



Microsoft AppSource & Azure Marketplace

Best Practices Guide

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the guide

In recent years, many business leaders have turned to online marketplaces to find new corporate technology solutions. Microsoft has made digital marketplaces such as **Microsoft AppSource** and **Azure Marketplace** available to its community of customers and partners. These digital “storefronts” allow customers to find, try, buy, and deploy applications and services that accelerate their digital transformation, and help publishers like you grow your business, thanks to increased access to Microsoft’s customers and partner ecosystem. Microsoft invites you to take advantage of this opportunity and has created this guide to help you get the most out of your marketing and sales efforts.

An optimized marketplace business profile and offer listings can help you accelerate your customer acquisition growth, and thus can play a significant role in your cloud business strategy. Get ready to list offers, provide customer trials, and connect with Microsoft customers and the greater partner community.

So where do you begin?

You will need to determine how best to leverage and market your new marketplace business profile and offer listings. This *Best Practices Guide* serves as a supplement to [Microsoft’s commercial marketplace publisher guide](#). It is designed to provide you with marketing strategies and ideas that can help you draw more traffic to your business profile and offer listings, and engage with online prospects in more meaningful ways. For step-by-step guidance on how to set up your business profile and offer listings in Partner Center, check out the documentation on [creating a business profile](#) and on [creating a new offer](#).

Chapter 2

Optimizing your business profile and offer listing

Microsoft will help drive qualified visitors to Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace. You will complete a business profile, detailing the expertise of your company, and offer listings, describing the benefits of your individual solutions. Your responsibility is to ensure the messaging and supporting content is differentiated, stands out among other companies and offers, and provides all the information a customer would need to feel comfortable reaching out to you, trying your product, and purchasing it. Simply listing your solution's features and functionality in a bulleted list is not very compelling. Focus on communicating more than just **what** your company and solution does by articulating **why** prospects need to work with you. Effectively communicating your core value proposition and return on investment is paramount.

10 benefits of optimizing your business profile and offer listing

1. Gain new leads
2. Convert prospects to buyers faster
3. Lower cost of selling
4. Reach global markets
5. Leverage Microsoft's investment in marketing and brand recognition
6. Make it easy for Microsoft sellers to share your solutions with others
7. Showcase your core competencies and vertical domain expertise
8. Gain increased credibility
9. Test and validate new product or service offerings and market opportunities
10. Easily provide free trials during the buying cycle

Business profile best practices

Below is a sample marketplace **business profile** with content best practice recommendations which will help you optimize your profile and maximize results:

Get your prospects' attention by asking a compelling benefit-based question and answering how your company can provide a positive impact.

Speak to your target audience and industry and identify a pain point that your company can help solve.

Showcase your Azure expertise by obtaining the [Azure Expert MSP badge](#).

Your company's [advanced specializations](#) showcase extensive validation of your expertise by Microsoft.

[Microsoft Partner Network competencies](#) showcase expertise in specified areas.

Carefully select your services, categories, industries, and products expertise to draw attention to how you best support your prospects.

Use quantifiable stats when possible.

Call attention to your marquee offerings and the benefits they provide to your prospects.

Microsoft | AppSource | Apps | Consulting offers | Partners

Partners > **Contoso**

Contoso
Toll Free, IL
Dynamics 365 Enterprise | Development tools | SQL | <3 more
Typically responds within 24 hours
Contact me | Save to my list | Share

Overview | Additional information

Struggling to manage workflows across multiple platforms? Contoso solutions reduce time spent on workflow management by 40% or more.

If you're an IT manager running integrated applications, you're likely experiencing inefficiencies in managing your workflows. Contoso builds applications to save you time and resources in managing your workflows and offers consulting services to quickly and cost-effectively implement Contoso apps integrated with Dynamics 365, Microsoft 365, and Microsoft Azure. Customers who use Contoso Workflow Manager and Contoso Consulting Services reduce time spent on workflow management by more than 40% and have saved up to \$1,500 per month. Contoso solutions also reduce your risk of missing important updates to keep your applications secure. We offer free trials and Test Drives on all our applications offered through Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace.

This provider is an Azure Expert MSP.
Only the most high-fidelity cloud-managed service providers are awarded the Expert MSP badge.

Advanced specializations
Partners who have undergone extensive validation by Microsoft or a third-party auditor on their ability to meet Microsoft's highest standards of service delivery in a specific solution area.

- Teamwork Deployment
- Teamwork Deployment
- Teamwork Deployment
- Linux and open source database migration to Microsoft Azure
- Identity and Access Management
- Identity and Access Management
- Identity and Access Management
- Data Warehouse Migration to Microsoft Azure
- Identity and Access Management

This provider has demonstrated competency in the following areas:
Gold and silver competencies are awarded to providers who demonstrate expertise in specified areas.

Gold	Silver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application Development Data Platform Cloud Platform Cloud Productivity Collaboration and Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Mobility Management

Services Partners expertise
These are chosen by the partner and should not be considered as endorsement confirmation by Microsoft.

Services	Categories	Industries	Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting and Professional Integration Learning and Certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Azure Stack Dynamics 365 for Sales SQL Server Upgrade SQL Server Upgrade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Azure Microsoft 365

Offer listing best practices

Below is a sample marketplace **offer listing** with content best practice recommendations which will help you optimize your listing and maximize results:

The screenshot shows a marketplace listing for 'Contoso Workflow Manager' on the Microsoft AppSource platform. The listing includes a product image, a 'Free trial' badge, a 5.0 star rating from 35 reviews, and a 'Get it now' button. Annotations with red arrows point to various elements of the listing, explaining why they are effective.

Annotations and Best Practices:

- Free trial badge:** Making a trial available is more likely to lead to a sale.
- Product image:** Adding transact capabilities allows your customers to go end-to-end through the buyer journey.
- Rating and reviews:** Monitor your ratings and encourage customers to leave a review to help prospects in their buying decision.
- Starting at Free:** Speak to your target audience and industry and identify a pain point that your offer can help solve.
- Targeted headline:** Are you an IT Manager looking for a management system to optimize your operations?
- Benefit-based question:** Get your prospects' attention by asking a compelling benefit-based question and answering how your company can provide a positive impact.
- Quantifiable stats:** Use quantifiable stats when possible.
- Clear value proposition:** There's a better way to run your business.
- Describe why your prospect should try and buy your solution:** Describe why your prospect should try and buy your solution. Explain how you can help. Avoid long lists of features.
- Link to additional resources:** Link to additional resources that may help the prospect in the decision to purchase.
- Include videos and images:** Include videos and images to show users potential benefits and impact. Videos generate high engagement and viewing time.

