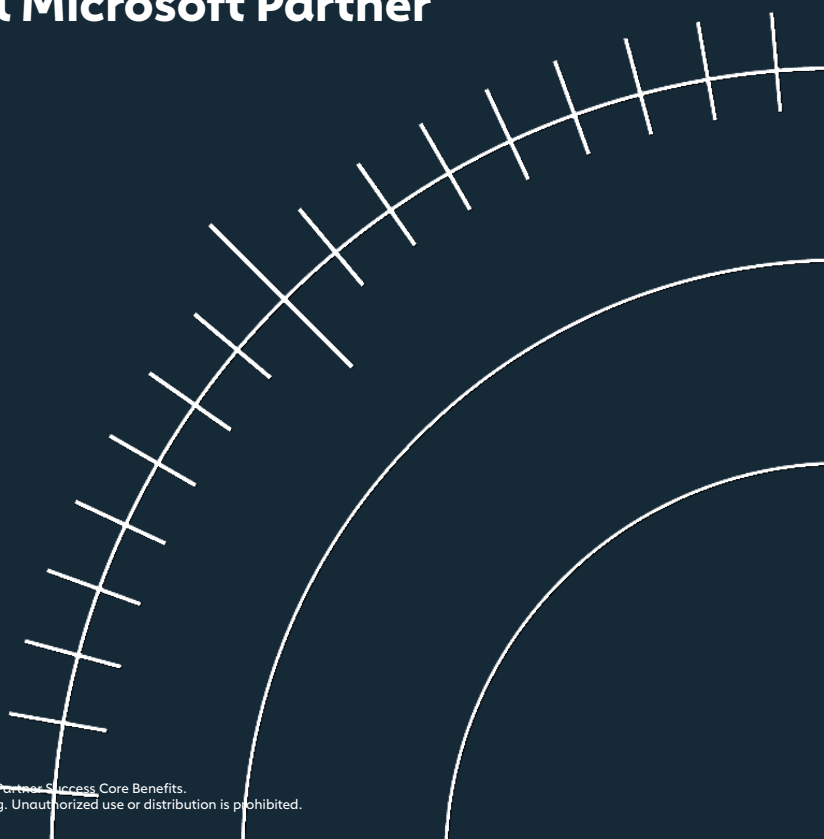
Maven COLLECTIVE

2025

Global Microsoft Partner Benchmarking & Strategic Insights Report

Collective discoveries and insights from Maven Collective Marketing's Global Microsoft Partner Benchmarking Survey



Now featuring insights on Partner Success Core Benefits.

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All findings are limited to the specific sample of individuals who chose to participate in the survey. The accuracy, completeness, and truthfulness of the data depend entirely on the candor, understanding, and interpretation of questions by respondents.

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Executive Summary

The 2025 Global Microsoft Partner Benchmarking & Strategic Insights Report reveals a dynamic and maturing Partner ecosystem where success is increasingly defined by strategic alignment, visibility, and investment.

Based on insights from over 200 participants across four continents, the report distills more than 50,000 data points into a clear picture of what drives Partner performance—and what holds it back.

Key Findings:

Designations are a growth catalyst:

93% of Partners hold at least one Microsoft designation, and 86% of those receive funding through programs like Market Development Funds (MDF), End Customer Investment Funds (ECIF), and Proof of Concept (PoC) credits, highlighting the direct link between designations and access to Microsoft support.

Marketplace presence is essential:

89% of Partners are listed on at least one Microsoft Marketplace, with designated Partners significantly more likely to receive leads and support.

Community and conference engagement fuels visibility:

85% of Partners are active in at least one Microsoft-aligned community, and most attend two or more conferences annually, highlighting the importance of peer networks and in-person engagement.

Marketing investment drives results:

87% of Partners invest more than 2% of annual revenue in marketing, with those allocating 11–15% reporting the highest lead-to-close rates (51–75%).

Strategic Implications:

To remain competitive, Microsoft Partners must go beyond technical capability. **The data shows that those who invest in visibility, align with Microsoft's evolving priorities, and engage deeply in the ecosystem are best positioned to scale.** Designations, marketplace optimization, and community participation are no longer optional—they are foundational to growth.

This report serves as a strategic compass for Partners seeking to sharpen their go-to-market approach, unlock Microsoft support, and build sustainable momentum in this cloud and AI-driven landscape.

Introduction

Key to success in the Microsoft Partner ecosystem is the ability to leverage critical factors like marketplace visibility, lead generation strategies, and the impact of Microsoft designations to drive growth and performance.

The Microsoft Partner ecosystem is highly competitive, with Partners constantly navigating evolving market dynamics, technological advancements, and increasing pressures. Partners face the dual challenge of differentiating themselves in a crowded marketplace while adapting to shifting customer demands and Microsoft's strategic direction.

This report provides a SWOT analysis to uncover the key drivers of success, challenges, and opportunities within the Microsoft Partner ecosystem. The analysis focuses on eight critical areas that influence Partner performance—designations, marketplace visibility, lead generation, community involvement, paid media effectiveness, MVP participation, funding access, and investment behavior—**with this edition also introducing Success Core Benefits as a new area of focus, highlighting how Partners are leveraging them to enhance impact.** These factors shape how Partners engage with the ecosystem and build sustainable growth strategies.

By examining these areas, the report highlights actionable trends and insights to help Partners optimize their approach, overcome barriers, and position themselves for success in the increasingly competitive landscape.

50,000+
Data Points

200+
Participants

4
Continents

Microsoft Partnership S.W.O.T.

A SWOT Analysis

To understand the internal and external factors shaping Microsoft Partner performance, Maven Collective® conducted a SWOT analysis based on survey data. This framework highlights core attributes that enable or inhibit growth and provides a view into the opportunities Partners can leverage to improve success. The findings reflect both how Microsoft's Partner Program is structured and operational challenges faced by Partners globally.

Strengths

Microsoft Partners benefit from Partner Program features and support systems that strengthen their credibility, discoverability, and sales potential within the Microsoft ecosystem.

Managed Status

Partners with managed status receive hands-on guidance from Microsoft account teams, access to joint business planning, and higher priority for Co-Sell opportunities. This support structure positions them to receive a greater volume of qualified leads.

Co-Sell Ready

Co-Sell Ready Partners are surfaced in Microsoft's internal seller tools, allowing them to be actively recommended during customer engagements. These Partners are often included in strategic deal planning, increasing their sales velocity.

Designation & Marketplace Visibility

Partners with solution area designations and active Marketplace listings benefit from increased visibility among both customers and Microsoft sellers. Transactable offers and featured listings further improve discoverability.

MVPs and Trusted Relationships

Relationships with Microsoft field teams, product groups, or through MVP affiliations contribute to trusted status. These informal connections often result in referrals, collaboration invites, or early access to programs.

Weaknesses

Despite the structural support available, several internal limitations reduce the ability of some Partners to fully capitalize on Microsoft's lead channels and growth programs.

Legacy Status

Since the introduction of the Microsoft Cloud Partner Program (MCPP), legacy designations, benefit structures, and Partner classifications are no longer aligned with Microsoft's current Partner model. Partners that have not transitioned run the risk of being overlooked by Microsoft sellers and customers who now rely on the updated designation model to assess capabilities and prioritize collaboration. This misalignment can create confusion around qualifications, limit access to Co-Sell opportunities, and restrict eligibility for newer programs and funding.

Team Size Constraints

Smaller or resource-constrained Partners may struggle to respond to leads quickly, engage in Co-Sell motions, or invest in visibility initiatives such as marketing or events.

Opportunities

Partners identified several areas where they can increase lead volume, strengthen Microsoft alignment, and drive sustained pipeline growth.

Partner Communities

Engaging in recognized communities (e.g., IAMCP, WIC, BCPA) fosters peer referrals, co-marketing, and cross-Partner collaboration.

Marketplace Optimization

Improving listings with clearer messaging, transactable offers, and customer testimonials increases both inbound demand and Microsoft referral likelihood.

Funding Programs

Microsoft provides marketing and go-to-market funding for Partners aligned to key solution areas. Applying for and using this funding effectively remains an underleveraged growth tactic.

Designations

Earning solution area designations improves positioning in Microsoft tools and provides stronger justification for Co-Sell engagement and funding eligibility.

Paid Media

Investing in targeted digital campaigns helps Partners improve brand visibility, drive traffic to Marketplace listings, and generate leads independently of Microsoft channels.

Conferences and Events

Participation in Microsoft-aligned conferences and industry events supports relationship building, visibility, and lead generation.

Threats

Low Marketing Investment

Many Partners operate with limited or inconsistent marketing activity. This reduces overall brand awareness and limits a Partner's ability to generate leads or maintain visibility with Microsoft sellers.

Low Repeatability

Partners without standardized workflows for sales enablement, lead follow-up, and campaign execution may face challenges in scaling operations and forecasting pipeline with accuracy.

Low Alignment with Microsoft Priorities

Partners that do not align their offerings with Microsoft's current investment areas are less likely to be included in Co-Sell or referral motions.

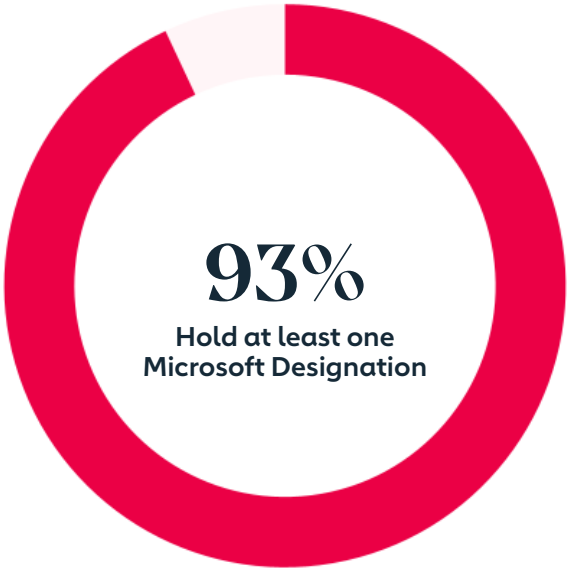
The SWOT analysis highlights the operational and strategic realities shaping Microsoft Partner performance. To remain competitive, Partners must address internal gaps, actively engage in the ecosystem, and adapt to Microsoft's evolving program structure.

Those that invest in repeatable processes, Co-Sell readiness, and strategic visibility are best positioned to capture long-term growth.

Designations

Microsoft Partner designations formally recognize a Partner's quality, technical expertise, and proven performance. They signal to customers that the Partner meets Microsoft's rigorous standards across key solution areas.

Designated Partners consistently report stronger engagement with Microsoft, greater **funding** access, and improved **lead generation** outcomes compared to non-designated peers.



Understanding the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program and Solutions Partner Designations

The **Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program (MAICPP)** serves as the strategic framework Microsoft uses to evaluate, support and incentivize its Global Partner ecosystem. MAICPP enables Partners to differentiate themselves based on technical strength and business performance. Partners who align with Microsoft's core cloud and AI solution areas gain access to a broader set of benefits, including **Co-Sell support,** technical enablement, and financial incentives.

Six Core Solution Areas

Microsoft recognizes Partners with deep expertise across six solution areas, aligned to key customer priorities in the Microsoft Cloud:

Business Applications

Expertise in delivering Dynamics 365 solutions that optimize operations and enhance customer experiences.

Data & AI (Azure)

Specialization in building analytics and AI solutions, and managing data across systems with Azure.

Digital & App Innovation (Azure)

Capability in developing, deploying, and modernizing cloud-native applications using Azure tools and services.

Infrastructure (Azure)

Proficiency in migrating, managing, and optimizing infrastructure workloads in Azure environments.

Security

Skill in safeguarding digital environments, managing access, and supporting compliance across hybrid and multi-cloud platforms.

Modern Work

Ability to enable secure, collaborative, and productive work experiences through Microsoft 365.

