



**Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program**  
**Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure)**

Updated: March 20, 2024

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## Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program

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# Welcome to the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program

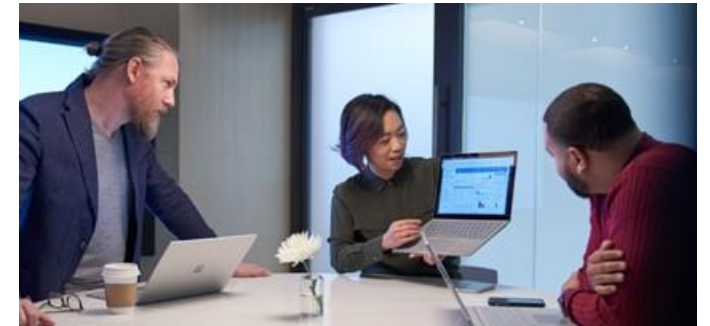


The world and how we work is rapidly changing. The opportunities for Microsoft partners—whether you build and sell services, software solutions, or devices—are significant. The capabilities required by our customers are evolving, and our partner programs are designed to meet that demand.

In this walking deck, we've outlined the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program—focused on simplicity, delivering customer value, investing in your growth, and recognizing how you deliver customer value.

# The Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program is your foundation for growth and profitability

Our partner program is a portfolio of tools, resources, and offerings to help you meet evolving customer opportunities, innovate for any cloud scenario on an extensible platform, join a community of partners committed to serving customers, and deliver successful solutions to industries and markets worldwide.



Tap into the largest technology ecosystem

Innovate on the most comprehensive, end-to-end cloud platform

Do business with a partner you can trust

# Focusing on customer needs and your growth

We provide clear pathways for partners to grow their business, deliver customer success, and invest in their partnership with Microsoft.



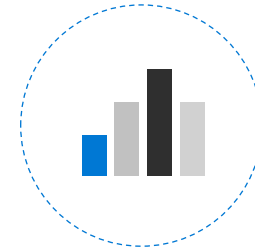
## Simplified partner program offerings

**Solutions Partner designations** demonstrate your organization's breadth of capabilities on the Microsoft Cloud. The six solution area designations are aligned to where we see customer demand and where partners have the greatest opportunity to scale to meet customer needs.



## Validating partner capabilities to deliver successful outcomes

The **partner capability score** holistically measures your organization's technical capabilities and experience across performance, skilling, and customer success.

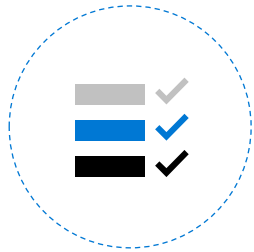


## Investing in partners' profitability

**Program benefits** continue to support you as you grow your business. We are making investments to help encourage business development, increase customer reach, and expand technical skilling and enablement.

# Solutions Partner designations

The Solutions Partner designation is the first opportunity for you to set yourself apart from the competition by demonstrating your organization's breadth of capabilities in solution areas with high customer demand and opportunities to scale.



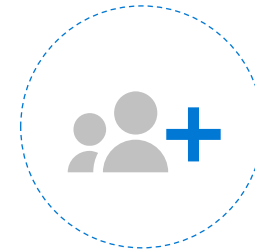
## Easily identifiable

Customers want to work with partners who have the right skills and capabilities to meet their needs. A Solutions Partner designation identifies partners with specific capabilities and experiences in high customer demand solution areas.



## Choose one or more

Partners can choose to earn one Solutions Partner designation, or more, if applicable to your organization. Once you attain a Solutions Partner designation, subsequent designations can be attained, after requirements are met, with no additional fee.



## Opportunity

There are significant opportunities for partners in this new world of work—whether you build and sell services, software, or devices. We're continuing to invest in designations to differentiate solutions based on partners' technical maturity and customer success.

