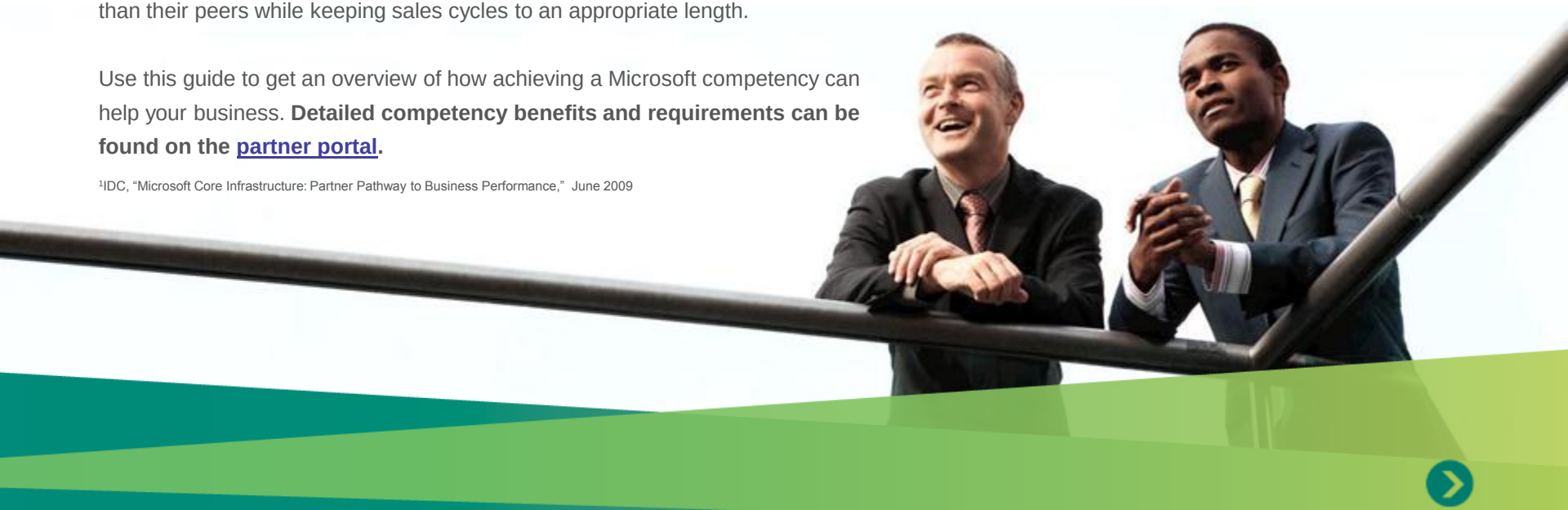
The Value of Earning a Microsoft® Competency

Microsoft Partner Network

In today's competitive environment, a Microsoft gold or silver competency can help set your company apart from the competition by demonstrating a specific, proven skill set to your customers. Further, recent Microsoft-commissioned research conducted by IDC[1] shows that partners with a higher level of engagement with Microsoft are more highly satisfied and demonstrate healthy business growth and profitability. These same partners report larger deal sizes than their peers while keeping sales cycles to an appropriate length.

Use this guide to get an overview of how achieving a Microsoft competency can help your business. **Detailed competency benefits and requirements can be found on the partner portal.**

[1]IDC, "Microsoft Core Infrastructure: Partner Pathway to Business Performance," June 2009



Microsoft Partner Network

Earning a Microsoft Competency

In July 2009, the Microsoft Partner Network announced a more relevant competency structure that better reflects solutions that customers purchase. We have now launched a total of 28 new silver competencies with associated gold competencies (collectively referred to as “competencies”).

Most solution competencies are aligned to our **Infrastructure Optimization** (IO) initiative, which we developed to support organizations in their quest to improve operational efficiency and better support business activities. As your customers progress through the maturity levels of an IO model (three models with four levels each), they will better align Information Technology with the organization’s business agenda. IT departments that successfully navigate the IO path will eventually transition from being viewed as a cost center to a strategic business asset.

Why earn a competency?

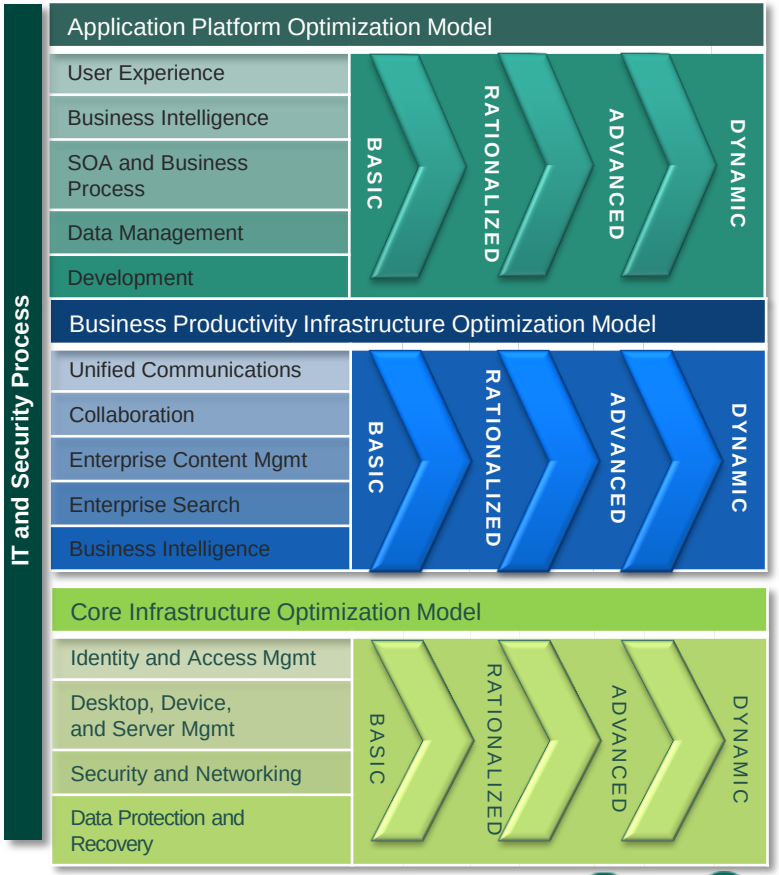
Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Earning a Microsoft Competency (cont'd)

