

Can You Get More from Microsoft Azure?

Why Enterprises Are Partnering with MSPs for Optimization



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Introduction

Nearly half of today's global enterprises have critical workloads in the cloud, reports [Statista](#). And large companies turn to Microsoft Azure ahead of the competition for their cloud computing needs, according to a [recent CNBC study](#) that found Azure is the most popular cloud service among enterprises.

As enterprises move new workloads to the cloud and scale their cloud computing initiatives, many rely on managed cloud services providers (MSPs) to optimize deployments and performance. A cloud computing MSP can help IT and business leaders define the business case for cloud, design a custom Microsoft Azure architecture, oversee deployment, and streamline ongoing management and optimization.

However, what many enterprises overlook is that MSPs can be a partner throughout the cloud computing lifecycle and that some of the most significant value can come through ongoing optimization. Increasingly, enterprises with existing deployments are finding tremendous value in leaning on managed services providers for optimization, insights, and delivering more value from their Azure solutions. With changing business needs and a constantly evolving landscape of features, an optimization strategy is an essential component of your long-term Azure management.

There are many ways to optimize your current Azure environment, including reviewing your Azure architecture against Microsoft reference architectures, uncovering opportunities for improvement by leveraging platform as a service (PaaS), and introducing Azure-native tools to help you achieve your most critical business objectives. Connection has seen [some companies save over 500%](#) by utilizing managed services to continuously optimize their environment. This allowed them to invest in other areas of their business, as well as into further cloud efforts.

Here's a closer look at the role of Azure optimization later in the cloud computing journey, and how managed service providers can help enterprises reach their potential—whether you're building on an existing instance with a wider scope or investing in improving the ROI of your Azure environment.



“Through 2024, nearly all legacy applications migrated to public cloud infrastructure as a service (IaaS) will require optimization to become more cost-effective. Cloud providers will continue to strengthen their native optimization capabilities to help organizations select the most cost-effective architecture that can deliver the required performance.”

—Gartner

How Can Microsoft Azure Optimization Help Your Enterprise?

Enterprises that have successfully deployed Microsoft Azure can get the most out of their cloud computing by developing management plans beyond expanded deployments and routine maintenance. They are developing long-term Azure optimization plans to help get more value, greater performance, and modern cloud computing benefits.

Microsoft Azure optimization services help enterprises with existing Azure deployments get more from the solution, from improving application performance to identifying and addressing security gaps. Making the most of the extensive toolset available within Microsoft Azure can take your enterprise's IT performance to the next level and improve cost-effectiveness, security, and speed to market of new experiences.

Yet without a systematic and data-driven approach, cloud optimization is often a time-consuming and complex process. Within Microsoft Azure there is an ever-expanding list of best practices to implement and architecture reference points to consider. New features are constantly rolling out that can benefit your enterprise's broader IT strategy. System design—and how to maximize performance and costs over time—can evolve as workloads shift and evolve. When considered against the heavy responsibilities that today's enterprise IT teams face, often on limited budgets and lean staffing, it's easy to understand why taking a proactive approach to making the most of your cloud resources all too often falls to the back burner.

Enterprises that find a way to optimize their Microsoft Azure instances can turn cloud performance into a competitive advantage. Enter: managed service providers.

Azure offers a range of different approaches to help ensure that you're running workloads optimally and getting the most out of your investment. By leveraging these tools, established best practices, and years of experience, an MSP can assess your current Azure environment and help you develop an effective roadmap to optimization. For enterprises that need every internal IT resource focused on other strategic initiatives, an MSP offers an accessible path to successful Azure optimization.

How MSPs Help Enterprises with Microsoft Azure Optimization

Enterprises work with MSPs to successfully optimize Microsoft Azure deployments. Just a few scenarios where service providers can help enterprises with mature cloud deployments include:

- **Simplifying daily management for strategic growth:** You've deployed Microsoft Azure but aren't maximizing the potential, due to bandwidth and talent availability. Managed services providers can help you automate the daily operations and realize the full value of your cloud investment with simplified management across the enterprise.
- **Moving from a pilot project to larger scale deployments:** Perhaps you tested Microsoft Azure for a specific workload or piloted the solution for a specific line of business. A managed services provider can assess how you're currently performing, offer detailed guidance to streamline current operations, and synchronize future deployments for maximum impact through standardized and optimized Azure deployments throughout the organization.



“As much as 35%
of public cloud
spend is wasted.”