# Distinguish yourself with Solutions Partner designations



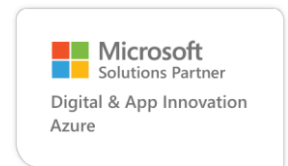
Solutions Partner  
for Business  
Applications



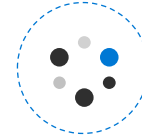
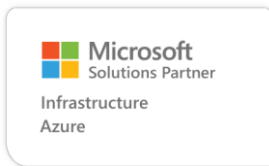
Solutions Partner  
for Data & AI  
(Azure)



Solutions Partner  
for Digital & App  
Innovation (Azure)



Solutions Partner  
for Infrastructure  
(Azure)



Solutions Partner  
for  
Modern Work



Solutions Partner  
for  
Security



\*Solutions Partner  
for Microsoft  
Cloud



**Designations** aligned to the Microsoft solution areas recognize your broad technical capabilities and demonstrated success delivering technology solutions.

**Benefits** aligned to your Solutions Partner designation include product benefits, go-to-market services, co-sell eligibility, skilling and sales enablement resources, and customer-facing badges to help you market your expertise.

**Specializations** further validate deep technical expertise after you attain a Solutions Partner designation and set you apart from the competition.

**Microsoft Solutions Partner**  
Data & AI  
Azure

**Specialist**  
AI and Machine Learning  
Data Warehouse Migration  
Windows Server and SQL Server  
Migration

\*Partners who attain all six Solutions Partner designations receive a Microsoft Cloud badge, recognizing your capabilities across the Microsoft Cloud.

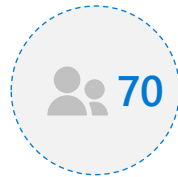
# Holistic measurement through the partner capability score

The Solutions Partner designation for each solution area has a holistic measurement framework, the partner capability score, which measures your organization's technical capabilities, allowing you to showcase solutions you have delivered to help customers succeed and grow.



## Maintain flexibility

Telemetry-based partner capability score model provides you with flexibility to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and experience.



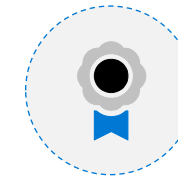
## Validate capability

Demonstrate your organization's capability in 1) performance, 2) skilling, and 3) customer success. Partners need at least 70 points out of a possible 100 points to attain a Solutions Partner designation.



## Track your progress

The partner capability score dashboard in [Partner Center](#) shows how you're tracking towards solution area focused designations and where you can take action to increase your score.



## Showcase your expertise

Customer-facing badges help you stand out and market your capabilities once you've attained a designation.



# How to attain a Solutions Partner designation for solution areas

The partner capability score provides flexibility to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and experience across subcategories of performance, skilling, and customer success. Partners qualify either on an SMB path or an Enterprise path, and must reach 70 points for the path they are on.

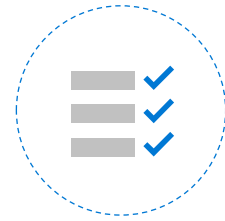
A minimum of **70** points must be earned, with points in each subcategory.

There are **100** points possible in total across categories.



## Performance

This category is measured by net customer adds.



## Skilling

This category verifies and demonstrates your dedication to skilling and training by intermediate and advanced certifications.



## Customer success

This category is measured by usage growth and the number of solution deployments.

# Understanding the partner capability score

Each solution area designation has a specific number of possible points that can be earned per category. You have the flexibility to choose which categories to focus on within a solution area to match your business needs. The maximum number of points available for each subcategory are the same for SMB and Enterprise paths.

Each Solutions Partner designation for solution areas requires **70+ points** with at least one point in each subcategory

		Solutions Partner for Business Applications	Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure)	Solutions Partner for Digital & App Innovation (Azure)	Solutions Partner for Infrastructure (Azure)	Solutions Partner for Modern Work	Solutions Partner for Security
		Subcategory					
Category	Performance	Net customer adds >> 15 <sup>pts</sup>	Net customer adds >> 30 <sup>pts</sup>	Net customer adds >> 30 <sup>pts</sup>	Net customer adds >> 30 <sup>pts</sup>	Net customer adds >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Net customer adds >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>
	Skilling	Intermediate Certs >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Intermediate Certs >> 40 <sup>pts</sup>	Intermediate Certs >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Intermediate Certs >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Intermediate Certs >> 10 <sup>pts</sup>	Intermediate Certs >> 40 <sup>pts</sup>
		Advanced Certs >> 15 <sup>pts</sup>		Advanced Certs >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Advanced Certs >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Advanced Certs >> 15 <sup>pts</sup>	
	Customer Success	Usage Growth >> 30 <sup>pts</sup>	Usage Growth >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Usage Growth >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Usage Growth >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Usage Growth >> 30 <sup>pts</sup>	Usage Growth >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>
		Deployments >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>	Deployments >> 10 <sup>pts</sup>	Deployments >> 10 <sup>pts</sup>	Deployments >> 10 <sup>pts</sup>	Deployments >> 25 <sup>pts</sup>	Deployments >> 20 <sup>pts</sup>