Competencies can enable you to provide specific guidance as your customers migrate through the optimization levels. To find out how these competencies compare to competencies previously offered under the Microsoft Partner Program, view Competency Structure Changes. To learn more about the IO initiative, visit http://microsoftio.partnersalesresources.com/overview.aspx.

The remaining competencies align to specific products, customer audiences, or cross platform. The Small Business Specialist Community (SBSC) designation continues to be a Microsoft partnership opportunity in addition to the new Midmarket Solution Provider competency offering.



Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Why earn a competency?

There are three main reasons why your company could benefit from earning a Microsoft competency:

1. **Differentiate your business in today's competitive environment.**
   A Microsoft competency can help set your company apart from the competition by demonstrating your proven Microsoft experience and skills to customers.
2. **Capitalize on benefits specific to your area of expertise that are aligned to your business life cycle.**

Achieving competencies can help you capitalize on a range of benefits for all stages of your business life cycle. And as you invest more in your Microsoft partner relationship, Microsoft recognizes your commitment with higher-value benefits.

These benefits can help you to:

- **Plan** and evaluate prospective investments with business modeling tools.
- **Enable** your company to sell, build and support Microsoft technology via internal-use software and training courses.
- **Create demand** with customers using marketing campaigns, directories, and a recognizable brand.
- **Increase sales** with compelling presentations, demos, financing, and incentives.
- **Improve customer service** with deep technical support and accelerate the sales cycle with advisory services.
- **Retain customers** and improve satisfaction with feedback from online surveys.

Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Why earn a competency ? (cont'd)

3. **Align your business with Microsoft.**
   Microsoft is a company you can depend on—both as a lasting partner into the future and one that will work closely with you to drive mutual success in the marketplace.

   Recent Microsoft-commissioned research conducted by IDC[2] shows that partners with a higher level of engagement with Microsoft are more highly satisfied and demonstrate healthy business growth and profitability. These same partners report larger deal sizes than their peers while keeping sales cycles to an appropriate length.

   A separate IDC[3] study shows the proof of the advantage of being a partner in the Microsoft community - partners make more than $9 out of every $10 of Microsoft software sold.

[2]IDC, "Microsoft Core Infrastructure: Partner Pathway to Business Performance," June 2009
[3]Microsoft Corporate Citizenship, "Economic Impact." 27 Oct., 2010. http://www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/en-us/our-actions/technology-innovation/economic-impact/

"Competencies are very important to us because our customers find value in it and we like being certified by Microsoft."