New SMB-Focused Designation Paths

To better support Partners of varying sizes, Microsoft introduced SMB-specific Solutions Partner designation paths within the AI Cloud Partner Program. These paths cover core areas such as Data & AI (Azure), Digital & App Innovation (Azure), Infrastructure (Azure), and Security, offering the same designations and benefits as the enterprise track but with requirements tailored to the scale and capacity of smaller Partners.

Note: Since the SMB tracks were launched after the survey period, the data may not fully capture Partner awareness or adoption of these new paths.

SMB Track

Designed for Partners primarily serving small and mid-sized customers, this track is ideal for those with:

- **Annual Azure consumption below $1 million.**
- **A customer base where at least 80% falls within the SMB or SMC segments.**

Enterprise Track

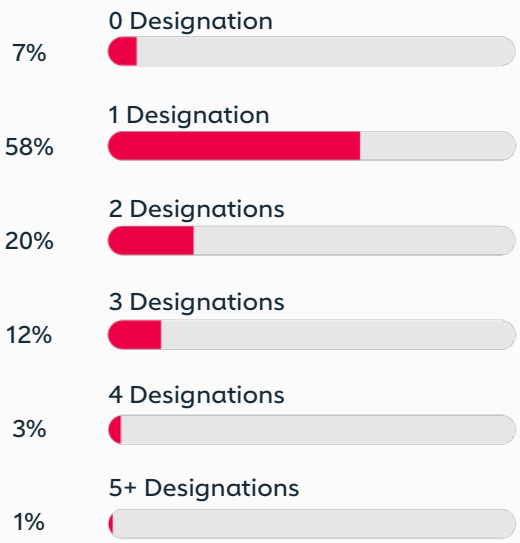
Geared toward Partners with a broader or more enterprise-focused customer portfolio, this path is designed for for those with:

- **Over $1 million in Azure usage over the past 12 months.**
- **More than 20% of customers categorized as enterprise-level.**

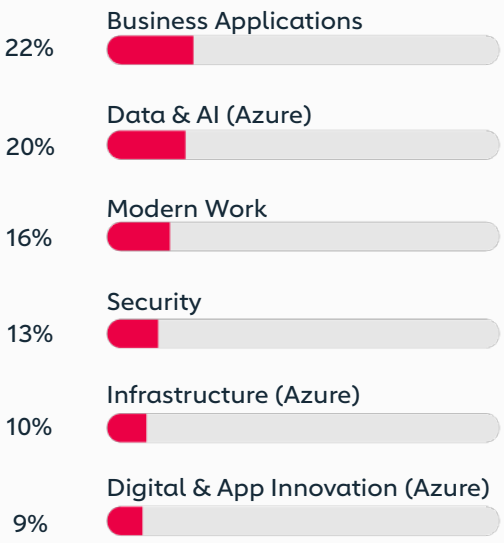
Designation Trends

Survey insights from respondents show broad participation in the MAICPP, though the majority of Partners hold only one designation, with fewer expanding across multiple solution areas.

Number of Designations Held



Most Common Designations



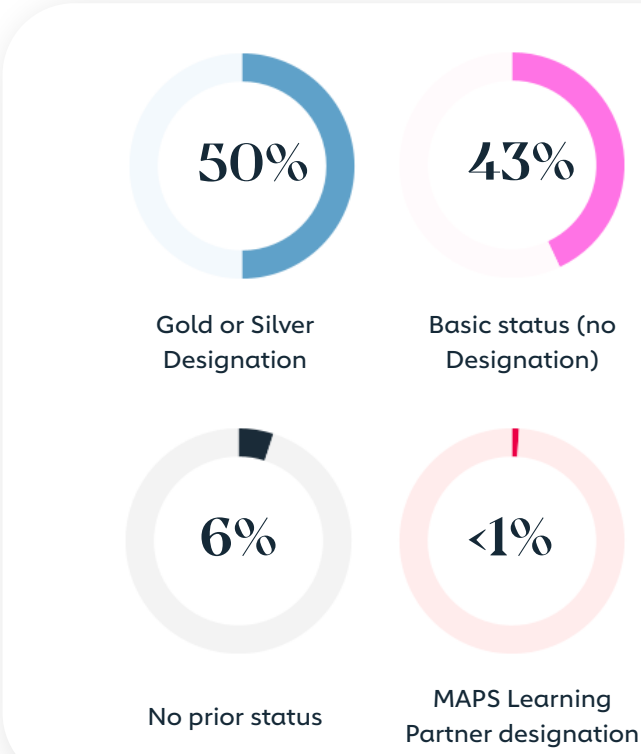
A Transition from Legacy Competencies to MAICPP Designations

Survey insights from respondents show broad participation in the MAICPP, though the majority of Partners hold only one designation, with fewer expanding across multiple solution areas.

In 2022, the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program officially replaced the legacy Microsoft Partner Network (MPN). This shift marked an evolution toward a more AI-centric, outcome-based model, which now serves as the unified framework for Partner recognition, capability scoring, and incentive eligibility.

On January 22, 2025, Microsoft officially retired the Microsoft Partner Network, discontinuing the use of Gold and Silver competencies as recognized designations and marking the full transition to MAICPP designations.

Microsoft introduced three new benefits packages: Partner Launch Benefits, Partner Success Core Benefits, and Partner Success Expanded Benefits. Partners who had previously earned Gold or Silver status were allowed to retain their legacy benefits, ensuring continuity and minimizing disruption.



30% **of Microsoft Partners surveyed held both a previous designation (e.g. Gold, Silver) from the Microsoft Partner Network and hold at least one designation on the MAICCP.**

Designations & Microsoft Funding

Apart from benefits like customer-facing badges that build credibility and trust and open Co-Sell opportunities, designated Microsoft Partners also gain access to a wide range of funding and incentive programs.

86% **of designated Partners report receiving funding through at least one of the following programs**

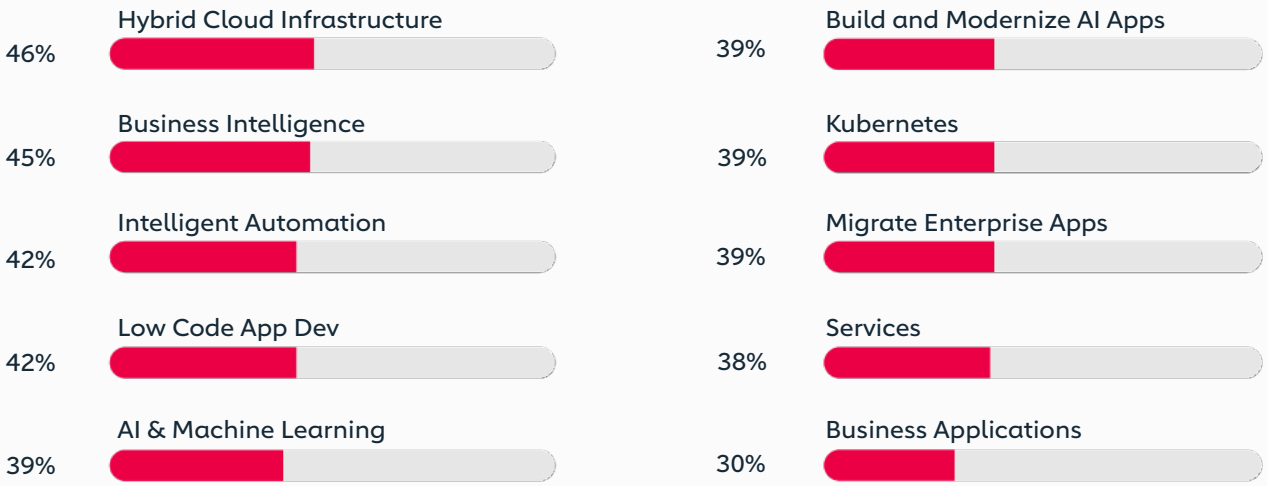
- Microsoft Development Funds (MDF)
- Microsoft Co-op Funds & Incentives
- End Customer Investment Fund (ECIF) Customer Training
- Proof of Concept (PoC) Credits
- Eligible Workshops & Assessments

SMB Specializations

Beyond formal designations, Small and Midsize Business (SMB) Specializations allow Partners to highlight their technical expertise in specific solution areas. These specializations help Partners stand out by showcasing their deep experience and strong dedication to serving the SMB market.

According to survey respondents, Microsoft Partners on average hold 11 specializations, highlighting how widely the program is used and how valuable specializations are for building credibility, including opening new business opportunities.

Top SMB Specializations held by Partners:



Key Takeaways

Partners who invest in and maintain a designation gain preferred access to resources, credibility, and support that non-designated peers often lack.

Here's how this is reflected in our findings:

91%
of Partners hold at least one Microsoft designation

86%
of designated Partners receive Microsoft funding

11 SMB specializations
on average per Partner

Marketplace

The Microsoft Marketplace is a powerful business platform that connects Microsoft Partners with customers at scale, enabling new revenue opportunities through subscriptions, one-time purchases, usage-based models, and consulting or managed services. It enhances Partner credibility and highlights seamless integration with Microsoft technologies. The most widely used channels include AppSource, Azure Marketplace, and the Partner Solution Gallery.

Marketplace provides Partners with global reach, streamlined sales, and Co-Sell opportunities with Microsoft's sales teams.

Understanding Microsoft Marketplace for Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program Members

The Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program (MAICPP) supports Partners specializing in AI solutions built on Microsoft's cloud platform. It gives Partners the opportunity to showcase their expertise in AI technologies such as machine learning, cognitive services, and AI-driven automation.

To achieve MAICPP designation, your solution must be:

- Marketplace-ready
- Interoperable with Microsoft Cloud
- Technically compliant
- Proven successful by customers (e.g., testimonials)

Your organization also needs to be designated, based on performance, skilling, and impact, to publish a Marketplace consulting listing.

For MAICPP Partners, Marketplace serves as a vital distribution channel, offering visibility, sales support, and a framework to drive revenue. Once designated, Partners can list their solutions and gain exposure to Microsoft Marketplace's extensive customer base.

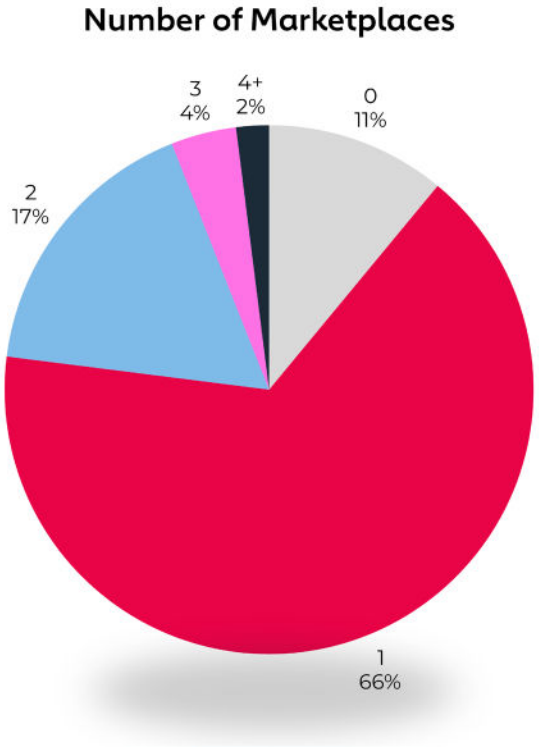
For more information on designations, visit the Designations Section.

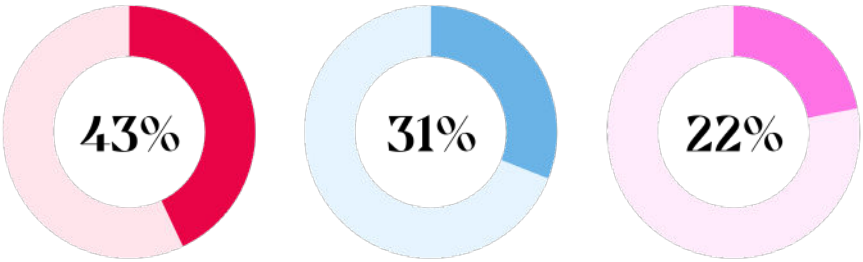
Where are Microsoft Partners Listed on Marketplace?