# represents maximum number of points in that subcategory

# Grow your partner capability score with partner associations

Make sure your organization is receiving the points you've earned by having the right associations in place.



Associations are the sole mechanism by which customer success, performance, and skilling subcategory points are acknowledged and calculated towards achieving Solutions Partner designations



There are two paths to earning points:

- **Partner associations** recognize partners for performance and customer success subcategories including net customer adds, usage growth, and deployment
- **Certified professional associations** provide visibility into the certifications individuals in your company have earned



Ensure you have both associations in place to earn points on your partner capability score and attain Solutions Partner designations

Explore the [Partner Associations Playbook](#) for more information on which associations are right for you and additional steps to maximize your partner capability score.

# Benefits for Solutions Partner designations

Benefits for Solutions Partners are effective, helpful, and relevant to your organization. We're investing more to help you with business development, increasing customer reach, and expanding technical skilling and enablement.



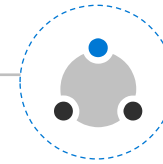
## Encouraging business development

- Product benefits (formerly internal use licenses) have been designed to align to the Solutions Partner designations, including:
  - Azure bulk credits for your organization
  - Access to development environments
  - Cloud services subscriptions that are most relevant in market



## Increasing customer reach

- Co-selling with Microsoft to expand your customer footprint
- Go-To-Market services, assets, and personalized consultation to help you along your marketing journey
- Microsoft solutions provider placement to increase exposure
- Customer-facing badges to showcase your capabilities



## Expanding technical skilling and enablement

- Personalized assistance, comprehensive courses, and world-class Microsoft experts to build your knowledge
- Technical presales and deployment services to help you deliver solutions faster
- Product (on-prem and cloud), platform, and technical support to help you troubleshoot specific issues

For details about benefits specific to each Solutions Partner designation, review our [benefits guide](#)

# Differentiate further with specializations

Once you attain a Solutions Partner designation, you can further differentiate your deep technical expertise and experience with specializations.



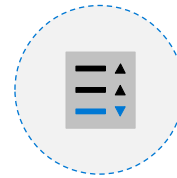
## Greater customer confidence

Earning a specialization validates your deep technical expertise, differentiates you from your competitors in areas with high customer demand, and helps customers identify your ability to meet their specific needs.



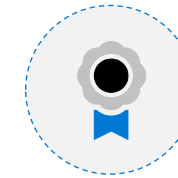
## Prioritization

Benefits to earning a specialization include prioritization ranking in the commercial marketplace and evaluation for active cooperative selling opportunities with Microsoft field sellers.



## Incremental product benefits

Gain access to incremental product benefits to further accelerate your business, including greater access to Azure credits, additional product licenses, and cloud service subscriptions that are most relevant in market today.

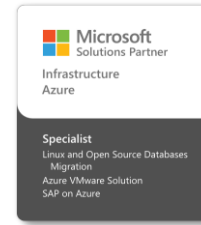


## Showcase your expertise

Earn a customer-facing badge to display on your business profile in the Microsoft AppSource partner gallery to promote your expertise.

Learn more about earning [specializations](#) to further differentiate your capabilities to customers.