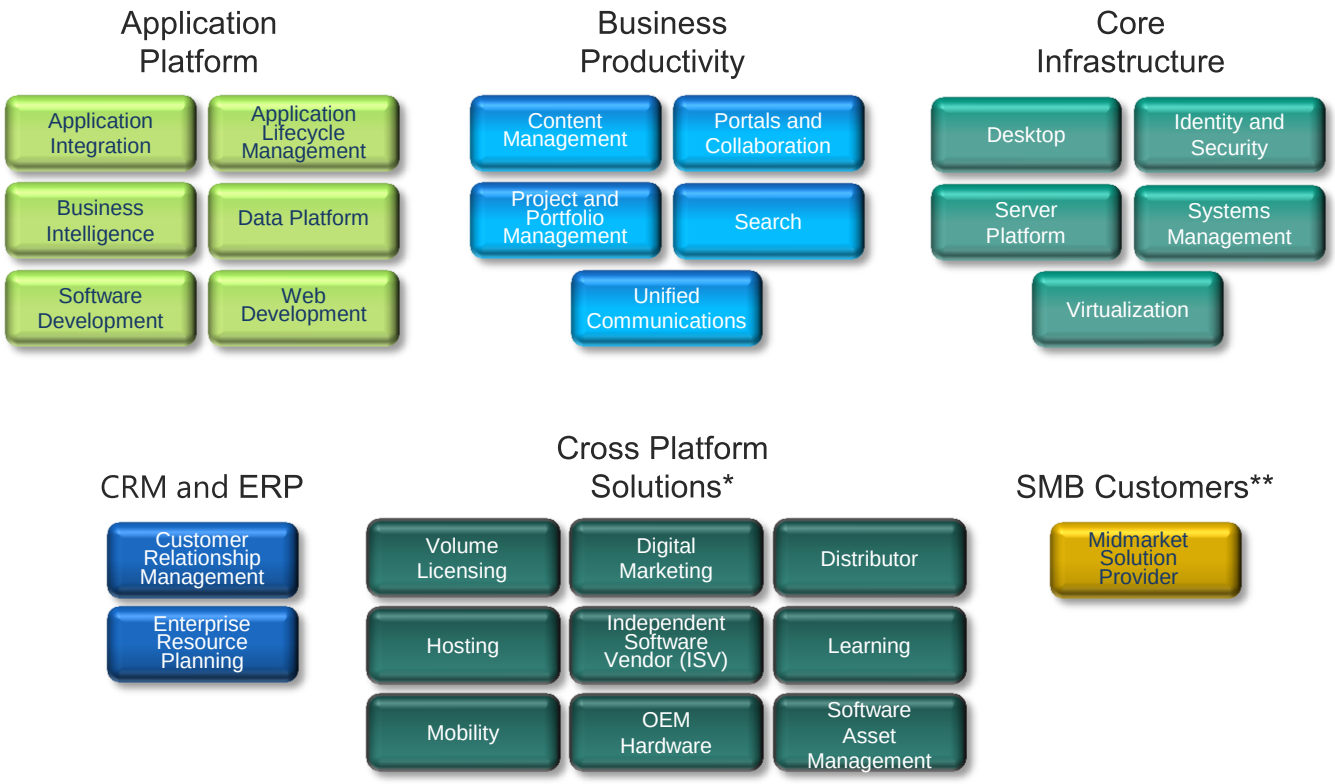
Lionel Laské, Director, D2S

Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies



*We continue to review the competency framework to ensure it aligns to the key solutions demanded by our customers. In line with this process, the Digital Home competency will not launch in May 2011 and a launch date is currently not scheduled.

**The Small Business Specialist Community (SBSC) continues to be a Microsoft membership opportunity for partners focused primarily on small business customers

Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Cloud Offerings

Microsoft Cloud Essentials Pack
Connected to Microsoft Partner Network

Microsoft® Cloud Essentials Pack is a resource that can help you accelerate building or selling cloud solutions. Cloud solutions can give your customers access to the latest Microsoft technologies and applications they know and trust— without requiring capital expenses or additional human resources.

Benefits include:

Internal Use Rights
- Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite up to 250 licenses
- Windows Azure Platform to support you when developing on Microsoft's cloud platform
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online up to 250 licenses (available late January 2011)
- Windows Intune to manage 10 devices for internal use (available calendar year 2011)

Business Benefits
- Online Sales Tools to model your cloud business
- Pre-sales and Technical Support – Unlimited Online Technical Communities

Marketing Benefits
- Marketplace Listing
- Marketing Resources

Training Benefits
- Training Platform with Targeted Cloud Training

To qualify:

For Partners Who Sell or Service:
- Microsoft Partner Profile
- Sales Agreement with Microsoft:
  - Sign Microsoft Online Services Partner Agreement (MOSPA) and complete introductory training and assessment

  OR
  - Sign CRM Software Advisor (CSA) and sell at least one (1) deal in prior 12 months
- For renewal eligibility - Demonstrated commitment to the Cloud Business through cloud services sales.

For Partners Who Build and Develop:
- Microsoft Partner Profile
- Platform Ready Signup and Register application

There is no fee required.

Go to www.microsoftcloudpartner.com to learn more and get started NOW!

Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

Cloud Offerings (cont'd)

Microsoft Cloud Accelerate is an exclusive program designed to recognize and reward committed partners with a proven track record of delivering Microsoft cloud solutions to their customers. Partners that qualify will receive the Microsoft Cloud Essentials Pack in addition to the following benefits:

Benefits include:

Internal Use Rights

- BPOS up to 250 licenses
- CRM Online up to 250 licenses
- Windows Azure Platform
    - MSDN Premium Subscriptions (Silver competency benefits)
    - Cloud Essentials Pack Benefits
- Windows Intune to manage 25 devices for internal use (available calendar year 2011)

Business Benefits

- 20 partner advisory support hours to apply to development and deployment of cloud solutions
- Delegated administrative Privileges providing you the ability to support your customers through acting as the administrator

Marketing Benefits

- Marketplace Priority for individuals where you are the partner of record
- Local Microsoft subsidiary contact
- Non-Disclosure Agreement Cloud Roadmap – provides insight into the future of the business

Training Benefits

- Training Platform with Targeted Cloud Training
- Unlimited Pre-Sales and Compete Support for Cloud Deals

To qualify:

Partners are required to meet a set of performance and capability criteria, including:

- **Microsoft cloud business commitment:** Partners must demonstrate commitment to the Microsoft cloud business via sales of Online Services or a certified Azure solution, in addition to a sales plan.
- **Customer References:** Partners must provide 3 customer references in which the solution and services provided include a Microsoft Cloud component (Microsoft Online Services and/or Azure)
- **Cloud Capability:** Requirement on Technical, Sales and Marketing Training and Assessment on Microsoft Cloud Services and pass an assessment on the training.
- **Fee:** None for partners that have a Microsoft silver or gold competency. Otherwise partners pay the local fee for a Microsoft silver competency.

Go to www.microsoftcloudpartner.com to learn more and get started NOW!