Listing Content:

Microsoft | AppSource Apps Consulting Services

Apps > Contoso Workflow Manager

Contoso Workflow Manager

Contoso

Web Apps

Free trial

★★★★★ 5.0 (35 Ratings)

Download free add-ins with full capabilities when you get Contoso Workflow Manager

Starting at Free **Get it now** Save to my list

Are you an IT Manager looking for a management system to optimize your operations?

If you use integrated applications, it can be difficult to monitor what's going on in your business, and running effective promotions is a constant struggle.

There's a better way to run your business.

Contoso presents its end-to-end management system that makes it easy for you to consolidate your workflows in one centralized system. By managing your operations within a single platform, you can:

- Cut 5-7 hours per week managing workflows
- Stay on top of supply chain management
- Centralize control, reduce risk, and catch leads faster

Contoso will streamline your entire supply chain by allowing you to:

- Coordinate centrally for both digital and physical assets
- Configure the user interface to your liking

Learn more by viewing our [customer one-pager](#) and [case study](#).

At a glance

Optimizing your marketplace business profile and offer listing content

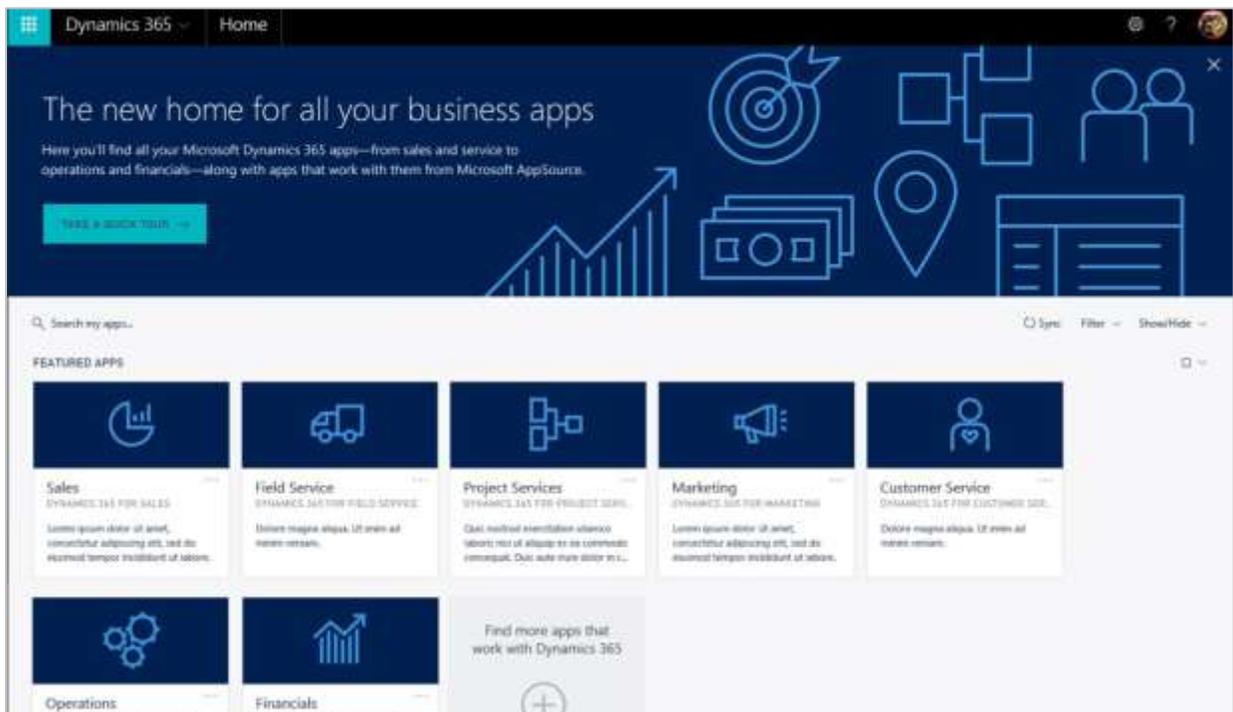
First impressions matter. Research shows it takes only seconds for a prospect to accept or reject your offering during the selection process. It is critical that you make your business profile and offer listings appealing so that they resonate immediately with your target audience.

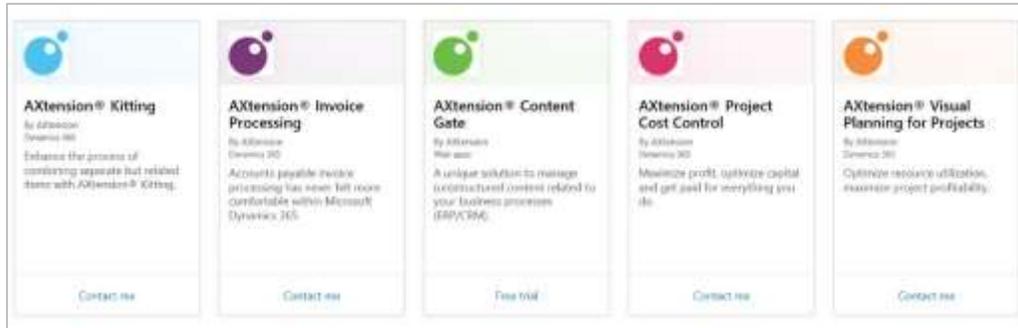
Branding is important

Choosing a name for your offer is a key decision. Avoid using technology-specific terms in your product name or acronyms unless they are broadly understood. If you plan to offer more products in the future, consider branding implications and how you might expand the name to include a family of products or solutions. For example, the Microsoft Dynamics 365 brand includes a family of individual products targeting different market segments and business needs.

Benefit-based solution names are always more effective than descriptive ones. Ideally, your offer name will communicate the core value customers will enjoy. Adding an industry-specific reference or indicator can increase relevance as well as conversion rates.

Example: Microsoft Dynamics 365 family of products





Example of extended product line from AXtension®

When choosing a name for your offer, keep the following questions in mind:

- Does my product name convey something meaningful to my prospects?
- Does it capture the essence of the product and indicate the value it delivers? Is it appropriate and appealing to my target audience?
- Is it short and memorable?
- Does it convey something relevant to my target customer's business? Does my offer name reflect what my business is about?
- Does it limit us in any way? How easily will it translate into other languages/cultures?
- Is it too similar to another product name, thereby potentially causing market confusion?