—Flexera

- **Focusing on optimized performance and advanced assets:** You've identified Microsoft Azure as an important part of your enterprise technology stack. Yet you're not capturing the full performance capabilities of the solution, and there are advanced features you'd like to tap into. An MSP can finetune your Azure deployment to support your most important business goals.
- **Implementing best practices for cloud strategy:** You adopted the cloud quickly but didn't leverage best practices. Or perhaps the rapid adoption of cloud over the past year has left your IT team with too many deployments to effectively optimize. Your enterprise needs an end-to-end review and to bring your deployments into alignment with best practices for performance, security, and cost management. An MSP can audit your current Azure environments, make strategic recommendations based on enterprise goals and industry best practices, and oversee the smooth implementation of upgrades and changes.

Azure Architecture Review

An Azure Architecture Review helps enterprises understand the current state of a Microsoft cloud computing deployment and creates a roadmap for optimization. During this process, a managed services provider will take a deep dive into your existing technology and architecture to better understand how you're set up, evaluate how the system is performing, and identify what gaps exist between the current state and best practices. As part of the assessment, an MSP will use Azure-native tools and advanced third-party tools to explore:

- **Performance history:** Take a deep dive into systems, database, and application performance, and better understand the health and utilization of your Microsoft Azure deployment at all levels.
- **Current Infrastructure as a Service Architecture:** In many cases, initial cloud deployments leverage Microsoft Azure primarily as infrastructure as a service solution. By understanding the current state of your architecture, it's possible to determine if alternate paths such as refactoring to Azure PaaS could result in significant performance gains for your enterprise.
- **Identifying operational management improvements:** Explore whether there are strategic opportunities to improve your enterprise's operational management of Microsoft Azure environments. From automating key aspects of Azure operations to engaging more advanced features and tools for monitoring and feedback, these analyses can provide data-based recommendations for growth and improvement.
- **Monitor and strengthen security:** Identify what security gaps may exist in your current deployment. Recommend a path to close gaps and implement the more than 90 security best practices currently recommended for Azure. Once best practices are in place, regular updates and monitoring can be implemented to make sure no future gaps are created or exploited.

Based on the Architecture Review, an MSP will develop a customized roadmap with specific recommendations for how to improve performance, eliminate resource waste, and modernize your deployment. This roadmap is delivered as a recommendations report and can provide the action path for your internal team or a managed service provider to optimize your enterprise's cloud investments for maximum performance now and into the future.

Right-sizing for Performance and Cost

As enterprises look for ways to reduce capital expenditures and right-size their operational expenses, flexible cloud computing consumption models are in the spotlight. One of the most attractive benefits of Microsoft Azure is its pay-as-you-go model. Because organizations pay only for what they consume, it's important to right-size solutions for both performance and budget. In many cases, enterprises can save money through consolidation, detailed analysis, and understanding how teams across the organization utilize cloud computing resources.

By relying on real-time analytics, an MSP can outline disk utilization, CPU, and other key metrics to help right-size your deployment for your unique needs. The reality is that cloud computing needs rapidly evolve, whether they've shifted since the initial Azure deployment or your enterprise is looking ahead to build the capacity for rapid growth. Don't guess at what you'll need. A managed services provider can give you a data-driven lens for optimization.

As Gartner notes, this isn't just about workload performance. It can also affect the bottom line. [Gartner](#) recommends that IT leaders "drive cost optimization by monitoring utilization and capacity metrics. Schedule and right size allocation-based services. Leverage programmatic discounts. Modernize applications to make use of provider managed services when these are more cost-effective." Managed services providers can assess current usage and spend and explore different strategies to better align these key areas to your enterprise's long-term IT strategy and budget trends.

Refactor from Azure IaaS to Azure PaaS

As part of their optimization strategies, enterprises can capture significant benefits of refactoring Azure IaaS to Azure PaaS. If you're seeking to modernize your apps and take advantage of Azure's DevOps and container capabilities, this can help your organization quickly innovate. In addition, refactoring helps shift your team's focus entirely to your apps—and eliminates the need to worry about underlying infrastructure, middleware, and software licenses.

[Microsoft](#) notes this strategy can be helpful in specific instances: "Often referred to as repackaging, this cloud migration strategy involves some change to the application design but no wholesale changes to the application code. Your application can take advantage of infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS) products, such as Azure App Service, Azure SQL Database Managed Instance, and containers."

When refactoring is the right long-term approach, enterprises can gain significant business agility from implementing it. A managed services provider that understands your desired business outcome and your underlying structure can help you determine if Azure PaaS is the right path for your enterprise and how best to structure your efforts.



Optimizing Management and Organizational Processes

Enterprises with large Microsoft Azure deployments capture significant cloud computing benefits, but many are increasingly searching for the best strategy to optimize their management. IT leaders often overlook Microsoft Azure optimization due to the pain points encountered in day-to-day operations. A managed services provider can help you find efficient ways to streamline operations, optimize costs, and even completely outsource the ongoing management of your Azure environments.

