The Value of Earning a Microsoft® Competency

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
Earning a Microsoft Competency

In July 2009, the Microsoft Partner Network announced a more relevant competency structure that better reflects solutions that customers purchase. By the beginning of 2011, we will have launched a total of 29 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.
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 will continue to be a Microsoft partnership opportunity in addition to the new Midmarket Solution Provider competency offering.
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 get a competitive edge with early access to the latest *internal-use software* to run your business and test compatibility with your solutions, and strengthen staff expertise with business and technical training.
   - **Create demand** with customers using marketing campaigns, directories, and a recognizable brand.
   - **Increase sales** with compelling presentations, demos, financing, and rewards programs.
   - **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? (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 market. 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.

\(^2\)IDC, "Microsoft Core Infrastructure: Partner Pathway to Business Performance," June 2009

“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

EARNING A MICROSOFT COMPETENCY

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Why earn a competency?
Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network Competencies

Cloud Offerings

**Microsoft Cloud Essentials Pack** is a subscription that is launching in late 2010 and provides partners with resources to help partners learn about, try, develop and sell Cloud solutions.

**Benefits include:**

**Internal Use Rights**
- BPOS up to 250 licenses
- CRM Online up to 250 licenses
- Intune (license allotment to be announced)

**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:**
Partners are required to be enrolled in the partner network and complete any one of the following:
- Sign the Microsoft Online Services Partner Agreement (MOSPA) and take a brief, online assessment
- Qualify for and sign the CRM Software Advisor agreement
- Register for application compatibility with the Windows Azure Platform through Microsoft Platform Ready

There is an annual fee of USD $120, which will be waived during the promotion sign-up period. To renew partners will need to show activity in their cloud business.

Go to [www.microsoftcloudpartner.com](http://www.microsoftcloudpartner.com) to learn more and get started NOW!
Why earn a competency?

Microsoft Partner Network

Competencies

Cloud Offerings

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 for the program 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
- Intune (license allotment to be announced)

**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

Go to [www.microsoftcloudpartner.com](http://www.microsoftcloudpartner.com) to learn more and get started NOW!

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.
Competency Benefits

When you earn your first silver competency or gold competency, you are entitled to a set of “core” (one time) benefits as well as competency-specific benefits. As you attain additional competencies, you receive additional competency-specific benefits. Gold competencies provide you with a richer and more robust set of benefits.

Core benefits, detailed in the next slide, and competency benefits detailed on the partner portal are available October 2010. If you have already attained a silver competency, you can view current benefits on the Software Licensing Benefits by Competency page or download your software now.

Your core and competency benefits will be renewable annually when you renew your competency.
If your organization has more than one location, you can share your benefits across locations within a given country. If you find your other locations within a given country need additional benefits, then your company can order an additional toolkit by meeting the competency requirements and by paying the appropriate fee.

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

This extension means that current gold certified or Certified partners can retain use of their current 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.

See the Prepare for MPN portal page for further information.
Competency Core Benefits

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

In addition to these core benefits, partners who attain a gold competency are eligible for a named Microsoft contact that will support the creation of a business plan as well as partner development and sales efforts.
Competency Core Benefits (cont’d)

Plan

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

**Internal-Use Software:** Get licenses for Microsoft’s latest software to gain first-hand knowledge of features and capabilities.

**Students to Business (S2B):** Find the most qualified technical students for entry-level and internship positions.

Enable

**Partner Learning Center:** Build technical and business skills with role-based training.

**MSDN Subscription:** Get access to tools, software, communities, and resources for developers and testers.

**TechNet Subscription:** Get access to tools, software, communities, and resources for testing and evaluation.

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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**
  - **Silver** Higher search rankings
  - **Gold** Highest search rankings

- **Microsoft Pinpoint and Microsoft Solution Finder**: Make your solution profile accessible to tens of thousands of potential customers in this online directory.

- **Partner Marketing Center**: Save time and money with customizable marketing resources, including campaign materials and activity guides.

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

Sell

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

- **Demo Showcase**: Create compelling sales presentations with rich, customizable demos.

- **Microsoft Financing**: Close more sales by offering tailored financing options for your customers.ortic.

- **Microsoft Partner Incentives Program**: Get rewards for driving engagements in strategic technology areas. Offerings vary by competency.