# How specializations map to Solutions Partner designations



## Business Applications

Business Intelligence  
Finance  
Intelligent Automation  
Microsoft Low Code Application Development  
Sales  
Service  
Small and Midsize Business Management  
Supply Chain

## Data & AI (Azure)

AI and Machine Learning on Microsoft Azure  
Analytics on Microsoft Azure  
Build and Modernize AI Apps with Microsoft Azure  
Business Intelligence  
Data Warehouse Migration to Microsoft Azure  
Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure with Microsoft Azure Stack HCI  
Infra and Database Migration to Microsoft Azure  
Kubernetes on Microsoft Azure  
Migrate Enterprise Applications to Microsoft Azure

## Digital & App Innovation (Azure)

AI and Machine Learning on Microsoft Azure  
Build and Modernize AI Apps with Microsoft Azure  
DevOps with GitHub on Microsoft Azure  
Intelligent Automation  
Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure with Microsoft Azure Stack HCI  
Kubernetes on Microsoft Azure  
Microsoft Low Code Application Development  
Migrate Enterprise Applications to Microsoft Azure

## Infrastructure (Azure)

Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure with Microsoft Azure Stack HCI  
Infra and Database Migration to Microsoft Azure  
Microsoft Azure VMware Solution  
Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop  
Networking Services in Microsoft Azure  
SAP on Microsoft Azure

## Modern Work

Adoption and Change Management  
Calling for Solutions for Microsoft Teams  
Custom Solutions for Microsoft Teams  
Meetings and Meeting Rooms for Microsoft Teams  
Modernize Endpoints  
Teamwork Deployment

## Security

Cloud Security  
Identity and Access Management  
Information Protection and Governance  
Threat Protection



**Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure)**  
**Benefits & Requirements**

# Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure)

As a Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), you demonstrate your broad capability to help customers manage their data across multiple systems to build analytics and AI solutions.

Becoming a Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure) gives customers a way to identify you as a partner that has both the commitment to training, accreditation, and has delivered solutions that lead to customer success.

**If these activities describe the work that you do, consider Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure):**

- Analyzing existing workloads, generating schema models, and performing extract, transform, load (ETL) operations to migrate data to cloud-based data warehouses and enable cloud-based analytics solutions.
- Planning and delivering tailored Microsoft analytics solutions using Azure Synapse Analytics, Azure Data Lake, Azure Data Factory, and Azure Databricks.
- Enabling customer adoption of AI and implementing Azure solutions for AI-powered apps and machine learning life cycles.



Data & AI  
Azure

\*All dates and requirements subject to change.

For more information specific to Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), [click here](#).



# Benefits for Data & AI (Azure)

Benefits include all common Solutions Partner benefits, like go-to-market services, TP&D advisory hours, technical support incidents, as well as unique product benefits designed specifically for Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure).

Product Group		Solutions Partner for Data & AI	per Azure specialization*
Incremental	Azure Production Credits	\$6,000 per year (bulk)	\$12,000 per year (bulk)
	Azure Dev/Test Credits	<i>Bulk offer delayed – in interim, dev/test credits are provided with Visual Studio Enterprise</i>	<i>Bulk offer delayed – in interim, dev/test credits are provided with Visual Studio Enterprise</i>
	Visual Studio Subscriptions	25 Visual Studio Enterprise subscriptions	10 Visual Studio Enterprise subscriptions
Core among Solutions Partner for Infrastructure, Data & AI, and Digital & App Innovation	Dynamics 365 (D365)	D365 Operations Application Partner Sandbox, D365 Sales, Field Service and Customer Service Partner Sandbox	-
	Power BI	100 Power BI Premium users	-
	Microsoft 365 (M365)	100 M365 E3 users	30 M365 E3 users
	Microsoft Project Online	20 users (Plan 5)	-
	Visio Online	5 users (Plan 2)	-
	Software Licenses	100 Windows Server Standard 2022, 32 Windows Server 2022 Data Center, 16 SQL Server, 100 System Center Standard, select CALs, and more	-

\*Max stacking of 5 specializations across all Azure specializations and expert programs (shared across Solutions Partner for Infrastructure, Data & AI and Digital & App Innovation designations). This asset is intended only for reference purposes as a high-level overview. Benefits are subject to change. Full details and terms and conditions are subject to applicable program guide.

# Requirements for Data & AI (Azure)

Three categories make up the framework for Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure): performance, skilling, and customer success. Points are earned through performance, certifications and exams, growth in usage and the number of successful deployed customer solutions. Points are earned incrementally as partners make progress in each subcategory.