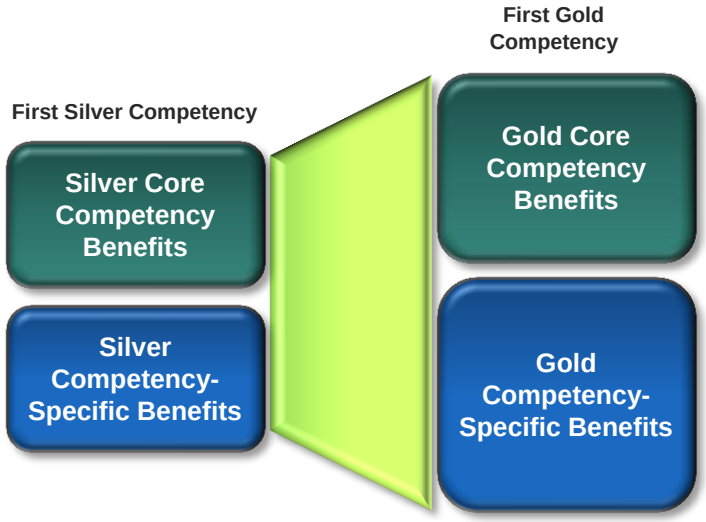
Competency Benefits

Microsoft Partner Network

When you earn your first silver or gold competency, you are entitled to a set of "core" benefits as well as competency-specific benefits (renewable annually). As you attain additional competencies, you receive additional competency-specific benefits.

Partners with competencies will be rewarded for their expertise and commitment with benefits that significantly surpass the cost of qualification – including tailored, competency-specific benefits based on solutions offered, and core benefits such as internal-use software, development resources, competency logos, training, exposure to customers through online directories and support as well as additional benefits local Microsoft teams may provide.

Eligibility for deal registration, many channel incentives and a named Microsoft contact to help with business planning require attainment of a gold competency.



Competency Benefits (cont'd)

You can obtain additional silver or gold competency benefits, including internal-use licenses and Technical Support and Advisory Hours (previously known as "Additional Toolkits") by qualifying any location linked to your headquarters. A location qualifies when it attains either a silver or gold competency (specific to that location). Only one additional silver or gold competency and its associated benefits is available per qualifying location. These additional internal-use licenses are bound to the maximum grants listed in the licensing calculator. Demonstration and training licenses are not bound to maximum grants. Additional software licensing information can be found on the partner portal.

Special note: To help our former Microsoft Gold Certified and Certified partners more easily make the transition to the new Microsoft Partner Network membership opportunities, we are extending the period that eligible partners can continue to use the **Gold Certified and Certified partner logos** and the **software benefits** provided until **October 31, 2011**.

This extension means that former Gold Certified or Certified partners can retain use of these old logos and software benefits until October 2011, regardless of which membership opportunity they choose when they renew their memberships between October 2010 and October 2011. Partner Technical Services benefits are not included in the extension and other requirement may apply.

Competency Core Benefits

Competency Core Benefits

The competency core benefits are highlighted in the following pages. They are organized according to stages of the partner business cycle, and show your access based on the type of member relationship you maintain.

Competency Core Benefits (cont'd)[3]

Plan

Partner Newsletter: Stay up to date with the latest news, partner opportunities, trainings, and more.

Silver (25 licenses of each product) → **Gold** (100 licenses of each product)

Internal-Use Software: Get first-hand knowledge of features and capabilities with licenses for Microsoft's latest software.

Talent Recruitment: Find the most qualified technical students for entry-level and internship positions with Students to Business.

Enable

Training:
Build technical and business skills with role-based training at the Partner Learning Center

msdn

Silver Use the licensing calculator. → **Gold** Use the licensing calculator.

Developer resources: Get access to tools, software, communities, and resources for developers and testers with an MSDN subscription.

Microsoft | TechNet

Silver Three TechNet for Microsoft Competency Partners → **Gold** Three TechNet for Microsoft Competency Partners

IT Pro resources: Get access to tools, software, communities, and resources for IT professionals with a TechNet for Microsoft Competency Partner subscription.

[3]Benefits are provided per partner organization for a year of membership, and are renewed annually when you re-enroll in the network.

Competency Core Benefits (cont'd)

Create Demand

Top Rated Companies

Top Rated Services

Silver Higher search weighting → **Gold** Highest search weighting

Online partner directory: Make your solution profile accessible to tens of thousands of potential customers with Microsoft Pinpoint

Marketing Resources: Save time and money with customizable campaign materials and activity guides at the Partner Marketing Center.

Microsoft Partner

Gold Business Intelligence

Silver Search

Customized Partner Logo: Show your unique expertise to customers with a custom logo that identifies your capabilities.

Sell

Sales Resources: Get resources that help you sell products and solutions more effectively.

Custom demos: Create compelling sales presentations with rich, customizable demos.

Microsoft Financing

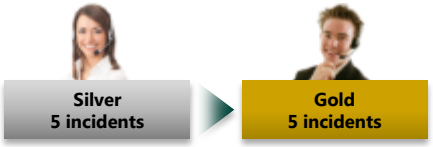
Financing for your deals: Close more sales by offering tailored financing options for your customers.[4]

Incentives: Become eligible to earn incentives for driving engagements in strategic technology areas.[5]

[4]Available in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
[5]Offerings vary by competency.