	Microsoft AppSource	Azure Marketplace	Partner Solution Gallery
Focus:	Business applications and industry-specific solutions.	Technical, cloud-based, and IT-centric solutions.	Partner-built solutions, focused on applications integrated with Microsoft Teams and Cloud technologies.
Solution:	SaaS apps, Dynamics 365 extensions, Power Platform solutions, and industry-specific tools.	Analytics, DevOps, migration, security consulting, and managed services.	ISV apps, consulting offers, packaged services, and solution briefs.
Best for:	ISVs and Partners offering line-of-business solutions tailored to specific verticals or functional needs (e.g., finance, HR, sales, marketing).	Partners providing infrastructure, platforms, and developer tools on Microsoft Azure.	ISVs looking to increase awareness and Co-Sell readiness by showcasing their expertise and alignment with Microsoft's solutions.
Audience:	Business stakeholders & other Microsoft Partners	Technical stakeholders & other Microsoft Partners	Microsoft ecosystem stakeholders

89% **of Microsoft Partners surveyed are listed on at least one Marketplace, with only 11% not participating. Multi-Marketplace engagement is less common: 17% are on two, 4% on three, and 2% on four or more.**

83% of Partners are prioritizing a focused presence on only one or two Microsoft Marketplaces at most.



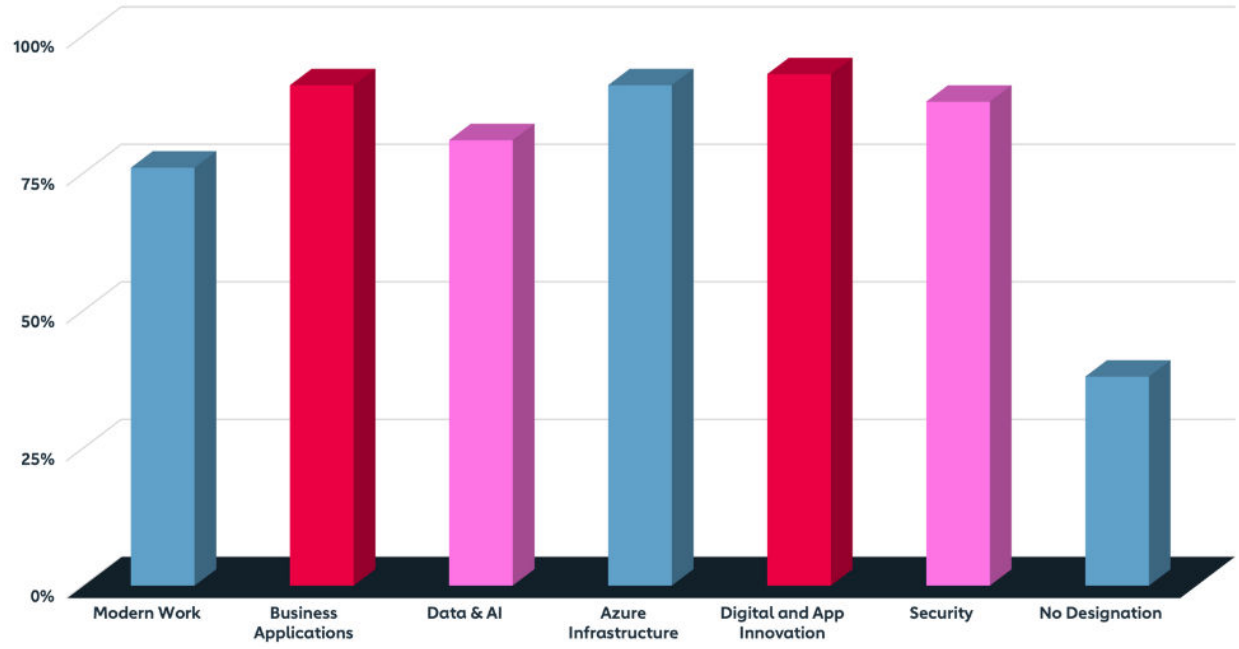


Microsoft AppSource is the most widely used platform, with 43% of Partners listing solutions there, followed by Azure Marketplace at 31% and the Partner Solution Gallery at 22%.

Marketplace Presence by Designation

Out of the Partners surveyed, **91% of Digital and App Innovation Partners have a solution listed on Marketplace**, followed by Azure Infrastructure and Business Applications at 91% each. In contrast, non-designated Partners demonstrate significantly lower Marketplace presence at only 38%.

Marketplace Presence by Designation



Marketplace & Support

Among Microsoft Partners listed on Marketplace, a significant **89% report receiving at least one form of support from Microsoft.**

This support spans across several key areas, including:

Lead Generation **Monetary Funding** **Marketing Resources** **Technical Assistance**

With **nearly 9 in 10 listed Partners** receiving support, Marketplace engagement appears to be a strong signal of alignment with Microsoft's strategy and enhances Partnership benefits.

Challenges in Microsoft Marketplace Listings

Microsoft Marketplace is a powerful global channel for Partners, but success comes with challenges. The most significant challenge reported by Partners is **generating high-quality leads (35%)**.

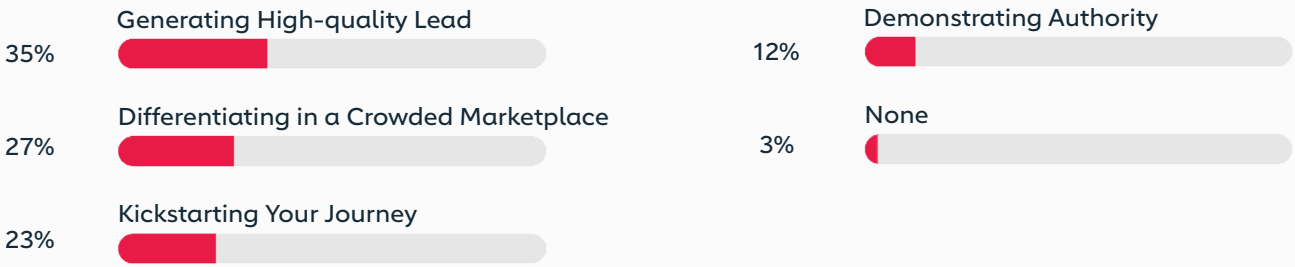
v

Marketplace listings increase visibility, but visibility alone does not guarantee engagement or sales. Marketplace success requires strategic optimization, clear positioning, and alignment with customer needs.

Other challenges include differentiating in a crowded marketplace (27%), where numerous solutions compete for attention, and kickstarting the journey (23%), as the onboarding process is often perceived as complex and resource-intensive. Additionally, some Partners reported difficulties in demonstrating authority (12%), highlighting the importance of credibility and proven success to stand out.

These findings suggest that while Marketplace offers reach and credibility, sustained success requires more than presence. Partners who stand out invest in differentiation, designations, and ongoing demand generation to translate Marketplace visibility into measurable growth.

Top Challenges in Marketplace Listings



Key Takeaways

Being listed on Marketplace is more than a sales channel, it's a gateway to Co-Selling, deeper Microsoft alignment, and access to valuable Partner support. Designations significantly strengthen this relationship, unlocking benefits that non-designated Partners often miss.

89%
of Partners are listed on at least one Microsoft Marketplace

43%
of Partners have solutions listed on Microsoft AppSource

89%
of Partners listed on Marketplace receive support from Microsoft

Leads

Microsoft Partners today rely heavily on a diverse set of channels to generate high-quality leads. Microsoft supports this by offering multiple channels that connect Partners to high-intent prospects across different industries and sales motions.

91% **of Microsoft Partners report receiving Leads from Microsoft and their associated Microsoft network.**

An Overview of Microsoft Partner Lead Sources

Microsoft Partner lead sources fall into two primary categories: those originating from official Microsoft-operated platforms and those from communities recognized within the Microsoft Partner ecosystem.

Microsoft Partner Center

Microsoft Partner Center is the central hub for managing a Partner's relationship with Microsoft. It streamlines key functions such as profile management, solution listings, Co-Sell opportunities, and lead tracking. The platform also provides access to Microsoft's commercial Marketplaces, including Azure Marketplace, AppSource, the Partner Solution Gallery, and more.

For more details on Microsoft marketplaces, refer to the Marketplace section.

The Referrals section within Partner Center allows Partners to receive and manage leads generated through Marketplace activity or direct Microsoft referrals. It offers tools for lead assignment, status tracking, and performance reporting - giving Partners clear visibility into the source, progress, and outcome of each lead.

1:1 Microsoft Relationships

The platform also enables access to Co-Sell opportunities, where Microsoft field teams collaborate with Partners on customer deals that align with strategic priorities and solution relevance. Partners are more likely to be prioritized when they maintain accurate profiles, align with Microsoft's focus areas, and actively engage in Co-Sell activities.

Microsoft Partner Communities

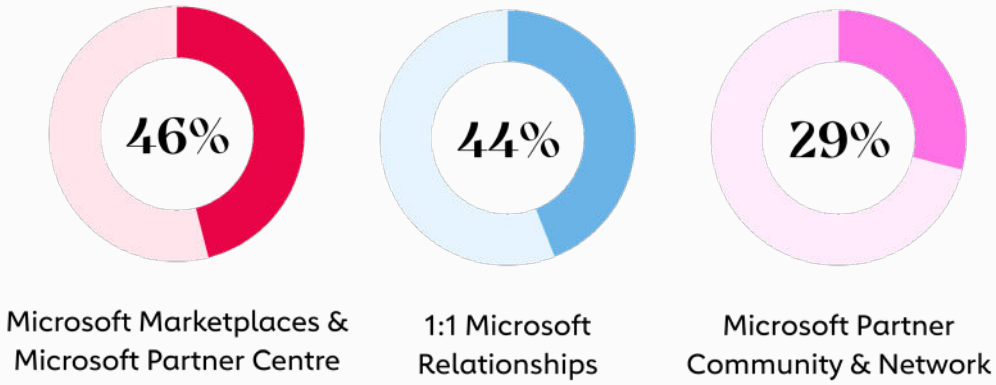
Beyond Microsoft-operated platforms, independent Partner communities play a key role in fostering collaboration and generating opportunities. Although not run by Microsoft, many of these groups are formally recognized for their impact.

Active participation in communities such as the International Association of Microsoft Channel Partners (IAMCP), Women in Cloud (WIC), and the Black Channel Partner Alliance (BCPA) helps Partners expand their networks, exchange business opportunities, and build trust within the broader Microsoft ecosystem.

For examples of communities that support Partner engagement and lead generation, see the Community section.

