

Migrate and Modernise: Embracing the Microsoft Cloud

An endless technical enabler for
mid-market businesses



The New Normal: Adjusting to Hybrid Working

In recent years, the adoption of cloud computing technology has seen a dramatic increase, as businesses across the globe sought out a solution to the previously unprecedented and widespread requirements of remote working.

Cloud computing has a range of capabilities that are attractive to the hybrid workforce, facilitating near-infinite flexibility, scalability and productivity. For mid-market businesses, abilities such as delivering system intensive software, virtualising hardware, developing virtual machines and supporting multiple large groups of users at once are particularly attractive.

The key to business consistency and stability in the unpredictable corporate landscape, is true cloud cohesion. The Microsoft Cloud, made up of Microsoft Azure, Microsoft 365 (including platforms Teams and SharePoint) and the Microsoft Power Platform, is the ultimate cohesive Cloud solution. As the services within this innovative cloud stack integrate seamlessly together, your every business need can be met and resolved, without the need to juggle multiple solutions from different vendors and struggle against time consuming incompatibilities.

In this guide, we will explore the unparalleled benefits of the Microsoft Cloud stack for mid-market businesses, diving deeper into the combined advantages of:

- Microsoft Azure
- Azure Virtual Desktop
- Microsoft 365
- Microsoft Teams
- Microsoft SharePoint
- Microsoft Power Platform



The Public Cloud Solution: Microsoft Azure

Azure is more than just Microsoft's answer to the public cloud, it is an ever-evolving solution enabler made up of more than two hundred products and services.

Due to its expansive service offering, Azure can support and facilitate all your technical requirements, no matter their scope or scale. Whether you need a cloud platform that will improve your productivity and efficiency, provide comprehensive data security or facilitate a seamless hybrid infrastructure, Azure is the solution for you.

Thanks to its host of innovative capabilities, Azure is relied upon by 96% of Fortune 500 companies, making it the ideal cloud platform to support the growth and development of your mid-market business. Azure's innovative potential is matched only by that of your company.



Azure:

The Core Services

Azure's expansive service offering can make it appear an intimidating solution. But with assistance from the Cloud experts at Blue Saffron, Azure has the potential to transform your processes and operations. Let's break down the Cloud platform's core qualities. Microsoft Azure's services can be arranged into a number of categories. These include:

Computing

By harnessing virtualisation technology, Azure can facilitate high-performance computing while eliminating the need for hardware investments. You can adjust and scale your required computing power on demand, enabling you to account for periods of increased demand and high-service loads.

Storage

Azure has large-scale, agile and flexible storage capabilities that can store data, applications and virtual machines. All data stored in the Azure data centres are protected by encryption, two-tier authentication, proxy card access readers and biometric scanners, protecting it from common and pervasive cyber threats.

Backup

Azure offers one-click backup of virtual machines, SQL workloads and on-premises data. Azure protects data from common threats such as ransomware, delivers application-consistent backup and simplifies data restoration.

Networking

Azure Virtual Network allows your business to create a hybrid computing framework that is based on the infrastructures of both private and public clouds. This allows you to connect internet endpoints, virtualised machines and on-premises devices in one network, advancing the capabilities of your own data centres with the scalable power of Azure.

Analytics

Azure aids business development by driving more informed decisions powered by AI insights, machine learning and enhanced analytics. You can track business statistics in real-time across applications in public, private and hybrid cloud environments.

Disaster Recovery

Microsoft has built-in disaster recovery tools that help to keep critical applications functional during outages, no matter whether they were planned or not. With Azure, users can replicate, failover and recover processes as they need.

Taking the Mid-Market by Storm: The Business Benefits of Azure

The powerful services of Azure can be relied upon to deliver tangible and impressive results. Microsoft Azure has the potential to deliver an extensive range of operational, infrastructural and financial benefits for mid-market businesses like yours.



Scalability

Azure has near endless flexibility, with manual and auto-scaling features, designed to facilitate and accommodate the rapid growth of your mid-market business. Azure adapts in line with your application usage so you will never experience unnecessary disruptions.



Security

As Microsoft invest more than \$1 billion annually into cyber security, Azure benefits from a world-class, multi-layered protective model. With a range of integrated security tools and policies, and an advanced encryption process, data stored in the Azure Cloud is given the ultimate defence.