Competency Core Benefits (cont'd)

Service



Break/Fix Support: Resolve technical issues quickly with support from Microsoft engineers

Online Technical Communities: Connect with Microsoft experts to resolve technology issues.[6]

Business-Critical Phone Support: Resolve critical customer issues (server down) immediately with Microsoft technical-support engineers.

Partner Advisory Hours: Get guidance to help you convey the functions, value propositions, and key benefits of Microsoft products and solutions to accelerate your sales cycle,

Retain

Customer Satisfaction Index: Get insights on customer satisfaction and loyalty with this fast and effective survey solution.[7]

[6]Response time is 4 business hours for break/fix queries and 8 hours for presales questions.
[7]Gold competency requirement.

Microsoft Partner Network

Competency Requirements

Following is a summary showing general requirements. However, requirements **vary by competency** so be sure to review specific competencies on the partner portal for specific details.

Exam Requirements, Learning Paths, Special Offer

General Requirements

Microsoft Partner Network

COMPETENCY EXAM PACKS
SAVE UP TO 30% + FREE RETAKES

Choose the Competency Exam Pack that works for you:

- 3-Pack – Save 20% plus free retakes
- 5-Pack – Save 25% plus free retakes
- 8-Pack – Save 30% plus free retakes

Exam Requirements, Learning Paths, Special Offer

With the rapid rate of technology change in the marketplace, new product versions open new and exciting solution possibilities. Training and certifying your staff on these latest products and technologies both from a technical and sales and marketing perspective provides a competitive advantage and helps you offer your customers the most relevant solutions in market.

To ensure Microsoft partners can deploy, recommend, sell and service the latest Microsoft technology to meet customer demand, partners who choose to attain a silver or gold competency will need to pass technical exams and business assessments based on the **latest Microsoft product version** in market (unless otherwise noted).

Partners can expect exams based on older product versions to retire after a replacement exam is published as a requirement. Partners will be provided adequate notification prior to retirement. After an exam is retired, partners have until their membership renewal date to take and pass new exam(s) in order to maintain their silver or gold competency.

To make it easy for you to take the training you need to pass associated exams, we've created **learning paths** by competency (and by product or solution).

In addition, Microsoft's **Competency Exam Packs** are available exclusively for partners to help you update your important credentials on the latest technologies. These packs allow you to **save up to 30%** and come with a **free Second Shot retake** on all exams!

Exam Requirements, Learning Paths, Special Offer

General Requirements

General Requirements

Requirement	Silver Competency	Gold Competency
Credentials	Two Microsoft Certified Professionals[8] **OR** Qualifying competency application test (for ISVs)	Four unique, credentialed Microsoft Certified Professionals, not holding any other gold competency[9] **OR** Qualifying competency application test(s) for ISVs[10]
Revenue	Not applicable	**Revenue commitment**[11] Reference the following document for specifics: Microsoft Gold Competency Revenue Guidelines
Business Training and Assessments[12]	One individual who passes a Microsoft Licensing overview assessment **AND** One individual who passes an online sales and marketing competency assessment	One individual who passes a Microsoft Licensing overview assessment **AND** Two individuals who pass an online sales and marketing competency assessment
Customer Evidence	Three unique customer references per competency.	Five unique customer references per competency. [13] **AND** Participate in Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Index
Commitment	Full profile and silver competency membership fee[14]	Full profile and gold competency membership fee[14]

[8] Your company can attain multiple silver competencies. Your employees or contractors who pass the applicable silver competency exams are eligible toward **multiple** silver competencies.

[9]Your company can attain multiple gold competencies. Your employees or contractors who pass the applicable gold competency exams are only eligible toward **one** gold competency.

[10]Qualifying application tests refer to products that pass Microsoft hardware or software tests, and apply to the ISV competency or other competencies through the ISV track. Qualifying application tests vary by product.

[11]Revenue commitment is also required for the Microsoft Silver CRM competency and the Microsoft Silver ERP competency, as well as their associated gold competencies.

[12]Requirements vary by competency.

[13]Your company may use customer references from your silver competency toward the corresponding gold competency. However, you cannot use the same reference to fulfill the requirements for more than one competency.

[14]Silver competency and gold competency fees vary by geography. Partners will pay the silver competency or gold competency fee one time, per year—no matter how many competencies are attained. If you attain a gold competency after first attaining a silver competency, then you only pay the difference between the two membership fees, unless you are within your 90-day renewal period.

Microsoft Partner Network

Competencies Eligible for Qualifying Product Testing

Building your organization's competency plan

How Will Customers See These Changes?

Next Steps and Key Links

Competencies Eligible for Qualifying Product Testing

Qualifying applications include developed and marketed packaged software solutions based on Microsoft technologies. Custom-written applications not meant for resale do not qualify.

Applications that have passed the required qualifying tests can fulfill one of the requirements for the following silver or gold competencies:

- Application Integration
- Business Intelligence
- Customer Relationship Management
- Data Platform
- Enterprise Resource Planning
- Independent Software Vendor (ISV)
- OEM Hardware (Device test)
- Unified Communications

Testing requirements can be found on the partner portal.

Access Microsoft Platform Ready tests.

Building your organization's competency plan
How Will Customers See These Changes?
Next Steps and Key Links

Building your organization's competency plan

1. **Determine which competencies represent your primary business focus.** Choose the competency that aligns to your highest priority customer solutions offered in market. Next, use the Partner Membership Center to determine where you may need to meet additional requirements.