Distribution of Lead Sources

Survey data shows that Partners are tapping into a diverse mix of lead channels to drive demand:



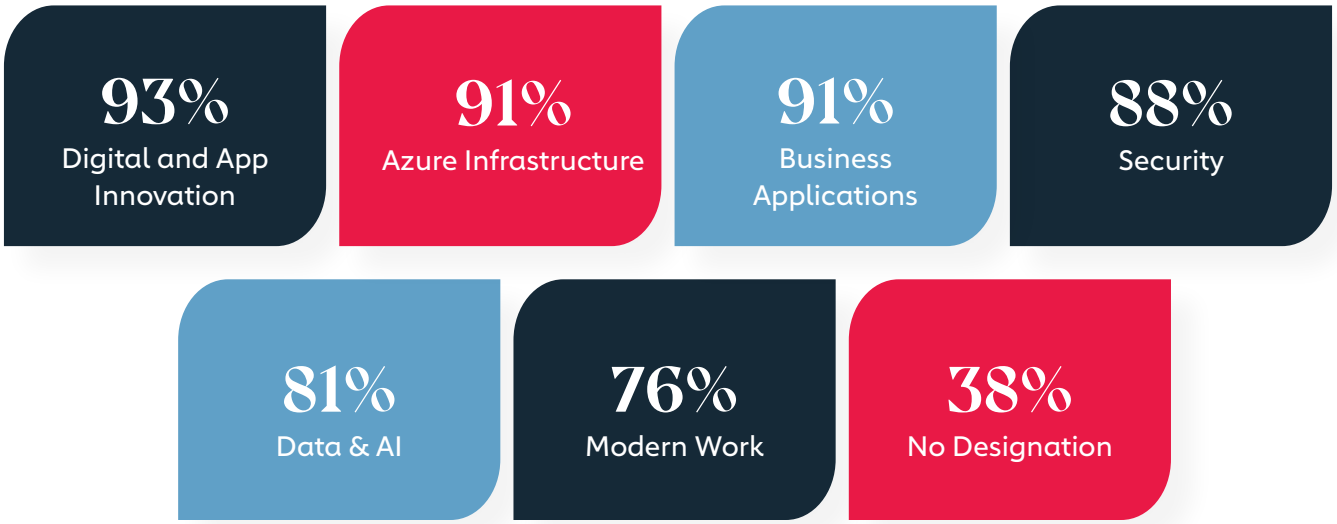
Note: Survey respondents selected all applicable Lead Source categories.

Respondents could select multiple lead sources, highlighting the fact that most Partners engage across various channels. Notably, 32% reported receiving leads from more than one Microsoft source, demonstrating the widespread adoption of a multi-channel strategy for lead generation.

Leads by Managed and Unmanaged Partners

Microsoft supports Partners at different levels based on their size, strategic focus, and performance. Managed Partners work directly with Microsoft account teams and often receive hands-on support, including Co-Sell planning and lead referrals. Unmanaged Partners do not have a dedicated Microsoft contact but still have access to self-serve tools like Microsoft Partner Center and the Microsoft commercial marketplace.

Partners holding the following designations reported receiving leads from Microsoft:



Microsoft sellers are more likely to notice Partners with clear solution area alignment and prioritize them in referral and Co-Sell motions.

To learn more about designations, visit the Designation section.

Lead Conversion by Source

The survey asked respondents to report the typical conversion rate of leads they received from Microsoft, categorized by lead source. The data highlights that not all lead types convert at the same rate and suggests that how a lead enters the funnel influences its sales readiness.

1:1 Microsoft Relationships show the highest reported conversion rates, with most Partners placing successful deals in the 26–50% range.

Microsoft Marketplaces and Microsoft Partner Center leads tend to convert in the 11–25% range, indicating the need for more qualification and follow-up by the Partner.

Microsoft Partner Communities and Network leads also fall primarily in the 11–25% range, reflecting the importance of relationship-building.

Lead Conversion by Partner Type

Each Partner type interacts with Microsoft in distinct ways, and the data reveals that these differences influence lead conversion outcomes.

Top Converting Lead Sources for Each Partner Type

1:1 Microsoft Relationships

25% of CSPs report a >50% conversion rate from 1:1 Microsoft relationships.

Marketplace Listings

36% of ISVs close >25% of leads from Marketplace listings.

Microsoft Partner Communities

50% of MSPs 1 in 4 leads generated through Microsoft Partner communities and networks converts into a client.

1:1 Microsoft Relationships & Microsoft Partner Communities

SIs identified highest close rates come from 1:1 relationships and networking.

Key Takeaways

The data highlights that Microsoft Partners are engaging across multiple lead channels, however outcomes vary depending on Partner type, designation, and sales motion.

91%

of Partners receive leads through Microsoft Partner Center & Marketplaces, 1:1 Microsoft relationships, and Microsoft Partner communities

26–50%

conversion rate for leads from 1:1 Microsoft Relationships, higher than leads received from other channels

68%

of those receiving leads from Microsoft are Managed Partners

Communities

Microsoft Partner communities - many of which are led by Partners themselves - serve as vital platforms for peer-to-peer networking, strategic partnerships, professional growth, and deeper integration within the Microsoft ecosystem.

From formal associations like IAMCP (International Association Microsoft Channel Partners) and BCPA (Black Channel Partner Alliance), to advocacy-driven networks like WIT (Women in Technology) and WIC (Women in Cloud), these organizations help Partners unlock Microsoft support, funding opportunities, and valuable connections to scale faster and smarter.

Popular Partner-Led Communities

IAMCP

International Association of Microsoft Channel Partners

Globally recognized, Partner-led association focused on helping Partners grow through peer networking, education, and advocacy.

BCPA

Black Channel Partner Alliance

Mission-driven nonprofit striving to accelerate the growth of Black-owned Microsoft technology businesses for equitable representation.

WIC

Women in Cloud

Global community focused on inclusion, helping women entrepreneurs build and scale technology ventures within the Microsoft ecosystem.

WIT

Women in Technology

Community committed to promoting gender diversity and leadership in technology, specifically across Microsoft Partner organizations.

FRP

FastTrack Ready Partner Program

Microsoft-endorsed Partner model that equips qualified Partners with training and resources to deliver FastTrack services.

Expanding Partner Networks Through Community Engagement

Microsoft Partners looking to grow their business, deepen relationships, and access new opportunities are increasingly turning to Partner-led communities and associations. These networks offer a powerful way to expand alliances, strengthen go-to-market strategy, and engage more closely with Microsoft's broader ecosystem.

Partner-led associations are nonprofit organizations founded and run by Microsoft Partners and technology business leaders. They feature strong membership bases and act as a direct channel to Partner engagement programs, P2P collaboration, professional skilling, and Microsoft program visibility.

By participating in these communities, Microsoft Partners gain access to real-time insight into Microsoft initiatives, joint marketing opportunities, and Co-Selling support. These relationships often serve as a multiplier for both growth and lead generation, especially for Partners that may not yet have direct access to Microsoft field teams.

Key benefits include:

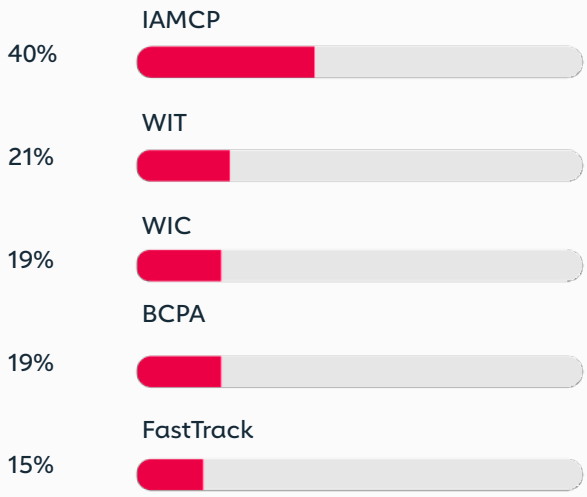
- **Increased Partner knowledge** and skilling through community learning and collaboration
- **P2P connection opportunities** for referrals, Partnerships, and joint go-to-market efforts
- **Improved visibility** into Microsoft-led funding, programs, and customer demand signals
- **Lead source amplification** via access to Marketplace and Partner Center programs

Where Microsoft Partners are Most Engaged

According to survey respondents, **66% of Microsoft Partners are active in at least one community.** An additional 20% participate in two or more communities. Only 15% of Microsoft Partners aren't involved in any Partner-led communities, highlighting just how critical these associations have become to Partner success.

Note: Survey respondents selected all applicable Community & Membership categories.

Community participation is distributed across the following groups:



Among those engaged, the **IAMCP leads the way, with 40% of respondents citing active membership.** IAMCP continues to be a central hub for peer networking, Co-Selling opportunities, and direct engagement with Microsoft.

These communities represent a cross-section of identity-based, business-focused, and Microsoft-aligned groups, all driving stronger engagement, lead development, and technical growth for Microsoft Partners worldwide.

Leads & Community

Participation in Partner communities goes beyond networking - it drives results. Microsoft Partners consistently report measurable lead generation tied to their community involvement, highlighting the tangible business value of active engagement.

Microsoft Partner lead sources generally fall into two main categories:

- Microsoft-operated platforms, including Microsoft Partner Center and Marketplaces
- Partner-driven communities, such as IAMCP, WIC, WIT, and BCPA

Microsoft Partner Center supports lead generation through solution listings, referral management, Co-Sell opportunities, and optimized Partner profiles.

Partner Communities complement these efforts through relationship-building, peer referrals, and co-marketing opportunities. These trusted spaces often result in leads through shared projects or vertical alignment.

Top Converting Lead Sources for Each Partner Community:

IAMCP

52% cited Microsoft Marketplace & Partner Center as their top lead source

WIC

41% cited both 1:1 Microsoft relationships and Marketplace

BCPA

41% cited 1:1 Microsoft relationships

WIT

51% cited Marketplace & Partner Center

Community & Conference Synergy

Microsoft Partner conferences play a major role in promoting connection, collaboration, and learning across the ecosystem. These high-impact events bring together Partners, Microsoft employees, and industry leaders to share insights, showcase innovations, and deepen engagement with the Microsoft platform.

Key Microsoft Partner Conferences

Microsoft Ignite/Inspire:

Microsoft's flagship event for Partners and enterprise customers, focused on product innovation, vision, and strategic announcements.

Directions:

A Partner-led conference for SMB-focused Microsoft Partners working with Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Dynamic Summit:

A community-led event providing deep, user-focused content for Dynamics 365 end-users and consultants.

Microsoft 365 Conference:

Focused on business users and IT professionals working across Microsoft 365 (Teams, SharePoint, Viva, Copilot).

Microsoft Build:

Designed for developers creating apps, integrations, and innovations using Microsoft technologies.

FabricCon:

A specialized data-focused conference for professionals leveraging Microsoft Fabric, AI, and analytics.

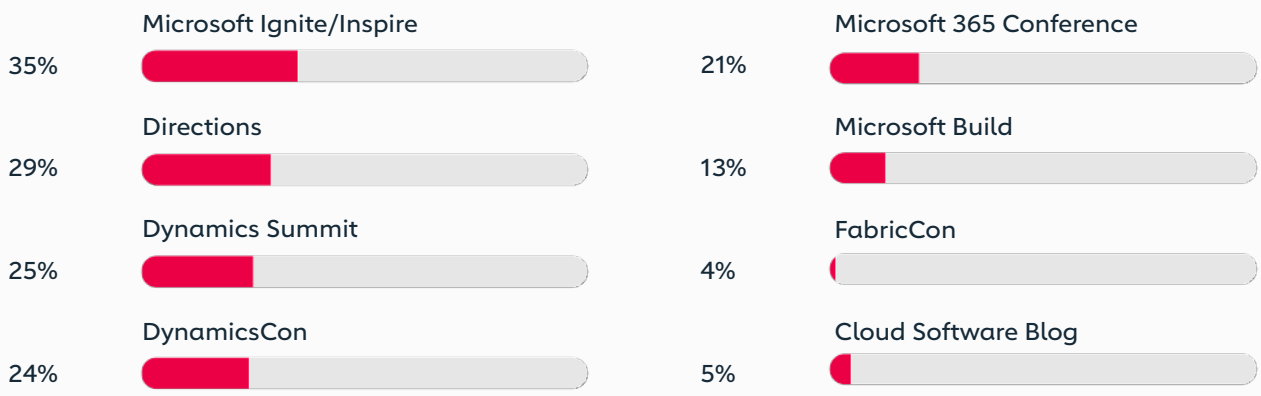
DynamicsCon:

Hosted by the Dynamics User Group (DUG), this event features peer-driven education and real-user stories in the Dynamics ecosystem.

Some communities also host their own signature events, like DUG's DynamicsCon, tailored to their member base and technology focus.