Even at large organizations, IT teams are lean and have significant workloads. [One recent study](#) found that 73% of technology professionals report being stressed out or even approaching burnout. Leaders are being asked to get more done with tight teams and budgets—and as a result, outsourcing the daily management of your Microsoft Azure solution can free your IT team up to focus on bigger strategic items and keep exploding IT workloads at manageable levels. Not only does this help ensure that everything possible is being done to optimize your environment, but it's a critical move toward investing in the well-being of your IT team and improving IT talent retention.

MSPs help enterprises streamline management in several ways, from helping you make the most of Azure-native tools for automation and monitoring to delivering services that optimize your ongoing operations—and help shift the day-to-day burdens off your busy IT team in a cost-effective way.

An MSP can help you optimize ongoing operations by:

- Implementing remote monitoring solutions to help you assess ongoing cloud health, application performance, security issues, and much more
- Providing regular reporting to inform IT decision making and simplify status reporting to executives and other organizational stakeholders
- Consolidating billing and communications with an Account Manager who knows your business and can save your team critical timing with a dedicated communication path
- Assessing your current utilization and looking at avenues for consolidation, streamlining your architecture, and right sizing your Azure deployment to meet your needs while keeping costs in check
- Offering customer support when issues arise, with 24/7 customer support across phone, email, and chat applications

Leverage Process Automation with Azure Automate

When you're struggling with operational efficiency, Azure Automate can help with Azure-native process automation and other solutions designed with enterprise-level business efficiency in mind.

Azure Automate delivers a cloud-based automation and configuration service that supports consistent management across your Azure and non-Azure environments. With Automate, you'll have complete control during deployment, operations, and decommissioning workloads and resources. Azure Automate comprises:

- Process automation
- Configuration management
- Update management
- Shared capabilities
- Heterogeneous features

Embracing Real-time Insights with Azure-native Tools

Microsoft Azure is equipped with a number of native tools that managed service providers and their teams can leverage to gain critical insights into your enterprise—and increase real-time visibility into core aspects of your business.

An MSP can ensure that you're leveraging these tools, capturing the insights, and feeding them back into your deployment for better performance. The key tools include:

Azure Advisor: Advisor is native cloud consultant dashboard that helps you incorporate best practices into your Azure deployments. It analyzes your enterprise's resource configuration and makes customized recommendations to optimize the cost effectiveness, performance, high availability, and security of your environment. An MSP can configure Advisor for your environment, identify gaps, and rely on these insights for immediate and continuous improvements across the organization.

Azure Monitor: With Azure Monitor, enterprises gain insights needed to maximize the availability and performance of your applications and services. Monitor delivers a comprehensive solution for collecting, analyzing, and providing actionable insights for both your cloud and on-premises solutions. It can help:

- Detect and diagnose application issues
- Identify infrastructure issues for virtual machines and containers
- Support troubleshooting and diagnostics with log analytics
- Streamline operations with smart alerts and automated actions



Azure Security: The Azure Security Center is a unified security management system that strengthens data center security and monitors workloads in the cloud. It offers continuous security monitoring of all assets, provides advanced threat detection, and deploys solutions rapidly to keep environments secure.

An MSP can use these advanced tools to help you understand your environment and configure them to meet your internal standards, monitoring needs, and much more.

Connect with Excellence

The Connection Microsoft Center of Excellence has developed a comprehensive way to make your cloud journey much easier. Our Azure Landscape Optimization (AZLO) suite of offerings, which is unique to our team, is designed to help take you from ideation all the way to the point of deployment. We know no two businesses are alike, and that's why AZLO's three-phased approach creates an adoption process that is customized to your business's unique needs.

If you choose to transition to Azure with us, we will ensure you get the best possible service. You will receive an Azure readiness assessment, security audit review, and a summary of subscription migration/ consolidation options with the objective of optimizing costs and operational enhancements—all to make sure the migration process goes smoothly.

Whether you're migrating to the cloud or seeking anything within the Microsoft ecosystem, we offer all the services you need in one convenient place. Our status as a Gold Microsoft Partner shows our years of experience and the expertise of our team. Whether you are looking for Microsoft 365, Windows 10, Teams, Azure, or more, we're the one stop shop to make your migration easy. No Microsoft solution is too big or too small. We help every step of the way and work to make your Microsoft journey as seamless as possible.

Contact Connection today to connect with an enterprise cloud computing specialist. Discuss your unique needs and learn how a managed service provider can help your organization develop an effective Azure enterprise optimization roadmap.

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