For Data & AI (Azure), partners qualify either on the Enterprise or SMB path and will see in Partner Center only one score aligned to their path. Partners who are driving less than USD1,000,000 and have 80% or more of their customers in the SMB/SMC segment will qualify on the SMB path. Partners who are driving more than USD1,000,000, or driving less than USD1,000,000 and have more than 20% of their customers in the enterprise segment will qualify on the Enterprise path.

	Eligible attributions	Maximum contribution (Enterprise path)	Maximum contribution (SMB path)	Max points
<b>Performance</b>				<b>30</b>
Net Customer Adds	PAL, DPOR, CSP	3 net customer adds >\$1000 ACR per month	3 customer adds >\$500 ACR per month	30
<b>Skilling</b>				<b>40</b>
Intermediate Certifications	Certified professional associated to Partner Center account	10 unique individuals 4 prerequisite certifications*	8 unique individuals 2 prerequisite certifications**	40
<b>Customer Success</b>				<b>30</b>
Usage Growth	PAL, DPOR, CSP	20% ACR growth YoY	20% ACR growth YoY	20
Deployments	PAL, DPOR, CSP	5 new deployments in TTM	5 new deployments in TTM	10
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>100</b>
<b>Minimum total points required for Solutions Partner designation</b>				<b>70</b>

\*On the Enterprise path, partners must have [prerequisite certifications](#) before points are earned for scoring certifications. No points are earned for prerequisite certifications.

\*\* On the SMB path, partners earn points for the two prerequisite certifications. Prerequisites must still be met in order to earn points for scoring certifications.

\*All dates and requirements subject to change.

For more information about measurements specific to Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), [click here](#).

# Requirements for Data & AI (Azure): Performance

30<sub>pts</sub>

## Net customer adds

The net customer adds subcategory measures the growth of a partner's experience with new customers over time. We look at the number of net customers added over the trailing 12 months. Partners earn 10 points for each incremental net customer add, up to 3 max net customer adds.

Net customer adds is defined as: contributing customers in the last two months – contributing customers in same two months last year. Customers will count positively toward the net customer adds score if they had USD0 Azure consumed revenue (ACR) in both of the two baseline months (last year) and had ACR above the threshold in any one of the last two months. Customers will count negatively toward net customer adds if they are above the threshold in the baseline months and below the threshold in the last two months. Customers will not count toward net customer adds if they are above the threshold or below the threshold in all considered months.

### Enterprise path



- Contributing customers = customers with  $\geq$  USD1,000/month ACR in any one of the last two months and with USD0 in both of the baseline months

### SMB path



- Contributing customers = customers with  $\geq$  USD500/month ACR in any one of the last two months and with USD0 in both of the baseline months

\*All dates and requirements subject to change.

For more information about requirements specific to Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), [click here](#).

# Requirements for Data & AI (Azure): Skilling

40<sub>pts</sub>

## Intermediate Certifications

For Digital & App Innovation, skilling points are earned only in the intermediate subcategory. Partners must meet the prerequisites for their path before they will earn points for the scoring certifications. The individuals who earn the prerequisite certifications can be the same as or different than the individuals who earn the scoring certifications. However, individuals who earn more than one of the scoring certifications will count only once toward your scoring certifications.

### Prerequisite certifications

- [Azure Administrator Associate](#)
- [Azure Solution Architect Expert](#)

### Scoring certifications

- [Azure Database Administrator Associate](#)
- [Azure AI Engineer Associate](#)
- [Azure Data Scientist Associate](#)
- [Azure Data Engineer Associate](#)
- [Data Analyst Associate](#)
- [Customer Data Platform Specialty](#)
- [Azure Cosmos DB Developer Specialty](#)

## Enterprise path

- Prerequisites: partners must earn at least two Azure Administrator Associate and at least two Azure Solution Architect Expert. Prerequisites do not earn points.
- Scoring certifications: once prerequisites are met, partners earn 4 points each for up to 10 unique certified individuals

## SMB path

- Prerequisites: partners earn 4 points for one Azure Administrator Associate certifications and 4 points for one Azure Solution Architect Expert
- Scoring certifications: once prerequisites are met, partners earn 4 points each for up to 8 unique certified individuals



\*All dates and requirements subject to change.