Microsoft Partners report attending an average of 2 conferences per year.

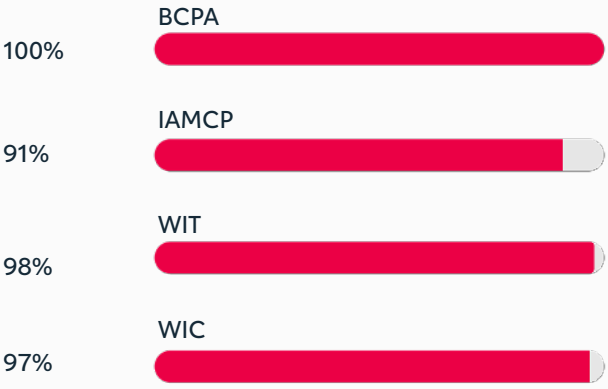
Conferences Most Frequently Attended



How Communities and Conferences Work Together

Communities provide trusted spaces for peer exchange, shared learning, and collaborative projects, while conferences offer dynamic opportunities for Partners to meet face-to-face with other Partners, Microsoft contacts, and customers. These two channels work in tandem; communities often promote and coordinate attendance at key conferences, and conference participation further deepens community bonds.

Survey data supports this overlap:



100% of BCPA members reported attending at least one Microsoft or Partner-led conference.

91% of IAMCP members surveyed attend conferences.

98% of WIT members attend conferences.

97% of WIC members attend conferences.

While the data does not specify which conferences each community attends, the high participation rates underscore the value members place on conference engagement. Together, community involvement and conference participation create a stronger foundation for connection, visibility, and strategic Partnerships.

Key Takeaways

Strong Partnerships start with meaningful engagement. Microsoft Partner Communities and Conferences aren't just add-ons, they are foundational to Partner growth, visibility, and lead generation.

85%

of Microsoft Partners participate in at least one community, with IAMCP being the most engaged

Two conferences

per year is most common, with Microsoft Ignite and Directions leading in attendance

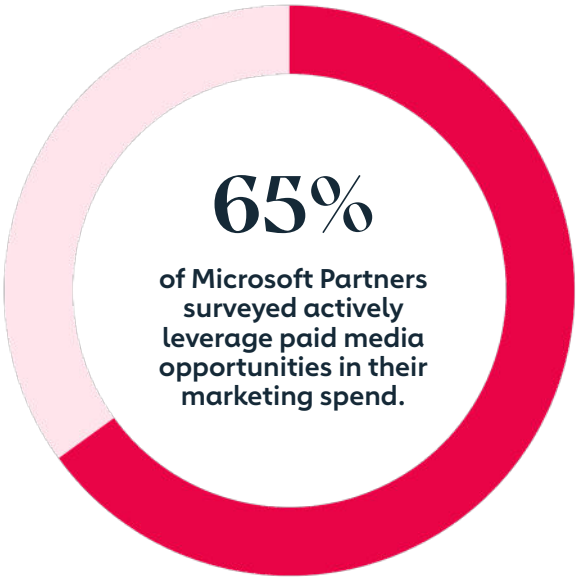
Strong correlation

between community participation and access to Microsoft-generated leads (Marketplace & Partner Center, 1:1 Relationships)

Paid Media

Microsoft Partners play a crucial role in delivering innovative solutions and services to customers worldwide. Many Partners are turning to the Microsoft Partner Community's paid media programs to enhance their visibility, build brand awareness, and generate qualified leads.

These targeted marketing opportunities enable Partners to align closely with Microsoft's brand while reaching relevant audiences more effectively.



Expanding Awareness Through Paid Media Communities

Paid media communities offer Microsoft Partners a strategic way to reach highly targeted audiences within the broader Microsoft ecosystem. These "pay-to-play" marketing opportunities provide Partners with access to well-established digital platforms and industry-specific audiences already engaged with Microsoft technologies.

The value of these channels lies in their ability to offer targeted exposure, credible placements, and, depending on the platform, guaranteed lead generation.

Paid Media Options for Microsoft Partners

Below is a curated list of reputable paid media platforms and independent editorial websites Microsoft Partners frequently use to drive engagement and growth:

Redmond Channel Partner Magazine
Promote brands through paid placements in newsletters, webinars, and syndicated content.

MSDynamicsWorld
Reaches Dynamics 365 professionals with lead generation programs, sponsored content, and webinars.

Channel Futures
Engages a broad channel-focused audience through paid media, events, and sponsored content.

ITPro Today
Targets hands-on decision-makers with technical content and sponsored digital placements.

CRM Software Blog
Features CRM and Microsoft sales solutions with member benefits like lead gen and brand exposure.

ERP Software Blog
Advertises ERP-related solutions to businesses researching ERPs, with membership-based lead tracking.

Maven Collective's Microsoft Partner Benchmark survey revealed clear trends in how Microsoft Partners engage with paid media opportunities. **Among those currently investing in paid media, a significant majority participate in two or more media channels, underscoring a strategic, multi-platform approach to driving awareness and demand.**

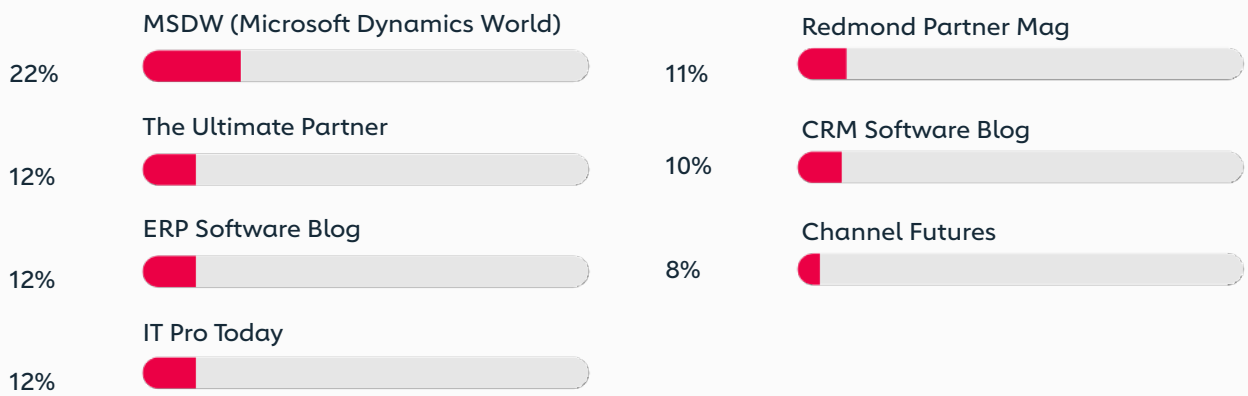
Microsoft Partners are not relying on a single channel for results. Many are adopting a diversified approach to maximize visibility and engage prospects throughout the buying journey. Participation in paid media varies by Partner type, reflecting the diversity of business models within the Microsoft ecosystem.

Paid Media Investment

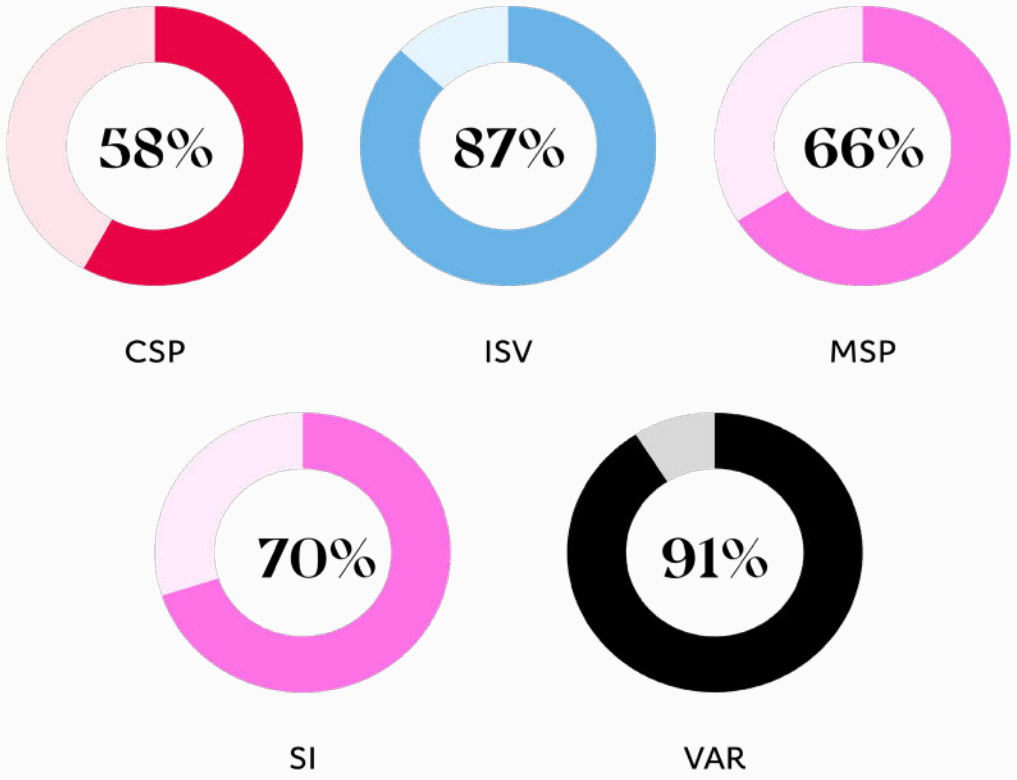
Cloud Solution Providers (CSPs) typically focus on reselling Microsoft cloud services alongside value-added support. Managed Service Providers (MSPs) offer ongoing IT management and monitoring, often on a subscription basis. System Integrators (SIs) work closely with clients to deploy and customize Microsoft solutions. Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) develop proprietary applications on Microsoft platforms, and Value-Added Resellers (VARs) combine software resale with consulting, training, or integration services.

These differences in go-to-market strategy influence how and where Partners invest in marketing, including their use of paid media to drive visibility and demand.

Top Paid Media Channels



Paid Media Engagement by Partner Type:



Key Takeaways

Across the Microsoft ecosystem, Partners that invest in paid media do so with strategic intent - leveraging multiple platforms and aligning efforts with their business models.

65%
of Microsoft Partners actively invest in paid media

Two or more
channels is most common for Partners using paid media

91%
of Value-Added Resellers (VARs) use paid media, the highest among Partner types

MVP

Microsoft MVPs (Most Valuable Professionals) serve as trusted experts, passionate community leaders, and direct conduits between Microsoft and its global user base.

71% of Microsoft Partners surveyed include one or more MVPs within their organizations.

The presence of MVPs is a clear signal of an organization's dedication to maximizing the value of Microsoft technologies.

Having a Microsoft MVP on your team sets your organization apart in four critical areas:

Recognition

MVPs are globally recognized by Microsoft for exceptional leadership and community impact.

Expertise

MVPs elevate your organization with expert insights and early access to Microsoft tools and product teams.

Authority

MVPs are trusted voices in the tech community, shaping best practices and attracting high-value opportunities.

Visibility

MVPs influence the Microsoft ecosystem through active participation in the global community.

