The MSP's guide to picking a CSP partner you can trust

What do you need from a CSP and authorized Microsoft Distributor as you adapt to Microsoft's FY26 Direct Bill rule changes? Here's your essential checklist.

Microsoft's sweeping rule changes—coming into force **October 1, 2025**—are shaking up the market for MSPs everywhere. To avoid disruption or service interruptions, MSPs should partner with a Cloud Solution Provider (CSP).

What do you need from a CSP partner?

You know what's important to you and your customers, so choosing the right partner depends on your specific needs. To help get you started, this checklist offers a comprehensive set of questions to ask any potential CSP before you sign on the dotted line.

Before you ask a CSP any questions, ask yourself these questions first

- Do I need strategic advice and guidance to help me navigate Microsoft's evolving ecosystem?
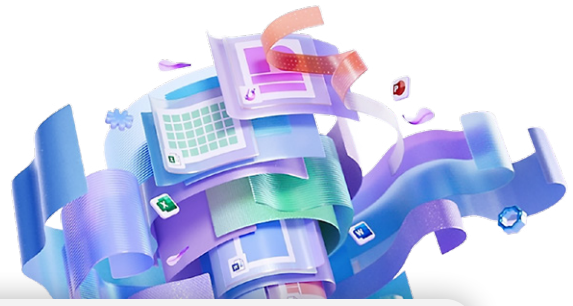
- Do I need help with billing, license management, or support escalations?

- Am I looking to expand my offerings with security-first capabilities and value-added services?

Choose a CSP with...

1 | Proven Microsoft expertise

Your CSP needs to know Microsoft inside out

Look for a partner with the credentials, experience, and technical knowledge to help you navigate licensing, incentives, and evolving requirements.

- Are they an official Microsoft partner and authorized Microsoft distributor with experience enabling growth for MSPs?
- Do they have Microsoft-certified professionals who understand licensing, incentives, and compliance?
- Are they up to speed on Copilot licensing, Azure Plan management, and the latest Partner Program changes?

2 | A security-first approach

Security builds businesses

Choose a CSP that builds cybersecurity into the foundation of their service, not as an afterthought.

- Do they offer built-in cybersecurity services, not just licensing?
- Is security core to their value—or simply a bolt-on?
- Can they help mitigate your clients' risk while supporting your compliance?

3 | Bundled value-added services

A true partner adds more than just licenses

The right CSP will offer extra services that streamline operations and create resale opportunities for your business.

- Do they include services like onboarding, enablement, billing support, and service desk access?
- Can they help you resell packaged services that boost stickiness and margins?

4 | Transparent pricing and predictable margins

No surprises. Just sustainable profits.

You need clear, MSP-friendly commercial models that support healthy margins and simplify billing.

- Is their pricing model clear and MSP-friendly?
- Do they offer predictability on margin, usage, and monthly billing?

5 | The scale and capability to support growth

This is more than a transaction— it's teamwork

Look for a CSP that invests in your success with dedicated support, marketing tools, and licensing guidance.

- Will you get a dedicated Partner Account Manager—not just a generic support desk?
- Do they offer sales enablement, training, and technical workshops?
- Can they support co-marketing efforts like campaigns and webinars?
- Do they provide licensing support for selling Copilot, Defender, Azure, and more?
- Will they help you build Microsoft-aligned service bundles?

6 | A strong security and compliance posture

Protect your clients. Protect your business.

Make sure your CSP offers best-in-class security and compliance, so you're not exposed to unnecessary risk.

- Can they help you comply with Microsoft's new security standards?
- Do they support MFA, RBAC, and secure tenant separation?
- Are they independently certified (e.g., SOC 2, ISO 27001 or equivalent)?

7 | A clear future-focused outlook

Think beyond the next license cycle

You need a partner with the vision and scale to grow with you as the market evolves.

- Are they ready to help you scale globally or regionally?
- Do they understand the roadmap—so you're never caught off guard?

Looking to find the perfect Microsoft partner?

OpenText Cybersecurity blends simplicity and flexibility with expert support to help MSPs scale their Microsoft business.

Get in touch >

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