Positioning your company for success

Product overview and description

In the business profile "About us" section and the offer listing "Overview" section, include the following components:

1. Clearly stated company or product value proposition

Before jumping into describing WHAT you are selling, in the main headline of your listing, tell prospects HOW your company or offer can positively impact their business. The core components of your value proposition should be conveyed up front and should answer the following:

- ✓ What need or pain does it address?
- ✓ Who will gain from it the most?

2. Pique your target customer's curiosity

8 out of 10 people will read headlines, but only 2 out of 10 will read the accompanying text. If you immediately ask a relevant question, you will attract prospects and pique their curiosity. This results in increased engagement. The best questions to ask are those that are benefit or pain based. For example, you could ask, "Tired of wasting valuable time and money manually processing invoices?" or "Want to reduce your invoice processing time by 20%?"

3. Identify pain points before benefits and features

Further engage customers by eliciting an emotional response. If you want to list features on your offer listing, begin your statement by identifying the **pain**, followed by the **benefit**, and then conclude with the **features**.

For example, "Is production downtime costing you money?" (**pain**) Now you can automatically determine the primary reason for production gaps and high related costs (**benefit**). Our solution offers full maintenance management and preventative maintenance functionality (**feature**).

Emotional messaging structure

	Approach	Messaging example
Weak	Non-emotion-generating feature	We offer inventory management.
Better	Somewhat emotionally appealing benefit	Increase your revenue and decrease your costs with more efficient inventory management.
Best	Emotionally compelling and action-driven statement	Stop losing revenue and customers due to stock outs and poor inventory management.

4. Target customers

Indicate who your company offering is intended for, so customers know when they read the title and description if it is designed for them. Does your company work with small businesses or large enterprises? Is your target audience an IT pro or a Business Decision Maker? In which regions is your offer available? Be clear and descriptive.

What countries does Shopify Connector support?

This app is available in: the US, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Canada and Denmark.

5. Don't forget proof testimonials

Include a quote, customer testimonial, or statistic confirming the benefit of your company or solution. Prospects want proof of any claims that you make. Customers heavily rely upon the opinions of other customers when making their purchasing decisions. For your offer listing, we strongly encourage you to build up user reviews. While nurturing your customers post-sale, you can encourage them to post reviews of their experience. Having ratings and reviews will help drive engagement in your offer

listing, help your listing surface to the top of search results, and result in increased customer conversion rates.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft AppSource interface for the 'Contoso Workflow Manager' app. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Microsoft | AppSource | Apps | Consulting Services'. Below this, the breadcrumb 'Apps > Contoso Workflow Manager' is visible. The main content area features the app's logo, name, developer 'Contoso', and category 'Web Apps'. A 'Free trial' badge is present, along with a 5.0 star rating based on 35 ratings. A promotional message states: 'Download free add-ins with full capabilities when you get Contoso Workflow Manager'. There are buttons for 'Starting at Free', 'Get it now', and 'Save to my list', along with a 'Teams' icon. Below the app card, there are tabs for 'Overview', 'Plans + Pricing', 'Reviews', and 'Details + support'. The 'Reviews' tab is active, showing 'AppSource reviews' with a 5.0 star rating and a distribution chart: 5 stars (100%), 4 stars (0%), 3 stars (0%), 2 stars (0%), and 1 star (0%). A 'Your review' section includes a 'Write a review' button and a note: 'To Submit your rating and review, first get the app and let us know about your experience'. At the bottom, it says 'Showing 1-10 of 35 reviews' and displays a sample review with a 5-star rating and the text 'ROCK SOLID PROTECTION'.

Sample listing with reviews

Supporting content for your offer listing

Screen shots and videos

When scanning text, the brain quickly tires and moves on. Include images and videos to show rather than tell users about potential benefits and impact of your offer. What can you include that effectively demonstrates your key value proposition in pictures rather than text? More effective than text are videos, product demonstrations, customer stories, solution screenshots, charts/graphs, and dashboards.

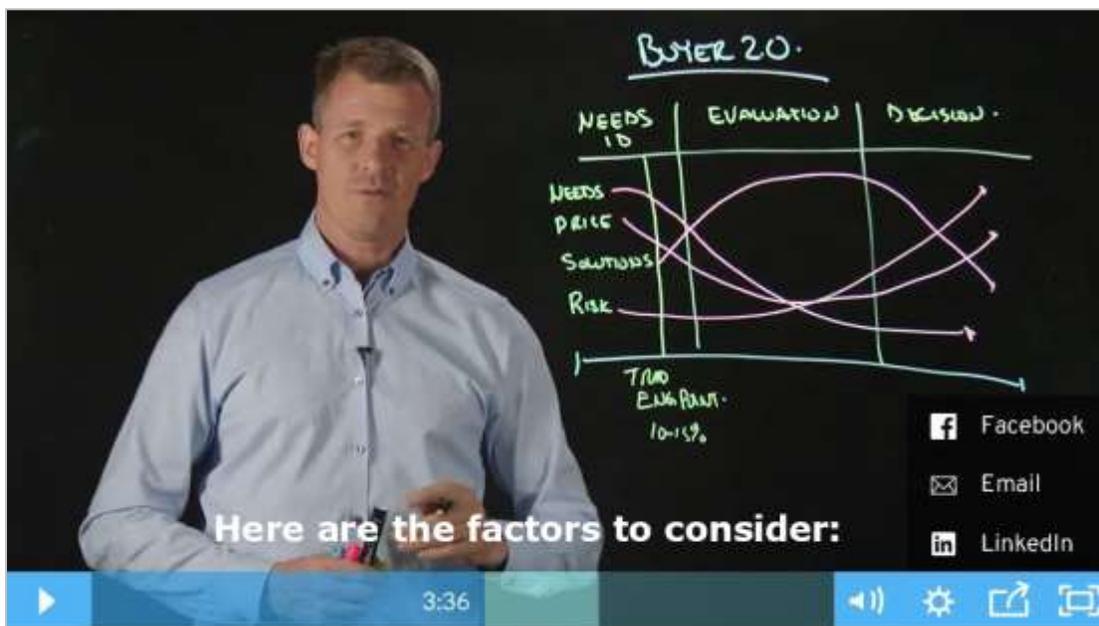
Videos generate a much higher level of engagement and viewing time, while conveying more than you can ever say with words. Ideal video length is less than 2 minutes. Videos can also be used across multiple channels including YouTube and social media and can be amplified through influencers where relevant. This is important because the initial cost of a video can be offset by the demand it creates and the fact that it



can be leveraged on other social channels. Microsoft's commercial marketplace allows you to add images and videos to your offer listing, so be sure to take advantage of this opportunity.