Becoming a Microsoft MVP

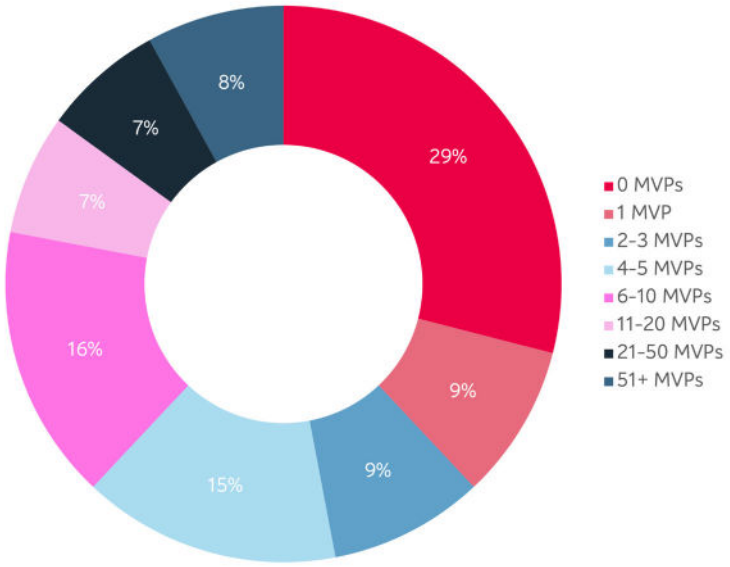
Microsoft MVPs are nominated by respected figures within the community, including Microsoft employees, fellow MVPs, or community leaders. While self-nominations aren't allowed, individuals can boost their chances of nomination by cultivating a strong and visible presence in the community.

MVP Representation Among Microsoft Partners

Recent survey data shows a wide distribution of MVP presence across Microsoft Partner organizations. Notably, 29% of respondents reported having no MVPs, suggesting that many Partners may be missing out on the strategic value MVPs can deliver.

The number of MVPs among Microsoft Partners varies across the organizations surveyed.

Number of MVPs Among Microsoft Partners



Comparing MVP Prevalence in Managed vs. Unmanaged Partners

Microsoft Partners fall into two key categories: Managed and Unmanaged.

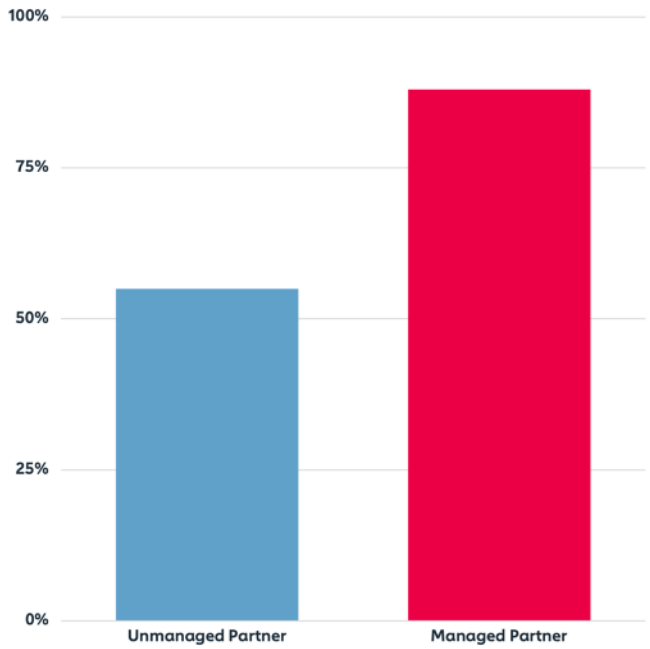
Managed Partners benefit from a closer, more structured relationship with Microsoft, gaining access to exclusive resources, strategic guidance, and Co-Selling opportunities that can accelerate growth and innovation.

In contrast, Unmanaged Partners operate with greater independence and agility, enabling them to pivot quickly and craft unique go-to-market strategies, though they receive less direct support from Microsoft.

Despite their differences, both types of Partners often include Microsoft MVPs on their teams.

Managed Partners are more like to Microsoft MVPs. **88% of Microsoft Managed Partners have at least one Microsoft MVP**. In contrast, only 55% of Unmanaged Partners have at least one Microsoft MVP.

Microsoft MVPs in Managed vs Unmanaged Microsoft Partners



MVPs and Microsoft Support Access

According to survey results, the quantity of MVPs in an organization does not directly impact access to support. In fact, even organizations with zero MVPs still reported receiving funding or support from Microsoft, with 63% accessing at least one form of assistance.

Survey results indicate that there is no direct correlation between the number of MVPs within a Microsoft Partner organization and the level of support received from Microsoft.

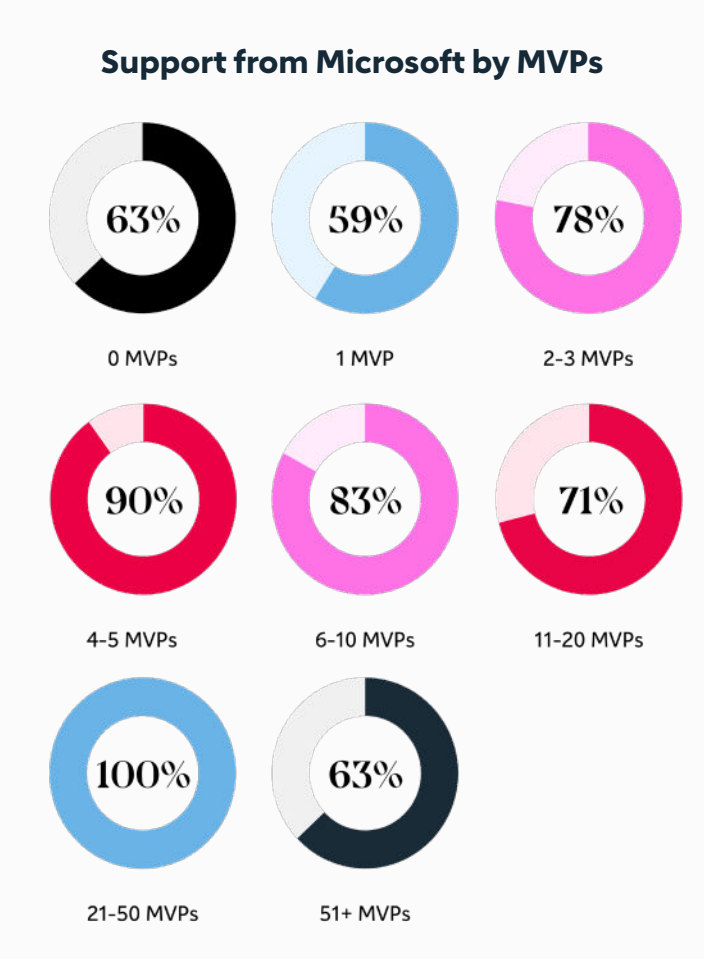
While companies with 2 to 50 MVPs receive strong levels of support, with 100% support reported among those with 21–50 MVPs, the trend is not consistently upward.

Organizations with no MVPs or just one still receive a moderate level of support (approximately 60%). Interestingly, support levels decline among Partners with more than 50 MVPs, suggesting that increased MVP presence does not always correlate with greater support.

The charts below illustrate the percentage of organizations receiving Microsoft funding and support, segmented by the number of MVPs within each organization.

While MVPs can offer value to an organization, the amount of funding and support received from Microsoft does not necessarily depend on the number of MVPs within the organization.

Please see the Funding section for more details.



Key Takeaways

Strong Partnerships start with meaningful engagement. Microsoft Partner Communities and Conferences aren't just add-ons, they are foundational to Partner growth, visibility, and lead generation.

71%
of Microsoft Partners have at least one MVP in their organization

88%
of Managed Partners include at least one MVP

63%
of organizations with zero MVPs still receive Microsoft support, suggesting no direct correlation between MVP presence and funding access

Funding

The Microsoft Partner ecosystem is a competitive one, and technical expertise alone is no longer enough to stand out. Strategic financial support from Microsoft can make the difference between maintaining your business and scaling it.

From solution development to go-to-market support and co-op marketing, Microsoft continues to invest in its Partner network to drive demand and expand market presence.

Understanding Microsoft Partner Funding

Microsoft provides a robust set of funding programs designed to support Partner growth at every stage of the business lifecycle. Partners can access these programs through the Partner Center, Microsoft's centralized hub for managing benefits, incentives, and co-investment opportunities.

Partners can access funding through several key programs:

Co-op Funds
Reimbursement-based support for marketing and sales activities aligned with Microsoft's strategic priorities.

Partner Investments
Incentives tied to specific solution areas or customer engagements, often awarded through performance-based criteria.

Solution Accelerator Funding
Pre-sales and solution development funding to help Partners build and scale cloud-based services.

Through the Partner Center Incentives (PCI) platform, eligible Partners can view available funding offers, manage claims, and monitor payment statuses. The platform also connects directly to usage data and performance metrics, making it easier to track eligibility and maximize value.

Quick Action Tip
Log into Partner Center and check your PCI dashboard for unused incentives—most expire quarterly.

Effectively understanding and utilizing these programs serves as a strategic advantage. Partners who take a proactive approach to managing funding opportunities report higher returns on marketing investments and more consistent revenue growth.

A Closer Look at Microsoft Funding for Partners

Microsoft's funding ecosystem is designed to reward alignment, performance, and specialization. The more closely a Partner's offerings map to Microsoft's strategic priorities—such as Azure, Modern Work, or Business Applications—the more funding pathways become available.

While co-op marketing and solution development support are well known, Microsoft also offers deal-based incentives, training reimbursements, and customer engagement funding. Many of these are tied to specific solution areas or Partner designations, encouraging Partners to invest in technical capabilities and go-to-market alignment.

Key Funding Opportunities

Microsoft Development Funds (MDF)

Microsoft Development Funds (MDF) represent a significant opportunity for Microsoft Partners to bolster their marketing efforts and drive revenue growth. Partners can use these funds for co-marketing activities, product launches, and technical initiatives.

Microsoft Co-op Funds & Incentives

Cooperative (co-op) marketing funds are earned through Microsoft Incentive Programs by claiming reimbursement for activities that support Microsoft product awareness. These funds help Partners conduct marketing activities that increase brand awareness and drive growth of their sales pipeline.

ECIF Customer Training

The End Customer Investment Fund (ECIF) is designed to support customer training, onboarding, and project support. Partners who provide a Statement of Work (SoW) with projected Azure Consumed Revenue at a 10:1 ratio can apply for ECIF funding to provide one-on-one training to enhance customer skills and adoption of Azure cloud solutions.

Proof of Concept (PoC) Credits

PoC Credits provide Azure credit to end-customers' subscriptions created in the Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) program. Microsoft covers the subscription consumption during the Proof of Concept period, helping Partners demonstrate the value of their solutions to potential customers.

Eligible Workshops & Assessments

Microsoft funds workshops and assessments to help customers adopt Microsoft technologies. These workshops and assessments provide tailored sessions that focus on specific technologies, helping customers understand and implement Microsoft solutions effectively.

Additional Funding Programs

Deal-Based Incentives

These incentives are provided to Partners based on the successful closure of deals involving Microsoft products and services. Microsoft designed these incentives to motivate Partners to drive sales and expand their customer base.

Training Reimbursements

Microsoft offers reimbursements for training programs that Partners provide to their customers. This helps ensure that customers are well-equipped to use Microsoft technologies, leading to higher satisfaction and retention rates.

Customer Engagement Funding

This funding supports activities that engage customers and drive the adoption of Microsoft solutions. It includes funding for events, workshops, and other customer-facing initiatives.

By aligning with Microsoft's strategic priorities and achieving the necessary designations and specializations, Partners can unlock a wide range of funding opportunities that support their growth and success in the Microsoft ecosystem.