Cost-efficiency

Azure has a consumption-based pricing model, which ensures that users only pay for the cloud features they require and use. This per-user pricing helps to significantly decrease infrastructure, maintenance and management costs across your business.



Compliance

As meeting strict data regulations become more of a necessity for many industries, Azure has strengthened its compliance controls. With more than 35 available compliance offerings, specific and tailorable to the requirements of key sectors, you can easily abide to regulations such as HIPAA, GDPR, ISO 27001 and more.

Taking the Mid-Market by Storm: The Business Benefits of Azure



Availability

Microsoft operates in 55 regions across the globe, and is accessible in 140 countries, facilitating the high availability of Azure. Busy, mid-market businesses are well suited to Azure due to its SLA that ensures 99.95% availability, or less than 4.5 hours of downtime annually.



Infrastructure

With Azure, businesses can eliminate the need for on-premises hardware and the upfront and maintenance costs that come with it. If you do wish to continue to store data, applications or computing processes on private servers, Azure's advanced networking features support and enable a hybrid cloud environment.



Integration

As you might expect, Azure integrates seamlessly with other Microsoft Cloud platforms and products, such as Microsoft 365. However, as it is also compatible with third-party applications, Azure facilitates a fully holistic Cloud environment.



Development

Azure has an end-to-end development platform that supports the building, deployment and management of custom web applications. Azure allows developers to use a range of popular tools and programming languages, offering complete flexibility for innovation.

The Remote Work Enabler: Azure Virtual Desktop

The hybrid workforce is always seeking new solutions that facilitate flexibility. Microsoft has answered this call in the form of Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD). This Desktop as a Service solution allows you to access your Windows desktop and connected applications remotely, from anywhere with an internet connection. Administrators can assign specific privileges, permissions and user rights that enable Azure Virtual Desktop to function exactly like any other corporate desktop, no matter what device it is running on. With AVD by your side, the key to hybrid working success is right at your fingertips.

Flexibility

AVD has the power to provide efficient solutions to multiple users on multiple devices simultaneously. It allows users to access their virtual desktop anywhere and customise according to preference while still sticking to provided usage rules and policies.

Security

Your Azure Virtual Desktop is protected by integrated, intelligent security capabilities. Proactive threat detection helps to secure your sensitive data and applications and ensure that your business meets compliance regulations.

Savings

You can reduce the cost of AVD, by leveraging your existing Microsoft licensing. Additionally, AVD has clear and predictable monthly payments, and adds increased value to the rest of your Microsoft Cloud stack.

Cohesion

AVD is capable of accessing and integrating with your existing Azure, Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 environments, helping with business continuity and disaster recovery.



The Productivity Powerhouse: Microsoft 365

Microsoft 365 is a cloud-based productivity suite, which delivers a wide array of applications, features and tools which enhance business collaboration, communication and organisation. It's not relied upon by millions of businesses globally for no reason: Microsoft 365 is a crucial and foundational element of the Microsoft Cloud stack.

Teams – Bring files, projects, workloads and people together via this innovative communication and collaboration application.

SharePoint – Share content, manage corporate workflows, deploy custom webpages and increase collaboration with SharePoint.

OneDrive – Store, synchronise, share and secure files on Microsoft's dedicated file hosting service.

Outlook – Combine business email, calendar, contacts and tasks in one cohesive application for extensive connectivity and communication benefits.

Office – Benefit from seamless online access to your favourite Office software, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint. With Office applications, content creation has never been easier.

Teams and SharePoint are becoming integral parts of the Microsoft stack, facilitating greater communication, collaboration and organisation within the Cloud. In the next two sections of this guide, we will take a closer look at these two platforms and the extensive benefits they offer mid-market businesses just like yours.



The Collaboration Champion: Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a collaboration and video-conferencing platform. Chat, voice and video calling features are complemented by structured teams, channels and integrated applications. With Microsoft Teams, your business can leverage the potential of true connectivity. As Windows 11 builds Teams directly into its operating system, the platform is becoming more essential to the Microsoft Cloud. With the assistance of Microsoft experts like those at Blue Saffron, you can harness the power of Teams to facilitate communication and collaboration solutions that are unique to your requirements.