*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.*

*Offerings vary by competency.*
## Competency Core Benefits (cont’d)

### Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Break/Fix Support</strong></td>
<td>5 incidents</td>
<td>5 incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Technical Communities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Advisory Hours</strong></td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td>50 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business-Critical Phone Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Satisfaction Index</strong></td>
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</table>

### Retain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Satisfaction Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Response time is 4 business hours for break/fix queries and 8 hours for presales questions.
2. Required competency requirement.
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

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, beginning October 2010, 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!
## General Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Silver Competency</th>
<th>Gold Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credentials</strong></td>
<td>Two Microsoft Certified Professionals OR Qualifying silver competency application test</td>
<td>Four unique, credentialed Microsoft Certified Professionals, not holding any other gold competency OR Qualifying silver competency and gold competency application tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint Microsoft and Partner Plan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td><strong>Revenue commitment</strong>&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt; Starting October 2010, partners will need to commit to delivering 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. Beginning October 2011, Microsoft will begin to measure actual attainment and partners will need to meet the revenue commitment by their next re-enrollment date after October 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Training and Assessments</strong>&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt; (Beginning October 2010)</td>
<td>One individual who passes a Microsoft Licensing overview assessment AND One individual who passes an online sales and marketing competency assessment</td>
<td>One individual who passes a Microsoft Licensing overview assessment AND Two individuals who pass an online sales and marketing competency assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Three unique customer references per competency.</td>
<td>Five unique customer references per competency. AND Participate in Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Full profile and silver competency membership fee&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Full profile and gold competency membership fee&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Partners can attain multiple competencies. Your employees or contractors who pass the applicable competency exams are eligible toward multiple competency.

<sup>2</sup>Partners can attain multiple gold competencies. Your employees or contractors who pass the applicable gold competency exams are only eligible toward one gold competency.

<sup>3</sup>Qualifying standard tests and qualifying advanced application tests refer to products that pass Microsoft hardware and software test, and apply to the ISV competency or other competencies through the ISV track. Qualifying application tests vary by product.

<sup>4</sup>Revenue commitment is also required for the Microsoft CRM competency and Microsoft ERP competency, as well as their associated gold competencies. After achieving a Microsoft gold competency, partners may be required to complete a simple business plan detailing the activities that will support their plan. If applicable, a Microsoft representative will contact the partner to support the creation of this business plan. Revenue thresholds will be published by September 2010.

<sup>5</sup>Revenue thresholds will be published by September 2010.

<sup>6</sup>Requirements vary by competency.

<sup>7</sup>Partners may use customer references from a silver competency toward a gold competency.

<sup>8</sup>Silver competency and gold competency fees vary by geography. Partners will pay the silver competency or gold competency fee one time, per year, per location—no matter how many competencies are attained. If partners attain a gold competency after first attaining a silver competency, then partners only pay the difference between the two membership fees, unless they are within their 90-day reenrollment period.

<sup>9</sup>Silver competency and gold competency fees vary by geography. Partners will pay the silver competency or gold competency fee one time, per year, per location—no matter how many competencies are attained. If partners attain a gold competency after first attaining a silver competency, then partners only pay the difference between the two membership fees, unless they are within their 90-day reenrollment period.

<sup>10</sup>Partners can attain multiple gold competencies. Your employees or contractors who pass the applicable gold competency exams are only eligible toward one gold competency.

<sup>11</sup>Revenue commitment is also required for the Microsoft CRM competency and Microsoft ERP competency, as well as their associated gold competencies. After achieving a Microsoft gold competency, partners may be required to complete a simple business plan detailing the activities that will support their plan. If applicable, a Microsoft representative will contact the partner to support the creation of this business plan. Revenue thresholds will be published by September 2010.

<sup>12</sup>Requirements vary by competency.

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Competencies Eligible for Qualifying Product Testing
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
- Content Management
- Customer Relationship Management
- Data Platform
- Enterprise Resource Planning
- Independent Software Vendor (ISV)
- OEM Hardware (Device test)
- Portals and Collaboration
- Unified Communications

Solutions must pass one of the following tests (if you have taken any product tests other than those listed below, those tests will not count toward the upcoming requirements and will expire on the product test expiration date or May 2011, whichever date comes first):

- Certified for Windows Server 2008 R2
- Works with Windows Server 2008 R2 Microsoft Platform Ready
- Windows 7 Microsoft Platform Ready (currently available as Windows 7 Logo Test)
- Windows Azure Microsoft Platform Ready (available October 2010)
- Windows Phone 7 Microsoft Platform Ready (available October 2010)

Access Microsoft Platform Ready tests.
Building your organization’s competency plan

To help your organization build its competency plan, use the Partner Transition Tool. Here you will find the people in your company that have achieved MCP status and are available to be associated to silver or gold competencies. You can also see what other requirements you need to meet.
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

Lead Generation

Public Relations

Worldwide Roll-Out

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

- Case Studies
- Testimonials

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

John Partner
Job Title

Email: Name.Surname@domain.com
Phone: 023-456-7890
Cell: 123.456.7890
Fax: 223.456.7890

Street Address
Suite Number
City
Zip code
## Next Steps and Key Links

1. **Determine which competencies represent your primary business focus.** Choose the appropriate competency that aligns to your highest priority customer solutions offered in market. Silver competencies are available now and gold competencies will be available in October, 2010.

2. **Utilize the Transition Tool** to determine where you may need to meet additional requirements in order to achieve competencies.