Style and production best practices for videos

- Speak directly to your prospects, using “you” rather than third person language such as “customers” or “they.”
- Post your video on YouTube or another highly accessible video platform and make it easily shareable via email, LinkedIn, and other social media.
- The ideal length of videos is 90 seconds (minimum 30 seconds/maximum 2 minutes).
- Make sure you underscore your visuals with high quality audio.
- Add interactivity wherever possible, linking to text, charts, animation, etc.
- Include alt text on images and captions in videos to make your content more accessible.



- Include a call to action at the end of all videos. Viewers should feel inspired to take the next step toward purchasing.
- Track views and measure viewer patterns so that you can learn from prospects’ actual behaviors and identify preferences to improve future content.
- Let prospects view what they are most interested in seeing; product demos should be less than 5 minutes long.
- Videos featuring a customer as the hero are more powerful than those in which you tell your own story.

Help your audience learn more about your offer

After you've used the overview section to deliver a concise, engaging message about your offer you can provide additional resources and information that users can link to in the "Learn More" section. This section is ideal for linking to additional collateral like brochures, white papers, or even customer case studies. You might also use this section to link to compliance or certifications your offer has attained.

Sample Dynaway A/S learning resources:

Learn more

[Dynaway EAM Brochure](#)
[Enterprise Asset Management White Paper](#)
[Customer Case Story - Kent Corporation](#)

Leverage ratings and reviews

Customer advocacy can be the biggest driver of sales as prospects tend to consider peer reviews before making a buying decision. Having multiple, strong customer reviews helps bump up your offer in search results. Invite new customers to try your solution and leave a review. Make sure to check your reviews frequently!

★★★★★ Tue, Jan 9, 2018	EXCELLENT Report abuse
★★★★★ Tue, Jan 9, 2018	Great Great Experience....Keep it up. Report abuse
★★★★☆ Wed, Dec 20, 2017	Power BI Very good graphics and easy to use. Report abuse

Provide a tangible experience

Customers like to try before they buy. When browsing apps, many marketplace visitors will filter offers by “Free trial” or “Test Drive.” The stronger your trial experience, the more interested your prospects will be. Having a trial or test drive option will also unlock greater go-to-market support and benefits from Microsoft to help drive offer growth.

^ **Trials (2)**

- Free trial
- Test Drive

Microsoft | AppSource Apps Consulting Services

Apps > **Contoso Workflow Manager**



Contoso Workflow Manager

Contoso

Web Apps

Free trial

★★★★★ 5.0 (35 Ratings)

Download free add-ins with full capabilities when you get Contoso Workflow Manager

Starting at Free [Get it now](#) [☆ Save to my list](#)

 Teams

Consider product positioning

Customers often compare solutions, so it is important to differentiate your profile and offers from your competitors' profile and solutions. Before you finalize your listing, benchmark your messaging and content against that of competitors.

Differentiation checklist

- Is the messaging on your listing different from that of competitors?
- Have you clearly highlighted the value you offer customers?
- Have you identified key compelling business pains and benefits rather than just listing features?
- Have you articulated what you are best at?
- Have you mentioned who will benefit most from your expertise or offer?
- Do you provide prospects with a self-driven buying journey?
- Does your messaging and language speak to a specific buyer persona?
- Have you carved out a unique position in the market?

Chapter 3

Sales landing page

Once you have successfully optimized your marketplace business profile and offer listings, you will want to drive prospects to a dedicated sales landing page. The Microsoft brand is powerful and compelling and will attract buyers; however, you will need to engage visitors further to convert them into customers.

Instead of sending prospective customers to your corporate website where they may get lost, create a dedicated sales conversion page hosted on your domain. Be sure to provide a link to this page under the overview/description area on your Microsoft marketplace listing. Perform ongoing testing to optimize interaction levels on this landing page.

Sales landing page best practices

Create a successful sales landing page

Review the following sample sales landing pages and recommended approaches and determine which elements will help you become more successful.

Leverage your brand to give your solution credibility

Visuals create an emotional connection. Paint a desirable picture of your customers' future situation

Do not give prospects too many menu choices. Narrow the scope of the buying journey. Use simple and descriptive menu options such as "pricing," "demo," or "buy now"

Include a visual product logo

State your value proposition early on the page

Pain leads to action. Identify 1-3 of your prospects' most prominent challenges

Ask a provocative pain-based question to capture interest

Include videos to tell your story

The screenshot shows a landing page for Scepta. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Scepta logo, contact information, and a menu with options like 'Dynamics 365', 'Apps', 'Demo', 'Learn', and 'Contact Us'. Below the navigation is a hero image of a person on a beach with the headline 'SELL MORE, WITHOUT WORKING MORE (OR HARDER)'. A 'View your demo' button is overlaid on the image. Below the hero image is the 'Shopify Connector' logo and the text 'The painless way to connect your Shopify B2C webshop with Dynamics 365 Business Central'. The page features three columns of pain points: 'Sell more', 'Don't miss out!', and '100% protected'. At the bottom, there is a video player showing the Scepta logo and the text 'Scepta Shopify Connector - the integration of your Shopif...' and 'Connect your Shopify store with Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central'.

Enhance your sales landing page

Visually engage prospects. Use pictures, graphs, and screen shots to enhance engagement. Don't be afraid to use humor

Highlight the most significant benefits and rewards your customers will gain if they choose your solution

Use bright, contrasting colors to call attention to buttons

Offer options to try now: view a self-running demo, plan a scheduled walkthrough, or take advantage of a time-limited special price, etc.

Make sure you include a very specific next step, such as a call-to-action button with the option to try or buy

Quick and easy
Are you a small business selling to consumers looking for a way to sell more? Have you let your fear that setting up an online store is going to be too hard, complicated, expensive or technical stop you from getting more revenue? Well, don't lose out any longer. It's actually very quick and easy.