For more information about requirements specific to Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), [click here](#).

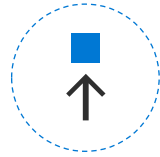
# Requirements for Data & AI (Azure): Customer Success

30<sub>pts</sub>

The definitions for both Deployments and Usage Growth are the same for both the SMB and Enterprise paths.

## Deployments

10<sub>pts</sub>

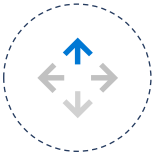


- Deployments are a measurement of a partner's ability to successfully deploy solutions for their customers.
- Eligible deployments are any Service Level 2 Azure service\* deployed in the trailing 12 months.
- Earn 2 points per deployment, up to a maximum of 5 deployments and 10 points.

*\* All Service Level 2 services will count toward your deployments score except Virtual Machines Licenses*

## Usage Growth

20<sub>pts</sub>



- Usage growth is a measurement of a partner's ability to successfully guide customers as their Azure needs expand year over year
- Usage growth percentage =  $(\text{Total ACR summed across all customers last month} - \text{Total ACR summed across all customers same month last year}) / \text{Total ACR summed across all customers same month last year} \times 100$ .
- Each 1% growth in ACR contributes one point, up to a maximum of 20 points.
- Total ACR must be at least USD1,000 to qualify for scoring.

\*All dates and requirements subject to change.

For more information about requirements specific to Solutions Partner for Data & AI (Azure), [click here](#).

# Key dates for Solutions Partner designations

## How and when Microsoft partners can attain Solutions Partner designations

**General availability (GA)**  
October 3, 2022

Legacy competencies and associated badging are no longer in market. Partners are no longer considered or referred to as gold or silver partners. Partners can choose to retain the legacy benefits historically associated to their past competencies.

At your anniversary date or new enrollment

### Looking to attain or maintain the Solutions Partner designation(s)?

After meeting all requirements for one or more Solutions Partner designations:

- Enroll or renew in Partner Center
- Activate your Solutions Partner benefits (or select and activate legacy benefits package, if eligible)
- Earn a specialization to access incremental benefits



### Not eligible?

For partners who have not met the requirements for a Solutions Partner designation and had a legacy competency on September 30, 2022, you'll have the option to continue to pay a fee (aligned to your legacy competency fee) and retain your legacy benefits.

If you choose not to purchase your legacy benefits, you also have the option to purchase a Microsoft Action Pack.

Between anniversary dates

### Eligible for a Solutions Partner designation?

If your organization meets the criteria for Solutions Partner designation, earning 70 points or more:

- Between anniversary dates, partners will receive the designation and badge.
- No change to existing benefits until your anniversary date.
- Attain a second to sixth Solutions Partner designation between anniversary dates and get the incremental benefits for your new designations right away



### Need more time?

If your organization doesn't yet meet the criteria for Solutions Partner designation:

- No change to your benefits until your anniversary date.
- At any time, meet the requirements and earn a Solutions Partner designation.

At your next anniversary date

Same as the last anniversary date

# Next steps



Admins can sign in to [Partner Center](#) to see how your organization is progressing towards a Solutions Partner designation and see the associated benefits.



Go to [Training Gallery](#) & [Microsoft docs](#) to learn about the requirements needed to attain a Solutions Partner designation.



For more information visit the [Microsoft partner website](#) and [Microsoft partner blog](#).



# Additional resources

[Training asset gallery](#)

[Partner capability score dashboard](#)

[Microsoft partner blog](#)



**Solutions Partner for  
Business Applications**

[Solutions Partner for  
Business Applications overview page](#)



**Solutions Partner for  
Data & AI (Azure)**

[Solutions Partner for  
Data & AI overview page](#)



**Solutions Partner for  
Digital & App Innovation (Azure)**

[Solutions Partner for Digital & App  
Innovation overview page](#)



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Infrastructure (Azure)**

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Modern Work**

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Modern Work overview page](#)



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