3. **Visit the partner portal to learn about qualifying competency exams and special offers.**
   - If you attended the Worldwide Partner Conference (WPC), you can still purchase the **5-for-1 exam pass** until October 10th. If you did not attend WPC and need additional exam savings, purchase a 3, 5, or 8 competency exam pack to **save up to 30%** and get a **free Second Shot retake** on all exams! You can handout exam passes to any individuals within your organization that need to get certified.
   - To find which exams you have **passed**, go to Microsoft Learning.
   - To find which exams are being **retired**, check the **retired exam list** or view Appendix B.

4. **If you are a software developer, submit your solution** through the Microsoft Platform Ready tool (for ISV tracks or ISV competency).

5. **Take assessments** (if required).
   - Licensing overview assessment
   - Sales and marketing assessment

6. **Gather customer references.**

7. **Participate in the Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Index** (gold competency requirement).

8. Accept the **revenue commitment** (gold competency requirement).

9. Upon renewal, **pay the appropriate membership fee** as listed on your local partner portal.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support in delivering Microsoft technologies to our mutual customers.
How-To Guidance
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 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 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 create and track customer references

Approved customer references are also a requirement for earning a Microsoft gold competency. A reference may only be assigned to fulfill a requirement for one competency.

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

For customer reference requirements see the Microsoft Partner Network Guide.

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.
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.
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.
Joint Microsoft and Partner Plan Requirement 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. Revenue thresholds will be published by September 2010 (at the latest).

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

L = Licensing Assessment
S = Sales & Marketing Assessment
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.
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. Competency and gold competency fees vary by geography. Partners will pay the silver competency or gold competency fee one time, per year, per location—no matter how many competencies are attained. If partners attain a gold competency after first attaining a competency, then partners only pay the difference between the two membership fees, unless they are within their 90-day reenrollment period.
**Competency Structure Changes**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Competency</th>
<th>Current Specialization</th>
<th>New Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Infrastructure Solutions</td>
<td>Systems Management</td>
<td>Systems Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Infrastructure Solutions</td>
<td>Windows Desktop Deployment</td>
<td>Desktop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Infrastructure Solutions</td>
<td>Active Directory</td>
<td>Server Platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Infrastructure Solutions</td>
<td>Storage Solutions</td>
<td>Virtualization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtualization Solutions</td>
<td>Virtualization Solutions</td>
<td>Identity and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Solutions</td>
<td>Infrastructure Security</td>
<td>Enterprise Content Management and Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Office Solutions Development</td>
<td>Content Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Portals and Collaboration</td>
<td>Portals and Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Search</td>
<td>Search</td>
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</table>

Credential Requirement Details
Joint Microsoft and Partner Plan Requirement Details
Business Assessments Details
Customer Evidence Requirement Details
Commitment Details
Competency Structure Changes
## Competency Structure Changes (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Competency</th>
<th>Current Specialization</th>
<th>New Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified Communications Solutions</td>
<td>IM/Presence</td>
<td>Unified Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Communications Solutions</td>
<td>Messaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unified Communications Solutions</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Data Visualization</td>
<td>Business Intelligence</td>
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<td>Business Intelligence</td>
<td>Business Intelligence Platform</td>
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<td>Business Intelligence</td>
<td>Performance Management</td>
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<td>Data Management Solutions</td>
<td>Data Management Solutions</td>
<td>Data Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Development Solutions</td>
<td>Application Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Software Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Development Solutions</td>
<td>Smart Client Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custom Development Solutions</td>
<td>Web Development</td>
<td>Web Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOA and Business Process</td>
<td>SOA and Business Process</td>
<td>Application Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Application Lifecycle Management</td>
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## Competency Structure Changes (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Competency</th>
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<th>New Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Specialist Community*</td>
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<td>Small Business Specialist Community</td>
</tr>
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<td>Networking Infrastructure Solutions</td>
<td>Midmarket Solution Provider</td>
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<td>Microsoft Business Solutions</td>
<td>Microsoft Dynamics CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
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<td>Microsoft Business Solutions</td>
<td>Microsoft Dynamics AX</td>
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<td>Microsoft C5</td>
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<td>Microsoft Business Solutions</td>
<td>Microsoft Dynamics SL</td>
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<td>Microsoft Business Solutions</td>
<td>Microsoft Dynamics POS</td>
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<td>System Building</td>
<td>OEM Hardware</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEM Hardware Solutions</td>
<td>Device Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEM Hardware Solutions</td>
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</table>

*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.*
### Competency Structure Changes (cont’d)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Competency</th>
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<th>New Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hosting Solutions</td>
<td>Hosting Solutions</td>
<td>Hosting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Office Deployment</td>
<td>Desktop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Worker Solutions</td>
<td>Enterprise Project Management</td>
<td>Project and Portfolio Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Solutions</td>
<td>Learning Solutions</td>
<td>Learning</td>
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<td>ISV</td>
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<td>ISV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing Solutions</td>
<td>License Delivery</td>
<td>Volume Licensing</td>
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<td>Licensing Solutions</td>
<td>Software Asset Management</td>
<td>Software Asset Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Solutions</td>
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<td>Mobility</td>
</tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Distributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
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