Strategic Engagement with Microsoft Funding

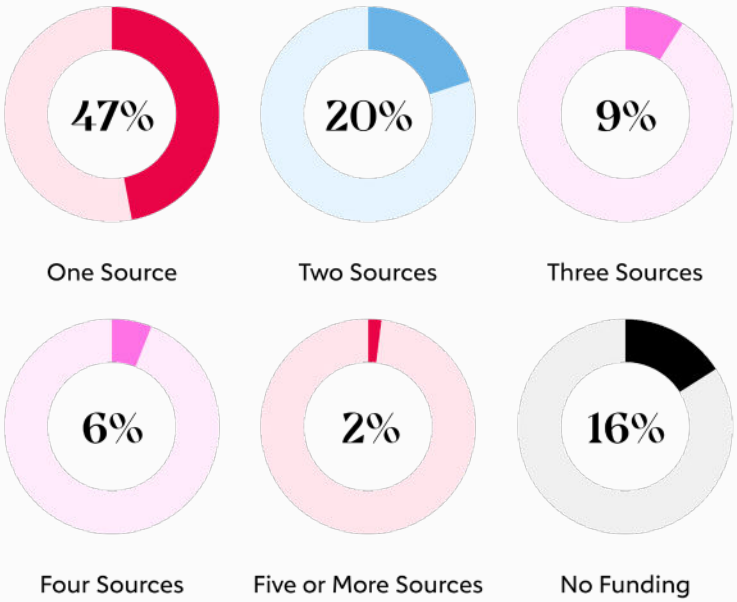
The survey data provides insight not only into which Partners are accessing Microsoft funding, but also into how they engage with the funding ecosystem and where opportunities for greater utilization still exist.

While 84% of Partners access at least one form of Microsoft funding, most limit their participation to just or two sources.

Co-op funding, assessments, and workshops were reported as the top funding sources, indicating that Partners tend to rely on entry-point or lower-effort programs often tied to marketing reimbursements or Microsoft-driven pre-sales engagements.

More complex or higher-value funding options, such as PoC Credits and MDF, see much lower uptake, even though they can offer significant growth potential when used strategically.

How Partners Leverage Microsoft Funding



Most Partners access only one or two of Microsoft's major funding programs. More complex programs like Proof-of-Concept credits and MDF are among the least used — pointing to untapped opportunities for Partners ready to deepen their engagement.

Funding and Management Status

The Microsoft Partner ecosystem is extensive, with only a portion of Partners managed directly by Microsoft. This classification plays a critical role in determining access to funding, resources, and support.

Survey results highlight the significance of this distinction:

- **94%** of Managed Partners receive Microsoft funding from one or more sources
- Only **64%** of Unmanaged Partners report the same

Managed Partners are 47% more likely to receive Microsoft funding than Unmanaged Partners.

This 30-point gap is not coincidental; it reflects how Microsoft prioritizes investment. Managed Partners typically receive more proactive engagement from Partner Development Managers (PDMs), who help guide them toward funding opportunities aligned to Microsoft's growth priorities. This includes everything from co-op incentives to assessments, eligible workshops, and proof-of-concept credits.

Unmanaged Partners, by contrast, must self-navigate the funding landscape. While many still access support through programs like the Partner Center, their path to funding often requires more internal ownership, enablement, and alignment to Microsoft's published program requirements.

The Correlation Between Designations and Funding

Designated Microsoft Partners are more likely to tap into the full spectrum of available funding from Microsoft. According to our survey, 86% of designated Microsoft Partners report receiving funding through at least one of the following sources:

- Microsoft Development Funds (MDF)
- Microsoft Co-op Funds & Incentives
- ECIF Customer Training
- Proof of Concept (PoC) Credits
- Eligible Workshops & Assessments

This high engagement rate shows that holding a Microsoft designation is a strong indicator of both access to and utilization of Microsoft's funding ecosystem. Modern Work Partners are the most frequent recipients of Microsoft funding, which highlights the importance of specialized focus when aligning with Microsoft's funding priorities.

Designated Partners, especially those focused on Modern Work, are significantly more likely to receive Microsoft investment through multiple programs. Aligning to Microsoft's solution areas and earning a designation not only validates Partner expertise but also directly increases access to strategic funding.

Key Takeaways

Partners with designations are far more likely to receive support from Microsoft across key programs, including Market Development Funds (MDF), ECIF training, Proof of Concept (PoC) credits, and eligible workshops.

86%
of Partners with solution designations receive funding

Accessing one or two
Microsoft funding programs is most common

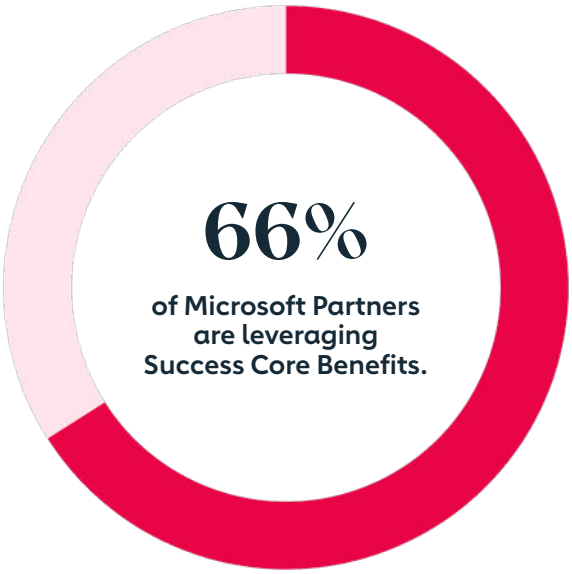
47%
more likely for Managed Partners to receive funding than Unmanaged Partners

Success Core Benefits

Your Gateway to Growth: Understanding Partner Success Core Benefits

Growth and success are deliberate choices, made easier with the right tools. Partner Success Core Benefits provide a foundation for partners to build and expand cloud and AI solutions, access expert guidance, and accelerate go-to-market initiatives, all while strengthening customer outcomes.

These benefits are actively shaping Partner success. A compelling 66% of Microsoft Partners surveyed are already leveraging them to drive measurable results within the Microsoft ecosystem.



Why Partner Success Core Benefits Matter

Partner Success Core Benefits are a curated set of resources, tools, and support designed to help Microsoft Partners grow their business and enhance technical capabilities. From cloud and AI tools to training, certifications, and workshops, Partners gain the foundation to innovate, scale solutions, and deliver intelligent customer experiences.

By strategically leveraging this program, Partners can accelerate solution development, elevate customer engagement, and position themselves for long-term success.

Success Core Benefits for Managed vs. Unmanaged Partners

Partners engage with Success Core Benefits in different ways. Managed Partners, who have dedicated Microsoft account support, are more likely to fully leverage these resources, accessing cloud and AI tools, technical guidance, and co-selling opportunities to accelerate growth. This reflects the added strategic guidance and alignment managed Partners receive, enabling them to maximize technical enablement, cloud credits, and go-to-market support.

Unmanaged Partners, while still benefiting from the program, tend to leverage Success Core Benefits less frequently due to limited guidance and support. Without a dedicated Microsoft account manager, they may be less aware of available resources or how to use them strategically. The program's technical and marketing tools come with specific usage rules, and smaller Partners may lack the capacity to fully integrate these benefits into solution development, training, or go-to-market activities.

Of the Partners who reported leveraging Success Core Benefits, **78% are managed and 22% are unmanaged,** highlighting the advantage structured support and dedicated engagement provide in maximizing these resources.

At the same time, this gap is an opportunity for unmanaged Partners to tap into these benefits and accelerate their growth trajectory.

Partners who reported leveraging Success Core Benefits

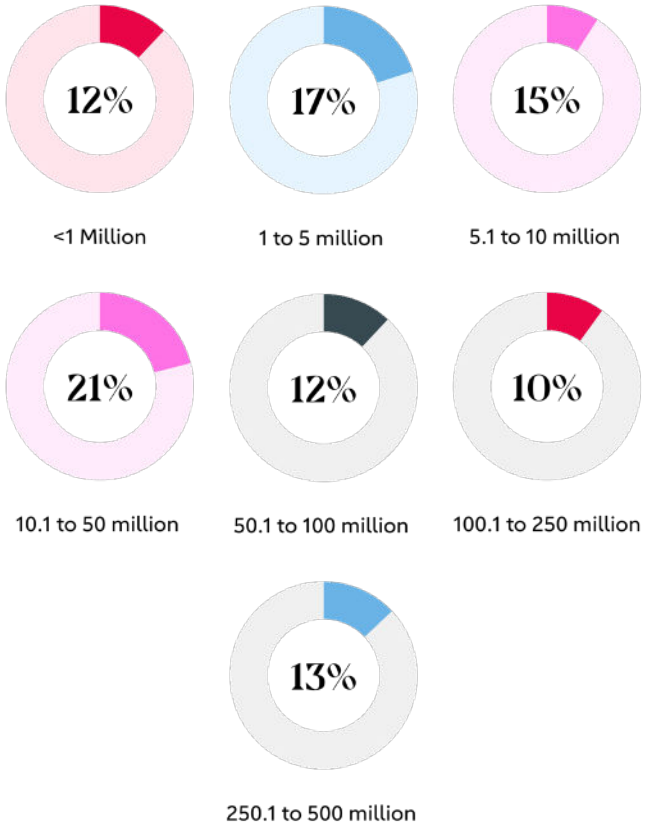
Success Core Benefits Across Partner Revenue Segments

Partner Success Core Benefits resonate across Partners of all sizes, with adoption strongest in the mid-market segment. Among Partners leveraging these benefits, the largest share of 21% falls within the $10.1M to $50M revenue range, highlighting that mid-sized Partners rely on these resources to scale solutions and accelerate go-to-market strategies.

Smaller Partners are also well represented, with 44% of adopters generating under $10M annually, demonstrating how Success Core Benefits drive early growth. At the other end of the spectrum, 23% of adopters generate $100M to $500M annually, emphasizing that even larger Partners leverage these benefits for advanced technical enablement and co-selling opportunities.

Overall, the data shows that while Success Core Benefits appeal broadly, they are particularly impactful for partners in the growth and scale phases, especially those seeking to balance technical innovation with market expansion. Partners of all sizes are leveraging Success Core Benefits, with those accessing structured support showing more engagement.

Revenue Mix of Partners Leveraging Success Core Benefits



Maximize Your Microsoft Partnership with Partner Success Core Benefits

Partner Success Core Benefits provide a foundation for growth, technical enablement, and market expansion across Microsoft Partners of all sizes. By combining cloud development tools, AI services, automation platforms, and training resources with marketing and co-selling opportunities, these benefits equip both managed and unmanaged partners with the building blocks to innovate and scale.

Adoption is strong, with 66% of Microsoft Partners already leveraging these benefits to strengthen customer outcomes and accelerate growth. Managed Partners lead the way, making up 78% of adopters and demonstrating the value of dedicated guidance and strategic support. Unmanaged Partners, meanwhile, have a clear opportunity to tap into these resources to drive early growth and expand capabilities. Mid-market Partners represent the largest share of adopters, accounting for 21% in the $10.1M–$50M revenue range.

By strategically using Partner Success Core Benefits, Microsoft Partners can maximize their investment and position themselves for long-term success within the Microsoft ecosystem.

Key Takeaways

66% of Microsoft Partners are already leveraging Partner Success Core Benefits to accelerate growth, strengthen customer outcomes, and expand market opportunities. These benefits provide a clear foundation for innovation, technical enablement, and long-term success that every Partner should leverage to maximize impact.

66%
of Microsoft Partners leverage Success Core Benefits.

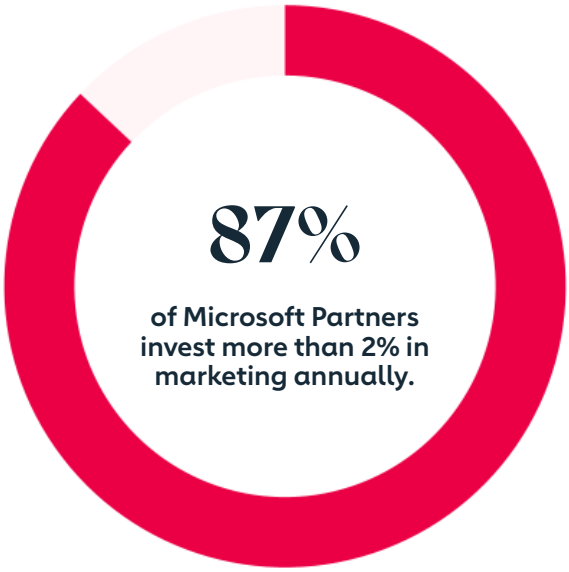
78%
of adopters are managed Partners.