+600,000 sellers on Shopify
The e-commerce platform Shopify has already empowered +400,000 entrepreneurs worldwide to grow their business with the launch of their online shop. And it's not difficult at all, the wizard helps you step-by-step with the setup. So you can start selling online in no time. Don't get left behind!

Start selling online now!
The Shopify connector it gets even better, because your webshop is linked directly to your back-end system. All the business process flows are managed directly from Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Financials. Shopify handles everything from payment to secure checkout. So don't miss out, and start selling online now!

More info on the setup wizard | Ready to discover? Ask your demo | Ready to download & try? It's free!

Get the complete Scepta Shopify Connector Factsheet
The complete feature documentation is a PDF file containing specific features so it helps you with the support of the Scepta Shopify Connector.

6 easy steps to setup your online store with the Shopify Connector

- Be up and running in minutes with our easy setup**
Installing a webshop with the Shopify Connector is quick and easy. Follow the step by step installation guide to get started with your webshop.
- Save time, simply upload your product list**
Upload your existing products from Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central into your Shopify webshop in a few steps. After this upload, the Dynamics 365 Business Central information of all your products is available in the Shopify store.
- Customize your store just the way you want it**
With Shopify, you have complete control over the look and feel of your online store. Products are centrally managed in the backend system Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. You can easily add pictures, an detailed item description, ... in Shopify to customize your store.
- No extra order processing needed**
Orders coming in from the online store are automatically transferred into the back-end system (Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central) where the Dynamics 365 Business Central order handling process of order picking, stock management, invoicing, ... is taking over.
- Instant payment status in Dynamics 365 Business Central**
No matter which external payment gateway you opt for, Shopify offers a seamless checkout experience. With the Shopify Connector, all payments, successful and failed, are always up to date in Dynamics 365 Business Central.
- Automatic e-mail confirmation**
Once the order is flagged as "shipped" in the back-end system, automatically an e-mail confirmation with tracking code will be sent to your customer.

Create powerful statements on your sales landing page

Include proof of value and benefits using customer quotes or testimonials

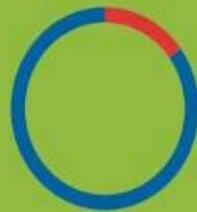


"This connector is really a life save for me. Before, I had to manually transfer every order into the system myself."

Christopher D Gates
President & COO
Quantico Boot LLC

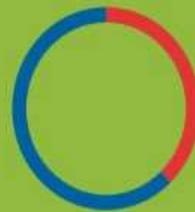


Don't make general and abstract claims. Use data as often as possible to support your claims



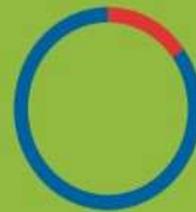
15%
Worldwide revenue via e-commerce platforms is increasing with 15%*, year over year

What are the growth figures of your company?
* Statistics from Gartner



38%
38% of buyers are using online sales channels exclusively to do their purchases *

Are you selling these online? Or are you missing out?
* Source: "Measuring Omnichannel B2B Customer Engagement", Forrester



15%
Customer satisfaction is increased by 15% when you have a webshop online 24/7 *

Selling online improves more than just your turnover. An integrated web store leads to happier clients

Reduce prospect frustration by indicating where your app or services are offered

Ready to start playing with your own webshop?

[Find us on Microsoft Appsource](#)

Include a link back to your listing on Microsoft AppSource or Azure Marketplace

Available in:



Other countries?

[Contact us](#)

Chapter 4

Go-to-market campaigns

Having an optimized business profile, offer listing, and sales landing page enables you to leverage the marketplace opportunity to gain traction. Just by listing in the marketplace you will gain access to marketing, sales, and technical benefits from Microsoft (via [Marketplace Rewards](#)) to help accelerate your offer growth. However, you will also want to conduct your own marketing campaigns, which will create greater awareness and drive ongoing demand for your solution. Listed below are critical, foundational steps that must be taken prior to executing your marketing campaigns. Take time to complete each step to ensure your campaign investment yields a high return.

1. Define your target market

To effectively drive traffic to your marketplace solution listing or profile, focus your marketing campaign efforts. Begin by defining high potential target market segments. A segment refers to a group of potential customers who share common characteristics, needs, and buying behaviors. Each market segment is unique; therefore, you will need to refine your content so that you can provide relevant emails, blogs, and other content that speaks directly to these prospects while addressing their business challenges. Examples of market segments could include small businesses, emerging mid-size companies, or large enterprises.

