

WHITE PAPER

# Optimize Your Existing Microsoft Azure Environment with a Managed Services Provider



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## Introduction

Many organizations work with managed services providers from early on in their journey to cloud computing. Managed services providers (MSPs) can help IT and business leaders define the business case for cloud, design a custom Microsoft Azure architecture, oversee deployment, and then handle ongoing management. An MSP can also be a powerful ally in helping you reach your goals later in the cloud computing lifecycle. Increasingly, organizations with existing deployments are finding tremendous value in leaning on managed services providers for optimization, insights, and delivering more value from their Azure solutions.

There are many ways to begin optimizing your current Azure environment, including reviewing your Azure architecture against Microsoft reference architectures, uncovering potential opportunities for improvement by leveraging Platform as a Service (PaaS), and introducing Azure-native tools to help you achieve your most critical business objectives.

Here's a closer look at the role of Azure optimization later in the cloud computing journey, where you'll see how managed service providers can help you reach your potential—whether you're building on an existing instance with a wider scope or simply taking the opportunity to improve your current Azure environment.

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**“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](#)

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## What Is Azure Optimization and Who Is It For?

Microsoft Azure optimization services help companies that already have Azure deployed 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 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. 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 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.

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

Azure offers many ways to help ensure that you're running your 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 environment and help you develop an effective roadmap to optimization.

## Who MSPs Help with Microsoft Azure Optimization

Many organizations work with MSPs to optimize Microsoft Azure. Just a few scenarios where service providers can be helpful 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.
- **Moving from a pilot project to larger scale deployments:** You're ready to scale your Azure deployment from a pilot project or a specific workload to other areas of the business. A managed services provider can assess how you're currently performing, and then provide detailed guidance to streamline current operations, as well as synchronize future deployments for maximum impact.
- **Focusing on optimized performance and advanced assets:** You've identified Microsoft Azure as an important part of your 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.
- **Implementing best practices for cloud strategy:** You adopted the cloud quickly, but didn't leverage best practices. Your organization needs an end-to-end review and to bring your deployments into alignment with best practices for performance, security, and cost management.



## Azure Architecture Review

One of the most critical initial steps conducted during the optimization process is an Azure Architecture Review. 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, how the system is performing, and 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 solutions. 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 organization.

- **Identifying operational management improvements:** Explore whether there are strategic opportunities to improve your operational management. 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.
- **Eliminating security gaps:** 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.

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 help bring your cloud investments to maximum performance.

## Right-sizing for Performance and Cost

One of the most attractive benefits of Microsoft Azure is its pay-as-you-go model. Because you're paying for what you consume, it's important to right-size solutions for both performance and budget. 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 specific needs. Perhaps your needs have changed since your initial deployment or you're preparing for rapid growth. Either way, a managed services provider can give you a data-driven lens for optimization.

As Gartner notes, this isn't just about 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.

## Refactor from Azure IaaS to Azure PaaS

Increasingly, organizations are seeing the 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 you quickly innovate. In addition, it 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 repackage, 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." 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 you.

## Optimizing Management and Organizational Processes

You may be considering Microsoft Azure optimization due to the pain points you've 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.

The reality for many of today's IT teams is that they're running lean. 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.

There are specific strategies that an MSP can recommend, 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 24x7 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 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 partners and their teams can leverage to gain critical insights into your business—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 company'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.

**Azure Monitor:** With Azure Monitor, you'll get the 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 discuss your unique needs and learn how we can help optimize your Microsoft Azure deployment.](#)

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