21%
of Microsoft Partners leveraging Success Core Benefits fall in the $10.1M–$50M revenue range.

Invest

Success in the Microsoft ecosystem is the result of deliberate marketing strategy and sustained investment. For Microsoft Partners, marketing remains one of the most effective levers for accelerating pipeline growth, improving conversion rates, and strengthening long-term brand equity.

In fact, 87% of Microsoft Partners invest at least 2% of their annual revenue in marketing, reflecting a clear recognition of its role in driving lead generation and deepening ecosystem engagement.



Where Microsoft Partners Allocate Their Marketing Investment

Microsoft Partners strategically invest in a diverse mix of marketing activities to drive demand, build brand awareness, and accelerate sales. These investments support every stage of the customer journey, from discovery to conversion, driving measurable business growth.

Conferences and Tradeshows

Visibility, networking, and lead generation at events like Microsoft Ignite and Directions.

Marketplace Listings

Optimized Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace listings to increase discoverability and drive referrals.

Digital Marketing

Paid media, content promotion, social advertising, and video campaigns that engage target audiences and drive ROI.

SEO/SEM and Websites

Enhancing digital presence for discoverability and conversions.

Email Marketing and Nurture Campaigns

Engaging prospects and accelerating sales cycles through targeted messaging.

Funded Marketing Tactics through Microsoft Co-op Programs

Microsoft provides Partner Incentives Co-operative (Co-op) marketing funds to reimburse eligible expenses, empowering Partners to reinvest in growth and align with Microsoft's go-to-market priorities.

Microsoft categorizes these investments into Demand Generation, Market Development, and Partner Skilling, each supporting different stages of the customer journey.

Demand Generation

Drive awareness and capture new leads

- Digital advertising (search, display, social)
- Email marketing and direct mail
- SEO and website optimization
- Tradeshows and expositions

Market Development

Nurture leads and close deals

- Customer events and seminars
- Bootcamps and telemarketing
- Solution building with third parties
- Proof-of-concept development

Partner Skilling

Strengthen internal capabilities and sales readiness

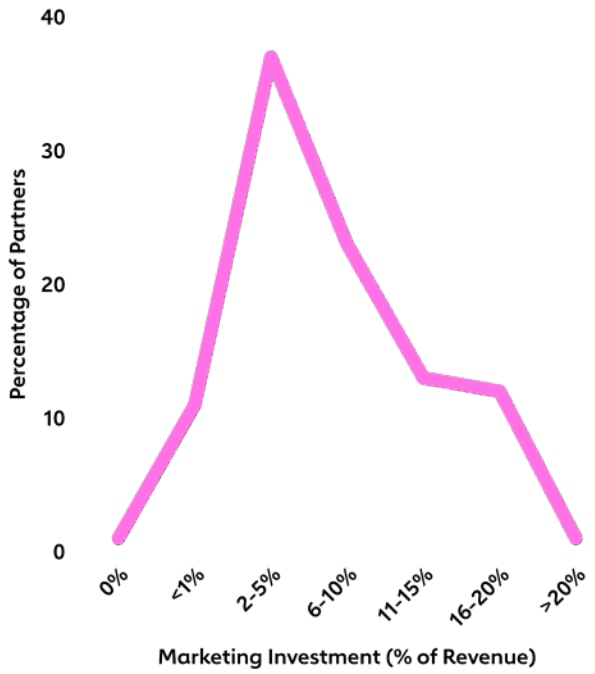
- Sales and technical training
- On-demand learning programs
- Participation in Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program
- Certification and enablement ecosystem.

These investments signal a mature, full-funnel marketing approach that balances immediate brand visibility with sustained Partner enablement and long-term growth.

How Much Do Microsoft Partners Invest?

Marketing investment is one of the clearest indicators of a Microsoft Partner's commitment to business growth, customer engagement, and long-term competitiveness. Yet, how much Partners allocate varies significantly ranging from minimal spend to double-digit percentage investments.

These figures demonstrate a wide range of strategies, but the pattern is clear: the majority (60%) of Microsoft Partners invest 2–10% of revenue in marketing annually—a strong indicator of how critical marketing is for maintaining visibility, building pipeline, and strengthening alignment with Microsoft's ecosystem and co-marketing programs.



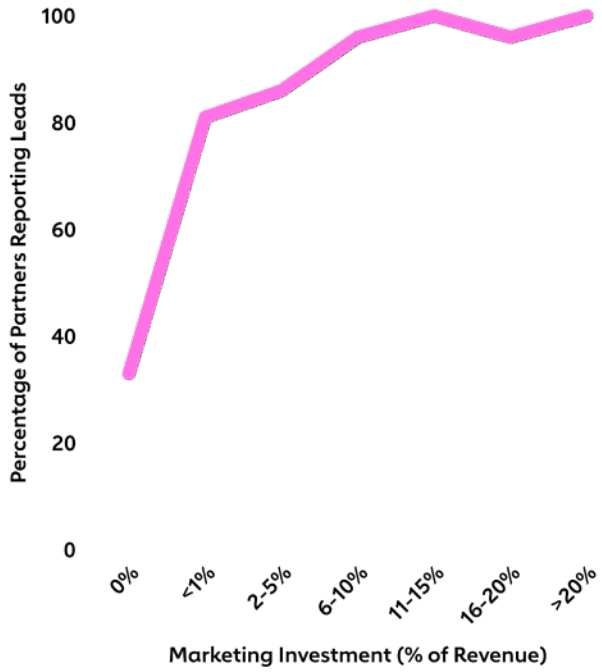
60% **of Partners invest between 2–10% of revenue in marketing annually.**

Marketing Investment Drives Lead Generation

Successful Microsoft Partners treat marketing not as optional, but as a core component of their growth strategy. The data shows a clear correlation between marketing investment and lead generation performance:

Partners investing just over 1% of their annual revenue in marketing reported lead generation rates of 81%, compared to only 33% among those with no marketing spend. This steady upward trend demonstrates the measurable impact of even modest marketing investments within the Microsoft ecosystem.

Partner Distribution by Marketing Investment



This trend holds true across all Microsoft Partner types, including CSPs, MSPs, SIs, and ISVs, in all global markets. Strategic marketing investment consistently drives higher lead generation across the entire Microsoft Partner ecosystem.

Seal the Deal with Marketing Investment

Survey data shows a strong correlation between marketing investment and lead-to-close rates. Partners committing a higher percentage of annual revenue to marketing consistently see stronger conversions, highlighting marketing as a strategic growth driver.

88%

Microsoft Partners invest less than 1% in marketing annually.

Average close rate less than 10%

60%

Microsoft Partners invest 2-10% in marketing annually.

13%

Microsoft Partners invest less than 11-15% in marketing.

Average close rate less than 51-75%

Key Takeaways

The link between marketing investment and business performance is clear - Partners that allocate more to marketing consistently report stronger lead generation and higher conversion rates.

87%

of **Partners invest more than 2%** of their annual revenue in marketing

60%

invest between **2–10% annually**

51 - 75%

lead close rate for Partners investing 11-15%

5 Partnership Strengthening Strategies

Thriving in the Microsoft ecosystem requires Partners to move beyond passive participation and embrace strategic collaboration. This report highlights distinct patterns in how high-performing Partners operate. The five strategies outlined below offer practical guidance to deepen Microsoft engagement, unlock greater value, and build a more resilient, growth-driven business.

1. Deepen Your Investment in Designations and Specializations

Designations are a cornerstone of Partner visibility and credibility in the Microsoft ecosystem. They unlock access to funding, Co-Sell motions, and marketplace opportunities. Yet many Partners stop at a single designation or overlook SMB specializations that can further differentiate their expertise.

What to do:

- Expand beyond your first designation to cover additional solution areas aligned with your offerings.
- Explore SMB-specific designation tracks if you serve smaller customers.
- Leverage specializations to showcase technical depth and signal readiness to Microsoft sellers.

2. Treat Marketplace Listings as a Strategic Sales Asset

Marketplace presence is one of the strongest indicators of Microsoft alignment and a key driver of lead generation. But many listings are under-optimized or outdated, limiting their impact.

What to do:

- Ensure your listings are transactable, clearly messaged, and include customer testimonials.
- Align listings with Microsoft's AI Cloud Partner Program requirements to increase visibility.
- Monitor performance and iterate regularly to improve discoverability and conversion.

3. Build a Repeatable, Fundable Marketing Engine

Marketing is no longer optional — it's a growth lever. Partners that treat marketing as a core business function, not a reactive activity, are better positioned to scale pipeline and attract Microsoft support.

What to do:

- Develop a marketing plan that blends Microsoft-funded and self-funded activities.
- Focus on full-funnel tactics: awareness, nurture, and conversion.
- Track ROI and use performance data to unlock additional Microsoft funding.

4. Engage in Communities to Expand Influence and Opportunity

Partner-led communities are powerful accelerators of visibility, trust, and collaboration. They offer access to peer referrals, co-marketing opportunities, and early signals from Microsoft.

What to do:

- Join communities that align with your goals (e.g., IAMCP, WIC, BCPA).
- Assign internal champions to represent your brand and build relationships.
- Use community engagement to amplify your presence at conferences and in Microsoft's field network.

5. Operationalize Microsoft Funding as a Growth Strategy

Funding is available, but often underutilized. Many Partners access only one or two programs, missing out on high-value opportunities like PoC credits, ECIF, and MDF.

What to do:

- Assign a dedicated owner to manage Partner Center incentives and claims.
- Build internal workflows to activate and track funding usage.
- Use success stories and performance data to advocate for more support.

How to Strengthen Your Partnership

A specialized agency like Maven Collective can help translate strategy into execution faster.

Putting these strategies into action requires more than insight—it demands time, consistency, and a strong grasp of Microsoft's evolving Partner landscape. For many organizations, already limited internal resources can make it challenging to keep pace with the complexities of designations, funding programs, and Marketplace optimization.

Engaging an experienced external marketing partner can be a key accelerator in driving meaningful results.

From refining your Marketplace presence and managing Microsoft funding programs to building repeatable, metrics-driven marketing campaigns, external support can accelerate your efforts and free up internal resources. More importantly, it brings structure, accountability, and a fresh perspective to help you stay aligned with Microsoft's priorities and stand out in a crowded ecosystem.

> **Whether you're looking to scale your visibility, improve Co-Sell readiness, or simply get more from your Microsoft Partnership, the right Partner can help you move with greater speed, clarity, and impact.**

- **Refine your Microsoft Marketplace presence**
- **Build repeatable, metrics-driven marketing campaigns**
- **Manage Microsoft funding and incentive programs**
- **Enhance Co-Sell readiness and strategic alignment with Microsoft**

Maven
COLLECTIVE
The Marketing Partner for Microsoft Partners

Microsoft Partners are navigating a complex landscape.

From designation changes and funding opportunities to paid media, MVP alignment, and Marketplace visibility—growth today requires more than effort. It requires clarity, data, and strategic focus.

Experienced Microsoft Partner Marketing

Gain tailored marketing strategies and innovative solutions deeply embedded with Microsoft ecosystem insights and expertise working with the Mavens.

Building upon work with more than **500+ Microsoft Partners** for more than **18 years,** discover an impactful partnership that delivers that competitive edge you've been searching for.

- **Microsoft Marketplace Listings**
- **Microsoft Go-To-Market Services**
- **Microsoft Co-Sell Ready Package**
- **Microsoft Co-Marketing Services**

The Strategic Marketing Partner for Microsoft Partners

Developing tangible marketing ROI requires a strategic, holistic approach to your marketing.

Measurable performance starts with proven, data-driven strategies. Turn insights into impact with experienced, award-winning Microsoft Partner Marketing that delivers the expertise you can measure.

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