2. **Meet exam requirements and learn about special exam offers**. To find which exams you have **passed**, go to Microsoft Learning. If you are a software developer, submit your solution for testing (for ISV tracks or ISV competency).

3. **Take assessments** (if required) and have your sales associate earn the Sales Specialist Accreditation (only applicable for certain competencies).

4. **Gather customer references**: Log in to the Partner Membership Center, click the Requirements and Assets dropdown menu, and then click "Create Customer References."

5. **Participate in the Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Index** (for gold competency only).

6. **Accept the revenue commitment** as part of enrolling into the competency (for gold competency only).

7. Upon renewal or attainment, **pay the appropriate competency membership fee** as listed on your local partner portal.

Building your organization's competency plan

How Will Customers See These Changes?

Next Steps and Key Links

How Will Customers See These Changes?

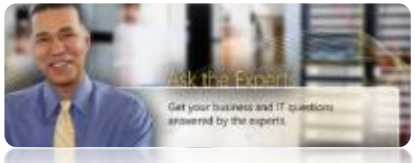
In Person

Online

- ✓ www.microsoft.com
- ✓ Search Engine Optimization
- ✓ Customer newsletters

Public Relations

- ✓ Case Studies
- ✓ Testimonials



Lead Generation

Microsoft Pinpoint

Worldwide Roll-Out

- ✓ 1 million connections
- ✓ In-product discoverability
- ✓ Application marketplace

Building your organization's competency plan

How Will Customers See These Changes?

Next Steps and Key Links

Next Steps and Key Links

Did you know it can take up to 12 weeks for your staff to get certified? Begin working on your competency plan now so you can complete your attainment or renewal process smoothly and take advantage of new benefits!

Turn to these resources to help you:

- Microsoft Partner Portal: View competency benefits and requirements
- Prepare for the Network: Check this Web page often to get the latest network updates
- Frequently asked questions: Find answers about the evolution from the Microsoft Partner Program, how benefits are affected, and changes to competencies
- Microsoft Partner Network License Calculator: Use the license calculator to calculate how many software licenses you'll gain with each competency
- Additional Support: Contact your local regional service center with questions

Thank you for your continued partnership and support in delivering Microsoft technologies to our mutual customers.

How-To Guidance

Microsoft Partner Network

How to track competency status
How long is a competency valid?
How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals
How to create and track customer references
Process for creating a reference

How to track competency status

Within the Partner Membership Center you can view your progress towards earning each competency by following the steps outlined:

- From the **Requirements and Assets** dropdown in the top navigation, click **Competency Summary**. The Manage Competencies page at the Competency Summary tab is displayed.
- In the **Select Location** area, click the down arrow and select a **Location** or the **Organization** that you wish to view. Then click **Select**.

The screen displays your progress towards meeting each available competency for the organization or the selected location, indicating what you may be missing for each competency and links to complete these requirements.

- Click the corresponding link within the list to navigate to screens where you can:
  - Add the required Microsoft Certified Professionals (MCPs)
  - Create customer references
  - Add tested products

Please Note: If a link is disabled, you do not have administrative rights for the location.

How to track competency status

How long is a competency valid?

How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals

How to create and track customer references

Process for creating a reference

How long is a competency valid?

A competency is valid as long as the requirements for that competency are being met. When an asset (such as an MCP, a customer reference, a tested product, etc.) used towards earning a competency expires, the status of the competency will change from “Active – Earned” to “Active – Non Compliant”. This status change is an indication that assets need to be updated in order to re-enroll in that gold competency before your next anniversary date.

How to track competency status

How long is a competency valid?

How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals

How to create and track customer references

Process for creating a reference

How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals

Associating Microsoft Certified Professionals to your organization and locations fulfills requirements for competencies.

A Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) is an individual who has successfully completed at least one Microsoft professional certification. All certifications held by an individual are tracked using a number known as an MCP ID.

Within the Microsoft Partner Network an individual must first associate to a location and then link their MCP ID to that location.* While an individual can be associated to multiple locations or organizations, an MCP ID can only be linked to one location within one organization.

Within the Partner Membership Center, Administrators can:

- Invite new MCPs to associate their credentials to a location within their organization.
- Reassign MCPs to a different location within the organization.
- View all MCPs assigned to a location.*

See the online Partner Membership Center Help for more information and instructions on performing these tasks.

*If an associated employee leaves your organization, ensure that you remove that person from the associated location.

How to track competency status

How long is a competency valid?

How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals

How to create and track customer references

Process for creating a reference

How to create and track customer references

Approved customer references are a requirement for earning a Microsoft silver or gold competency. You may use customer references from your silver competency toward the corresponding gold competency, but you can only use a reference for one competency.

References can be re-assigned to different locations and competencies.

You are able to submit as many customer references as desired. You may submit more than one reference for the same customer but it must be for different projects. Each reference must feature a project that you have completed within the past 12 months and will be verified with your customer.

Internal implementations cannot be used as a reference; all customer references are required to be companies that are legally independent of the partner organization submitting the reference. This ensures independent, third-party validation of all references.

To create a reference, log in to the Partner Membership Center, click the **Requirements and Assets** dropdown menu, and then click "**Create Customer Reference**".

