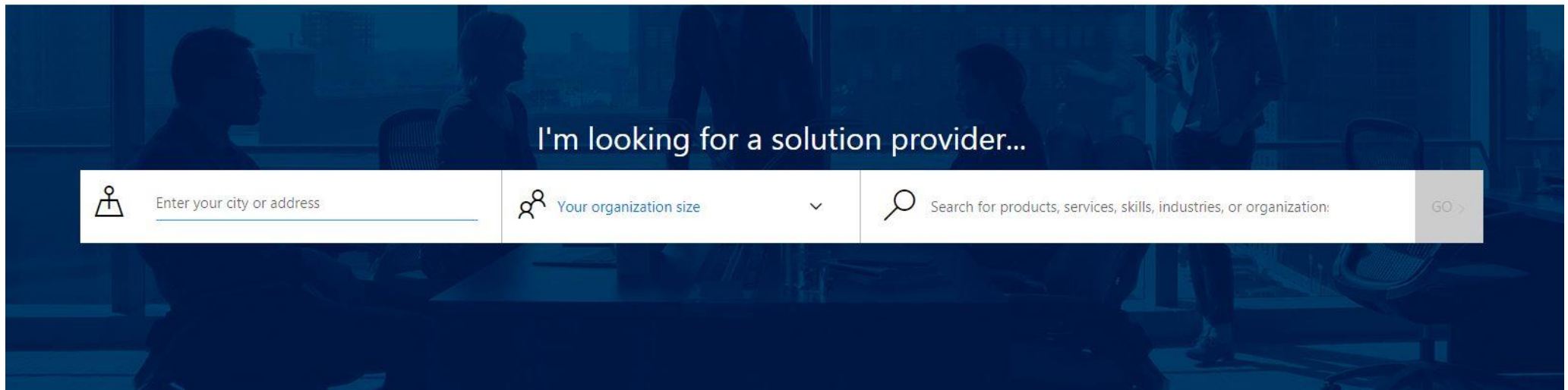
When you explore the above resources, you may notice that there are many certifications and many courses for you to choose from. It's important for you to make sure you get the training that is most relevant to your team and your competencies.

If you're not sure what is right for you or where to start, [book a free consultation with us](#) about building your learning path.

Step 7 – Find and manage your customers

Get listed on the right Microsoft sites

Create your company profile on Commercial Marketplace in your [Partner Centre account](#) so that customers can find you and your services.



Your steps:

- [Read the MPN page](#) about how the Commercial Marketplace supports your practice
- [Create your Commercial Marketplace company profile](#) in your Partner Centre account (you will need to be signed in for the link to work)
- [Check out what Commercial Marketplace looks like](#) from the customer's point of view
- [List your SaaS offers and Apps in AppSource](#) if you're working with Dynamics 365, Microsoft 365 or Microsoft Power Platform
- [List your Azure-based solutions on Azure Marketplace](#) if you're offering tools that can be useful to IT professionals and developers

Get the right marketing tools

A portfolio of go-to-market resources

As a partner, you get access to a rich collection of resources, offers, and programs. Sign in to see your included partnership offers.

[Sign in >](#)



Leverage the [Marketing Resource Hub](#). It's a collection of Marketing tools tailored to your needs as a Microsoft Partner. If you sign in to your Partner Centre account, you will see personalised resources and offers that are relevant to you on this page.

Learn how to manage your customers on Partner Center

There's a lot to learn when it comes to using and leveraging Microsoft Partner Center. One important area for you to get familiar with is customer management – to learn how to use customer management features, read the [Connect with Customers documentation](#) on Microsoft Docs.

Step 8 – Build your practice

If you've gone through all the previous steps, you're now set-up on all the essential Partner resources – congratulations.

What's left now is for you to learn how to build a successful practice, and how to become a part of the Microsoft ecosystem.

Learn practice building strategies

Discover the resources that are available to you on MPN to assess the state of your practice; and learn the Microsoft five-phase approach to practice development on the [Build a Practice page](#).

By signing into your account, you will get access to e-books around accelerating digital transformation and building a practice in a specific area.

Get into the Microsoft ecosystem

Join the Microsoft communities and stay up to date with important news and updates:

- [Follow Microsoft](#) on social media
- Keep an eye on the [Microsoft Blog](#)
- Read [case studies and success stories](#)
- Join the [Microsoft Partner Community](#)

Step 9 – Get recognized

Microsoft Partners who are great at what they do get recognized through competencies and awards. Earning a competency or award gives you increased opportunities and visibility, so it's important to start working on them now. Regardless of your current membership level, make sure you inform yourself about how you could reach the next step up and build a strategy to get there.

Understand Solutions Partner Designations

If you are at the action pack level, it's important for you to understand how to obtain and maintain your badges in your chosen solution areas. To do this, go to the [Solutions Partner page](#) and check the requirements for your area of focus, as well as the benefits that come with getting the badges.

The badges are attributed on a point-based system, the details of which you can see on the page. You can also track how you are doing in your Microsoft Partner Center account.

For a high-level summary of what is changing, you can also check our blog article: [Microsoft Partner Competencies are changing this October – find out what is new](#)

Understand advanced memberships

If you are a Gold partner, now is the time for you to dig into advanced memberships. There are two options for you to look into.

- [Discover advanced specializations](#)
- [Find out if the Expert MSP Program is right for you](#)

Additional recognition opportunities

Through [Digital Partner of Record](#) (DPoR), you can associate your customers' Microsoft software subscription to you. This way, you can keep track of your successes as well as make sure you will get the recognition (and regular payment) you deserve.

Take part in the [Microsoft Partner of the Year Awards event](#). Each year, you can submit a nomination to be considered for this award; winners are announced during the annual Microsoft Inspire conference in the US, and publicised throughout the year so you will get global recognition.

Step 10 – Grow your practice

Expand into new solution areas

There is a wide range of Microsoft products and solutions you can sell – if you're looking to expand, how about expanding into a new solution area?

Here's how you can see what the possibilities are:

- View the [full list of Microsoft solutions](#) you can deliver
- Use the [Solution Workspace framework](#) to build new solutions

Leverage Partner incentives

Microsoft are offering various incentive programs to reward your success as a Partner. We recommend getting familiar with them and seeing what you might qualify for by checking the [Partner Incentives portfolio](#).

Join the P-Seller program

Joining the [Partner Seller](#) (P-Seller) program lets you work as a part of the Microsoft sales team. Through this, you can get access to exclusive Microsoft sales resources and boost your customer engagement.

Reach even more customers through Commercial Marketplace

Take a look at this [MPN page about reaching more customers](#) and learn how to leverage Commercial Marketplace even more.

Explore partnership opportunities

A great way to expand your business fast is to work with other Partners to deliver solutions. Microsoft supports partners who want to connect and work together. To explore the opportunity, read the [MPN page about building partnerships](#).

Even more resources for Microsoft Partners



Webinar Recording: Making the most of MPN and Microsoft Partner Center

Discover the 2 most useful Microsoft platforms for Microsoft Partners with a guided tour that shows you through the main functionalities and most relevant resources of MPN and Partner Center.

[Watch MPN and Partner Center Webinar On-Demand](#)



Get Ready for the Microsoft Cloud Partner Program (MCP)

Does your Microsoft Partner Practice still need to get ready for the MCP? We can help! With our MCP Solutions Partner Designation Accelerator, get a clear view of what you need to do in order to get your new Solution Partner Badges – and get us to do all the work for you!

[Learn More & Book a Free Call](#)