Productivity

Divide and conquer by creating specific teams and channels for projects and departments. Plus, customise notifications to prioritise specific updates and alerts.

Communication

Communicate efficiently via chat, voice and video conferencing features. Screen sharing, VoIP integration and mobile application capabilities offer new ways to connect.

Collaboration

Users can edit documents simultaneously in real time, and stay up to date via consistent Teams groups, files and conversations.

Hybrid Working

Accessible on a range of devices, on desktop and mobile applications and over the web, you can check in with Teams from anywhere. With Teams, even remotely, connectivity is at your fingertips.



The File Sharing Facilitator: Microsoft SharePoint

SharePoint has vast potential, facilitating seamless file sharing as well as web page and intranet building. Armed with only a web-browser, you can create dedicated sites to share, open, review and edit documents in real-time. The functions of SharePoint are almost as diverse as the capabilities of your business, making it an ideal Cloud solution to support your requirements.



Flexibility

SharePoint has a variety of functions. Create shareable libraries of files, documents and media or build internal intranets and Cloud-hosted applications.



Consolidation

Integrate all your work sites into a single platform to create a holistic environment for all your company data, while minimising the expense of siloed site administration.



Automation

SharePoint enhances efficiency by automating company processes such as approvals and feedback, while eliminating manual workflows.



Management

Optimise your company organisation by structuring files and folders clearly and logically. Custom templates facilitate bespoke management of SharePoint.



The Automation Accelerator: Microsoft Power Platform

Microsoft Power Platform combines Power BI, Power Apps, Power Automate and Power Virtual Agents, helping businesses to transform and streamline their everyday operations. Facilitating a range of organisational solutions individually, the applications within the Power suite also connect with and complement each other, as well as the rest of the Microsoft Cloud stack. Are you weighed down by mundane repetitive processes? It might be time to electrify your operations with the power of automation and customisation.



Power BI

Connect your data to your decision making, with this scalable platform for business intelligence.



Power Apps

Empower your team to start building custom applications that facilitate innovative business solutions.



Power Automate

Boost efficiency, streamline repetitive processes and enhance operations with the power of automation.



Power Virtual Agents

Build sophisticated bots powered by AI to assist with a range of business processes, from client communication to issue resolution.



The Microsoft Technical Stack

The Microsoft Cloud provides a comprehensive technical stack for mid-market businesses. Microsoft 365, and its related applications Teams and SharePoint, support the maintenance of your everyday operations, facilitating extensive collaboration and communication benefits. The Microsoft Power platform provides the automation capabilities to enhance the efficiency of your operations. Meanwhile, Azure delivers the necessary infrastructure to grow and scale your business in the Cloud.

When you invest in the different elements of the Microsoft Cloud, you facilitate a more seamless working experience within the Cloud environment. As all your technologies are now provided by one vendor, Microsoft, you can rest assured that integration will be efficient and productivity will be optimised.

There are a variety of workplace benefits to utilising the Microsoft Cloud stack in conjunction:

- Microsoft 365 data stored in OneDrive, SharePoint or Exchange can be backed up to Azure.
- Custom web applications developed on Azure can integrate seamlessly with SharePoint.
- Azure extends the hybrid Active Directory of Microsoft 365, enabling Single Sign On.
- Azure extends Microsoft 365 with custom mobile application support.
- You can continuously monitor your Microsoft 365 environment for suspicious or malicious activity using Azure Advanced Threat Protection.
- Microsoft 365 subscriptions include a free Azure Active Directory subscription, saving you money.

Optimise your Microsoft Cloud Experience with Blue Saffron

In the era of hybrid working, the Microsoft Cloud has the potential to revolutionise your business operations. The Microsoft Cloud stack provides your business with nearly endless technical capabilities that assist flexibility and growth in the modern working environment.

As an accredited Microsoft Cloud Partner, Blue Saffron have the necessary experience and expertise to optimise your Microsoft technical stack. We can guide your internal IT team through every stage of your Microsoft Cloud journey from migration to management. With our assistance you can seamlessly integrate your Microsoft stack and leverage the Cloud to drive business success.

**Are you ready to implement a cohesive Cloud solution that packs a powerful punch?
Get in touch with a Cloud specialist at Blue Saffron today to unlock the possibilities of the Microsoft technical stack.**

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