In Japan, partners submit a Memorandum of Understanding. From the **Requirements and Assets** menu, click "**Create Customer Reference**" to view additional instructions on creating and submitting a Memorandum of Understanding.

How to track competency status

How long is a competency valid?

How to associate Microsoft Certified Professionals

How to create and track customer references

Process for creating a reference

Process for creating a reference

Within the Partner Membership Center, create a Customer Reference to submit to the customer for approval. When creating the reference, you provide the following information:

- General customer contact and organization information
- Project information

You also specify the gold competencies for which you think the project is applicable.

- Visit the Partner Membership Center for more information on how to create a customer reference.

When you have completed creating a reference, an e-mail is sent to the customer requesting their approval of the reference. You can preview the e-mail before it is sent to the customer.

Note: If your customer has a free or public e-mail domain, or the microsoft.com e-mail domain, Microsoft's Regional Support Centers will handle the approval process manually.

- The customer receives the e-mail notification requesting their approval of the reference. There is a link within the customer e-mail to a Reference Approval Page within the Partner Membership Center for this particular reference. By clicking this link, the customer views the reference and can either approve or reject it.
- The customer's response is sent to your organization's Primary Program Contact, or the person who submitted the reference if that person is an administrator, alerting them that the reference has been approved or rejected. If the customer rejects a reference, you cannot override the decision.

You may assign the Reference to one of the competencies you previously specified in the Customer Reference Profile.

Microsoft Partner Network

Appendix

Credential Requirement Details
Revenue Requirement and Details
Business Assessments Details
Customer Evidence Requirement Details
Commitment Details
Competency Structure Changes

Credential Requirements Details

To ensure Microsoft partners can deploy, recommend, sell and service the latest Microsoft technology in market to meet customer demand, beginning October 2010, partners who choose to attain a silver or gold competency will need to pass exams based on the **latest Microsoft product version in market** (unless otherwise noted). Partners can expect exams based on older product versions to retire twelve months after a replacement exam is published in our available language set. After an exam is retired, partners have until their membership renewal date to take and pass new exam(s) in order to maintain their silver competency or gold competency.

We acknowledge that it may be difficult for some small partners to achieve more than one Microsoft gold competency as some of the primary requirements include four unique Microsoft Certified Professionals and a revenue commitment.

These requirements evolved from partner feedback requesting that Microsoft help partners differentiate their technical and business capabilities, raise the “bar” and reward the highest commitment, as well as customer feedback requesting deeper specialization in our best-in-class partners. Smaller partners who were previously Gold Certified with multiple competencies are encouraged to choose their **primary business focus** for pursuing a Microsoft gold competency and if applicable, choose silver competencies that complement their primary focus. In addition, partners who focus on small-business customers can engage through the Small Business Specialist Community and are encouraged to try to achieve the Microsoft Gold Midmarket Solution Provider competency if their go-to-market strength is around quality breadth of solutions versus depth in a single solution area.

Credential Requirement Details
Revenue Requirement and Details
Business Assessments Details
Customer Evidence Requirement Details
Commitment Details
Competency Structure Changes

Revenue Requirement and Details

The vast majority of our Microsoft revenue comes through you, our partners. Historically the revenue that you drive has not been recognized as part of the Microsoft Partner Network. Our goal is to recognize and differentiate you within the partner network based in part on the revenue and market impact that you are already driving in your business.

As a step toward this, **starting October 2010, partners will need to commit to a minimum Microsoft revenue amount**based on their respective geography and competency. Revenue may be directly transacted or influenced. In some competencies revenue is identified as solution or design wins. Starting October 2011 Microsoft will begin to measure actual attainment and partners will need to meet the revenue commitment by the time they renew their membership after October 2012. Exceptions include the CRM and ERP competencies where revenue bars will be in place for the year looking forward beginning October 2010.

After achieving a Microsoft gold competency, partners may be required to complete a simple business plan detailing the activities that will support it. If applicable, a Microsoft representative will contact the partner to support the creation of this business plan.

More details can be found in the Microsoft Gold Competency Revenue Guidelines.

Revenue commitment is also required for the Microsoft Silver CRM competency and Microsoft Silver ERP competency, as well as their associated gold competencies.

Credential Requirement Details

Revenue Requirement and Details

Business Assessments Details

Customer Evidence Requirement Details

Commitment Details

Competency Structure Changes

Competencies requiring an assessment:

- Application Integration (L, S)
- Application Lifecycle Mgmt (L)
- Business Intelligence (L, S)
- Content Management (L, S)
- Data Platform (L, S)
- Desktop (L, S)
- Identity and Security (L)
- Learning (L, S)
- Midmarket Solution Provider (L, S)
- Portals and Collaboration (L, S)
- Project and Portfolio Mgmt (L)
- Search (L, S)
- Server Platform (L, S)
- Software Asset Management (L)
- Software Development (L)
- Systems Management (L, S)
- Unified Communications (L, S)
- Virtualization (L, S)
- Web Development (L)

L = Licensing Assessment
S = Sales & Marketing Assessment

Business Assessments Details

For some competencies, partners must take and pass a **licensing overview assessment** and a **sales and marketing assessment**. These assessments will be refreshed yearly — partners will need to take and pass these assessments as they are refreshed and by the time partners renew their competencies.

The licensing overview is designed to ensure partners have a basic understanding of Microsoft's licensing programs as well as essential product licensing basics. The sales and marketing assessments is competency specific and tests knowledge of selling a specific solution.