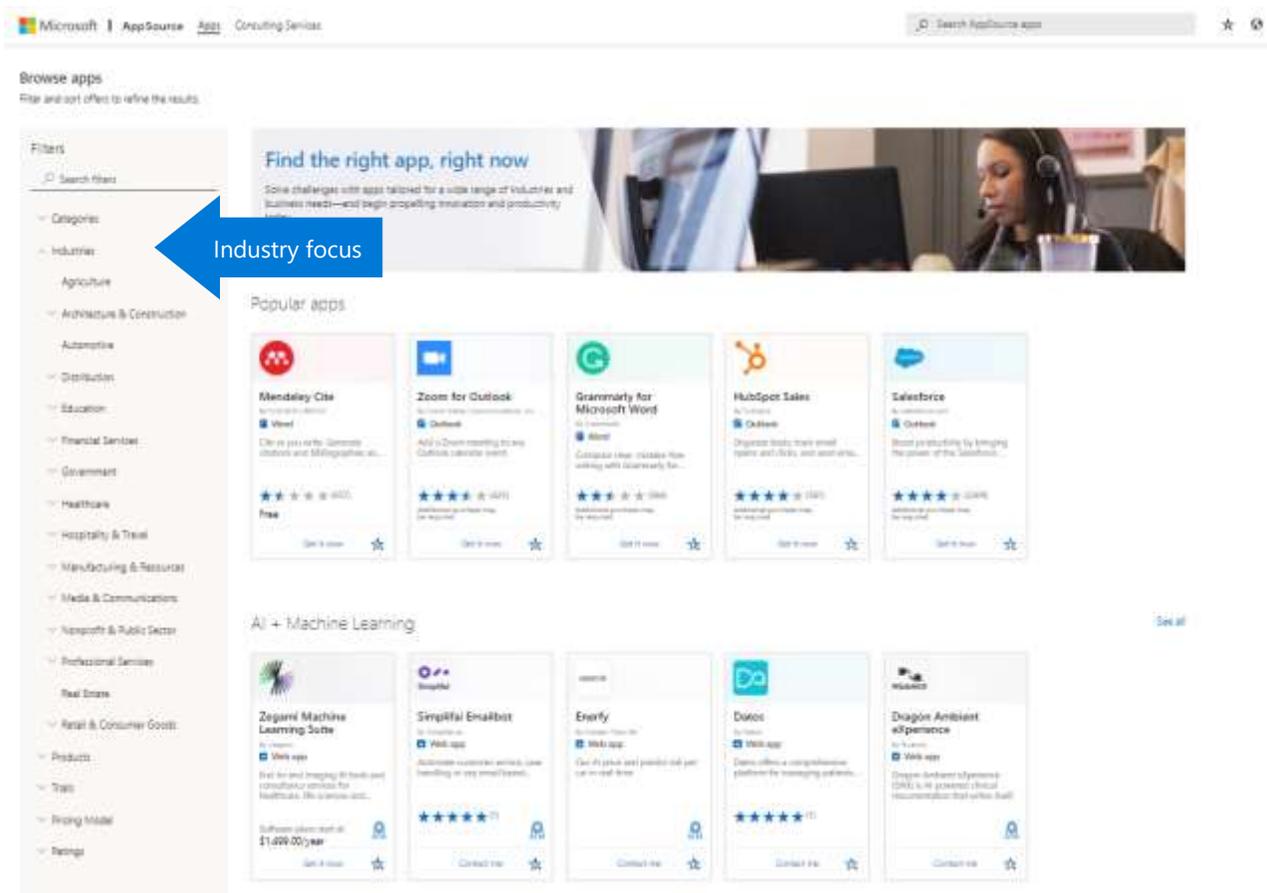
Know your key decision makers

- ✓ What are their primary pains and challenges?
- ✓ What do they most want to achieve?
- ✓ What drives their decision making?
- ✓ Who influences them?
- ✓ What is most important to them?

2. Be specific about the industries you serve

Prospects want to know if your solution is optimized specifically for their business needs. Make sure to demonstrate your domain expertise by creating and sharing industry-specific case studies, by providing industry specific landing pages, and writing blogs that highlight key challenges facing your target industries.

Microsoft AppSource leverages industry specific categories for refining search queries. Take advantage of these filters if you have industry expertise that your customers are searching for.



3. Speak to a specific persona

Drafting an email, blog, advertisement, or other marketing asset that appeals to a broad mass-market can be quite challenging. We often try to create content that resonates with all prospective buyers, but in doing so, we don't reach any one prospect in a meaningful way. The needs of an IT Manager are different from those of a Marketing VP or CEO.

Prospects will only spend a few seconds scanning your marketplace business profile, offer listing, and landing page, or reading your email. Identify WHO your solution is for at the top of your page, so that visitors can immediately know they have come to the right place, and that you have a solution just for them.

	Azure Marketplace	Microsoft AppSource
Target audience	IT professionals, developers (specialist roles include DBAs, SecOps, DevOps, etc.)	Line of business decision makers (specialist roles include procurement, manufacturing, accounting, etc.)

4. Have a well-defined content strategy

Your prospects are very busy. In addition to fulfilling their many responsibilities, they are overwhelmed with daily emails pertaining to sales and marketing offers from outside firms. Most importantly, they often don't trust the content of sales materials or advertisements as much as they used to. This means you should focus less on selling and more on educating. All of your campaign content should teach prospects during the buying cycle, rather than focus solely on product features and functionality.

You earn trust by providing information that is valuable to your prospects. This can include sharing:

- ✓ Interesting industry data or research
- ✓ Summaries of key trends
- ✓ Case studies and success stories
- ✓ Checklists, guides, and self-assessments
- ✓ Educational blogs on important industry specific topics
- ✓ Other informative content

The screenshot shows a landing page for a report titled "2019 Manufacturing Industry Trends: Survey Results and Analysis" by Alithya. The page features a blue header with the Alithya logo and the text "FULLSCOPE IS NOW PART OF ALITHYA". Below the header, the main heading reads "2019 Manufacturing Industry Trends: Survey Results and Analysis". The central content area includes a headline: "Are you up to speed on the latest industry trends? Find out what you need to know to remain competitive." followed by a short introductory paragraph and a bulleted list of key findings. A small image of two people in a factory setting is also present. To the right of the main text is a "Get the Report!" form with fields for "First Name*", "Last Name*", "Email*", "Job Title*", "Phone Number*", "Company Name*", "Manufacturing Sector*" (with a dropdown menu), and "Country*". There are also checkboxes for "I would like to request a demo" and "I agree to receive communication from Alithya". A prominent orange "GET REPORT" button is at the bottom right.

5. Avoid using too much emotionless text

Most vendors use too much text in their marketing materials and communications. Adding an image to an email has been proven to increase open rates. Email open rates are tied to sender-name and subject line. In fact, if you have an image in your email and the recipient doesn't have images enabled in the preview pane or full view, it won't count as an open. Provide a link to a video or demo to encourage prospects to move to the next step in the discovery journey. Include a link to your marketplace offer listing on all your marketing assets. Attract buyers' attention, show them something they won't want to miss, and stand out from the rest! Include dashboards, images, and other graphics in campaign content to deepen visual interest and increase consumption time.