In addition, some competencies offer the ability for individual sales and marketing professionals to achieve a **Microsoft Partner Network Sales Specialist Accreditation**, designed to help our partners strengthen their Microsoft solution sales knowledge and gain recognition for solution expertise in key competencies.

Individuals who earn a Sales Specialist Accreditation receive a Microsoft Partner Network Sales Specialist logo to promote his or her solution expertise and showcase to customers the ability to offer exceptional strategic value and service. Sales Specialist Accreditations will be offered for the following business areas:

- Business Intelligence
- Customer Relationship Management
- Data Platform
- Enterprise Resource Planning
- Identity and Security
- Unified Communications (Voice or Exchange)
- Virtualization

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Customer Evidence Requirement Details

Customer References are required for both silver or gold competencies. Each reference needs to feature a project that you have completed for the customer within the last twelve months. Internal implementations cannot be used as a reference; all customer references are required to be companies that are legally independent of the partner organization submitting the reference. This ensures independent, third-party validation of all references.

The same customer company can be used for more than one customer reference as long as each individual reference is for a different, unique project, and you provide a different customer contact. A large project can be used for more than one reference as long as the project meets the customer reference requirements for the competency. A customer reference can only be assigned to a single competency. To begin, go to the Partner Membership Center and from the **Requirements and Assets** menu, click **Create Customer Reference**.

The **Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Index** can help you understand and act on customer satisfaction and loyalty information. Remain competitive by benchmarking your relative industry performance. CSAT is a requirement to attain a gold competency, but is not per competency.

CSAT Index is an online survey solution administered by TNS, a market research organization. You can participate in any of the four CSAT Index survey periods conducted each year. Each survey period has key dates and activities occurring throughout. To meet your CSAT Index requirement, you need to receive ten survey responses in the twelve months prior to when you re-enroll—regardless of which survey period the responses were received. Your survey responses must also be received no later than the 23rd of the month prior to your anniversary date. For example, if your anniversary date is December 15th, you must receive ten survey responses by November 23rd at the latest.

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Commitment Details

To earn a gold or silver competency, you will need to complete a **full profile** and update it yearly.

In addition, there is a **yearly fee** depending on whether you have a gold or silver competency. Silver competency and gold competency fees vary by geography – check your local partner portal for details. You will pay the silver competency or gold competency fee one time, per year—no matter how many competencies are attained.

If you attain an gold competency after first earning a silver competency, then you only pay the difference between the two membership fees, unless you are within your 90-day renewal period.

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Competency Structure Changes

Below is a chart showing how the competency structure changed in May 2010.

Current Competency	Current Specialization	New Competency
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions	Systems Management	Systems Management
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions	Windows Desktop Deployment	Desktop
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions	Active Directory	Server Platform
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions	Storage Solutions	
Virtualization Solutions	Virtualization Solutions	Virtualization
Security Solutions	Identity & Secure Access	Identity and Security
Security Solutions	Infrastructure Security	
Information Worker Solutions	Enterprise Content Management and Forms	Content Management
Information Worker Solutions	Office Solutions Development	Portals and Collaboration
Information Worker Solutions	Portals and Collaboration	
Information Worker Solutions	Search	Search

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Competency Structure Changes (cont'd)

Current Competency	Current Specialization	New Competency
Unified Communications Solutions	IM/Presence	Unified Communications
Unified Communications Solutions	Messaging	
Unified Communications Solutions	Voice	
Information Worker Solutions	Data Visualization	Business Intelligence
Business Intelligence	Business Intelligence Platform	
Business Intelligence	Performance Management	
Data Management Solutions	Data Management Solutions	Data Platform
Custom Development Solutions	Application Infrastructure Development	Software Development
Custom Development Solutions	Smart Client Development	
Custom Development Solutions	Web Development	Web Development
SOA and Business Process	SOA and Business Process	Application Integration
N/A		Application Lifecycle Management

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Competency Structure Changes

Competency Structure Changes (cont'd)

Current Competency	Current Specialization	New Competency
Small Business Specialist Community*		Small Business Specialist Community
Networking Infrastructure Solutions	Networking Infrastructure Solutions	Midmarket Solution Provider
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics CRM	Customer Relationship Management
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics AX	Enterprise Resource Planning
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft C5	
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics GP	
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics SL	
Microsoft Business Solutions	Microsoft Dynamics POS	
OEM Hardware Solutions	System Building	OEM Hardware
OEM Hardware Solutions	Device Manufacturing	
OEM Hardware Solutions		

**The Small Business Specialist Community (SBSC) designation will continue to be a Microsoft partnership opportunity in addition to the new Midmarket Solution Provider competency offering.*

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Competency Structure Changes (cont'd)

Current Competency	Current Specialization	New Competency
Hosting Solutions	Hosting Solutions	Hosting
Information Worker Solutions	Office Deployment	Desktop
Information Worker Solutions	Enterprise Project Management	Project and Portfolio Management
Learning Solutions	Learning Solutions	Learning
ISV	ISV	ISV
Licensing Solutions	License Delivery	Volume Licensing
Licensing Solutions	Software Asset Management	Software Asset Management
Mobility Solutions	Mobility Solutions	Mobility
N/A		Digital Home
N/A		Distributor
N/A		Digital Marketing

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