Sample compelling image, courtesy of Hitachi Solutions

6. Make video the hero of your campaigns

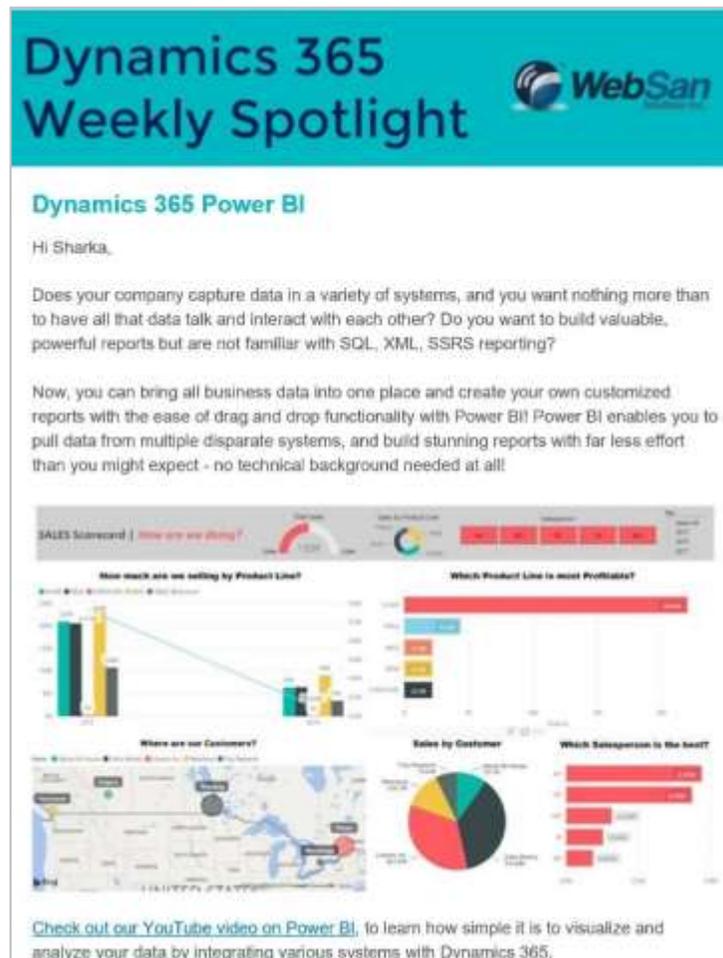
Online video is the future of content marketing. Why? In our world of information overload, video is easy to engage with. Your campaign strategy should include video content. Even if you operate a small business, you can inexpensively create authentic customer stories, educational videos, employee video blogs, and more. Share your videos on your website, embed links in your email campaigns, and post your videos on social media. Include a direct link to your marketplace business profile and offer listing at the end of all of your videos. Include alt text on images and captions to ensure your content is accessible.



Sample video, courtesy of K3 Retail

7. Keep your campaign content simple

Keep your messaging clear and to the point. Use language your customers would use to describe their needs or challenges, rather than using polished marketing verbiage. An abundance of text will be largely ignored. On your business profile, listing pages, conversion landing pages, and in campaign emails, try eliminating everything that isn't compelling or important.



Sample email, courtesy of WebSan Solutions Inc.

How to engage and not overwhelm the buyer's mind

- Include lots of white space and cut text
- Use simple, descriptive, ordinary language
- Avoid emotionless stock photos
- Tell your story in infographic form
- Incorporate videos, trials, demos, and interactive content
- Add subtitles or bullet points to help break up the text

8. Set up campaign tracking

Once you set up your own marketing campaign, you can use campaign tracking codes to measure the campaign results. With "OCID" tracking codes you can measure visitors and Call To Action (CTA) clicks for things like your marketing campaigns, social media posts, blogs, nurture emails, or any activity that is directed to your marketplace offer listing. The OCID tag or identifier enables you to track all user traffic and lets you better assess the effectiveness of those tactics in driving listing engagement.

How to properly implement OCID tracking codes for Microsoft AppSource or Azure Marketplace listings.

1. Select URL: Identify the Microsoft AppSource or Azure Marketplace listing for your campaign.
 - *Azure Marketplace example:* <https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/apps/Microsoft.DocumentDB?tab=overview>
 - *Microsoft AppSource example:* <https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/product/office/WA104380627?tab=Overview>
2. URL clean up: Remove 'tab=overview' from the listing's URL. If there is no 'tab=overview', then add "?" at the end. Make sure there is only 1 '?' before OCID:
 - *Azure Marketplace example:* <https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/apps/Microsoft.DocumentDB?>
 - *Microsoft AppSource example:* <https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/product/office/WA104380627?>
3. Create your own "campaign name" after "OCID", this could be any word that ties activities together, such as campaign, mktgcampaign, aprilcampaign. You can give each activity a unique identifier, or if you have multiple activities as part of a single campaign, you could use a common name as the identifier such as "aprilcampaign" so that you can easily group all activity results as part of that campaign.

Action: Add "ocid=campaignname_" after the "?" in the URL:

- *Azure Marketplace example:* https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/apps/Microsoft.DocumentDB?ocid=campaignname_
 - *Microsoft AppSource example:* https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/product/office/WA104380627?ocid=campaignname_
4. After the "campaign name" add other identifiers including your marketplace publisher name (required for tracking). Then you can include the asset name such as social image, paid search, blog

post, tweet. Optional: you can add the week number or assets number. Examples include: Microsoft_blog_wk1; Microsoft_search; campaign name_Microsoft_socialtext_no1; See below for examples.

Action: Add Publisher_assetname_wk# or Publisher_assetname_no# after "ocid=campaignname_" in the URL

- *Azure Marketplace example:* https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/apps/Microsoft.DocumentDB?ocid=campaignname_microsoft_socialimages_wk1
- *Microsoft AppSource example:* https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/product/office/WA104380627?ocid=campaignname_microsoft_blog_no1

Contact your Marketplace Rewards engagement manager to get reporting details on your OCID campaign tracking codes.

9. Become a Featured App on the commercial marketplace

One of the opportunities available to you on the commercial marketplace is having your solution promoted through the Featured Apps program. The program provides premium placement for eligible listings across Microsoft AppSource, Azure Marketplace, and Azure Portal. This allows your solution to be displayed in areas with valuable real estate and expose your listing to millions of customers each month. Leverage this opportunity to get exposure for your listing and drive growth.

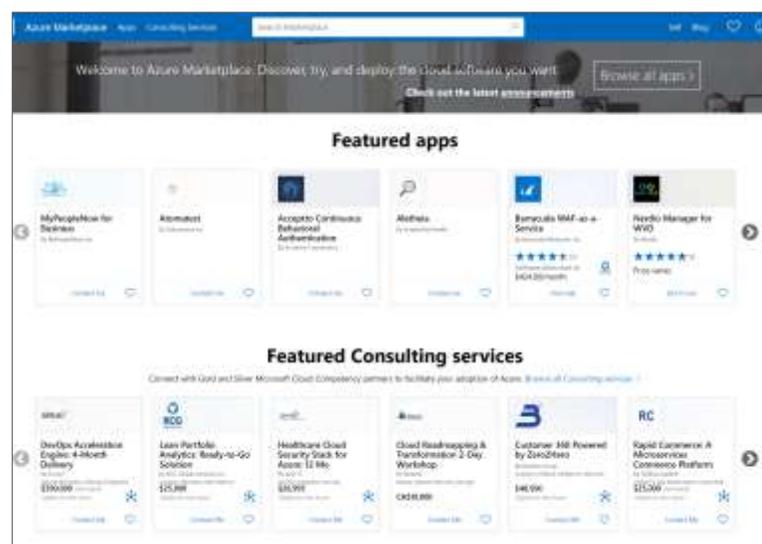
Who is eligible for a Featured App promotion?

All new consulting (proof of concept, implementation or workshop) and trial offer listings receive a category promotion. Transact offer listings with \$500+ marketplace billed sales also receive a category promotion and offers with \$1million+ in marketplace billed sales earn a homepage promotion. You can also receive placements if your solution is performing exceptionally well in the marketplace. When considering which apps will be eligible for performance-based featuring, we consider such metrics as MAU, leads, billed sales, and more.

Where can my listing be promoted?

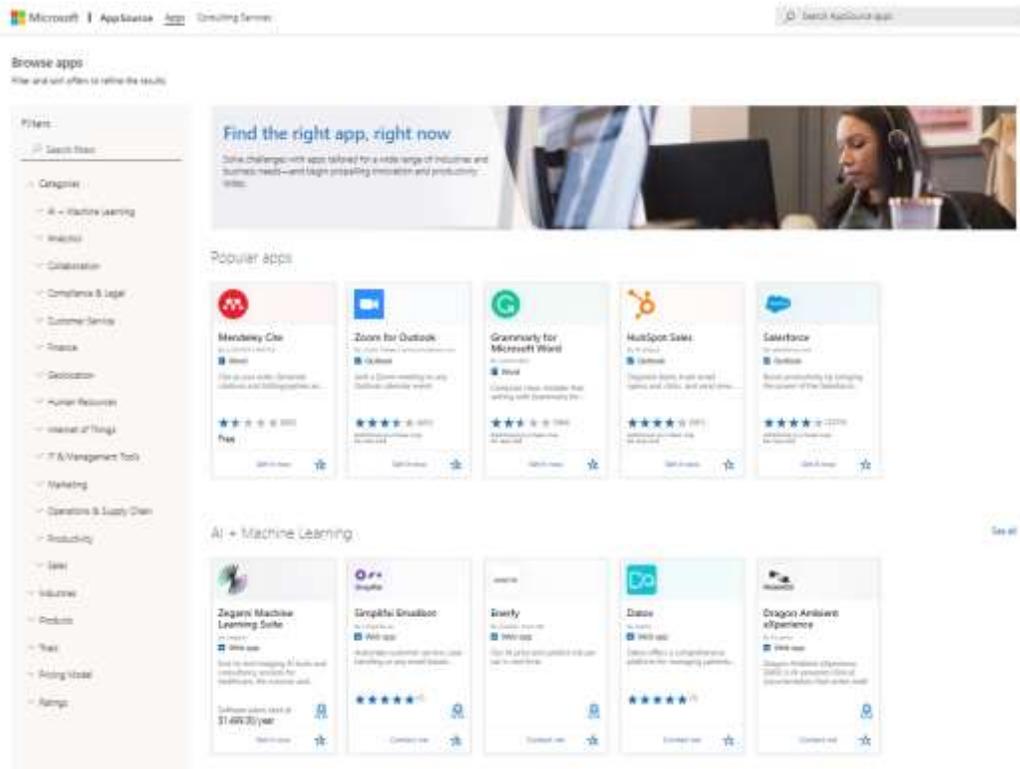
There are two primary types of featured app promotion: **homepage** promotions and **category** promotions. A homepage promotion is when your solution is featured within the Featured Apps area of azuremarketplace.microsoft.com or appsource.microsoft.com and the category placement allows you to appear in the featured area of each category which appears in the navigation menu items on the left hand side of the page in Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace (see images below).

Featured homepage placement - if your solution is eligible, you will receive at least 2 weeks of promotion on the relevant homepage, which will have a measurable impact on the success of your offer. The timing of your featured placement will be based on availability.



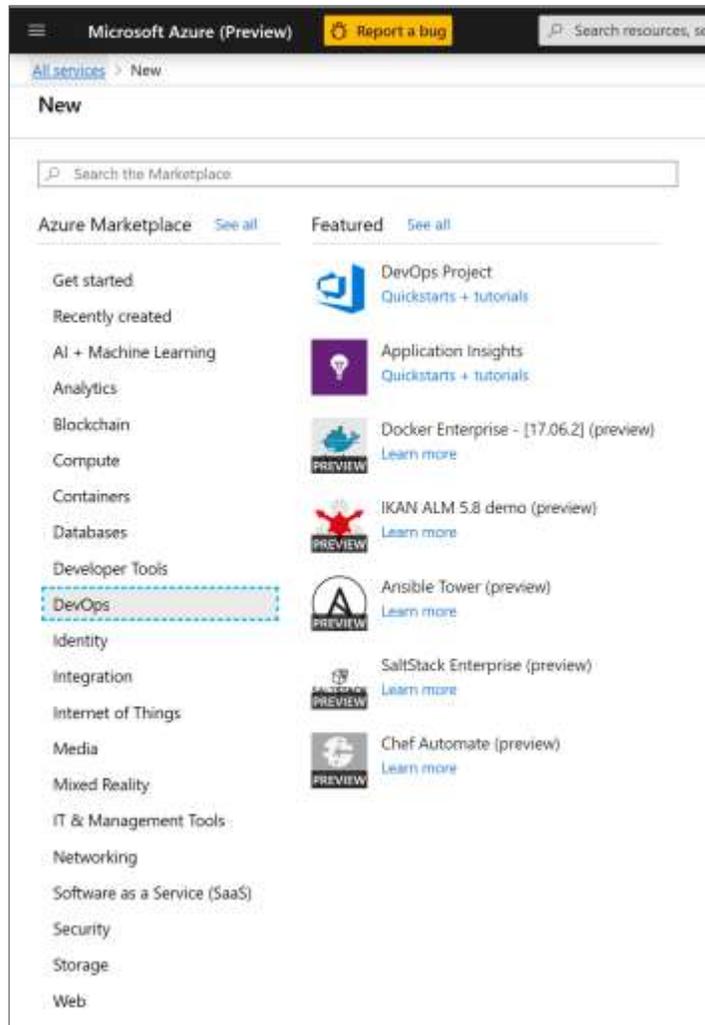
Homepage placement on Azure Marketplace

Category placement - once your commercial marketplace listing is optimized your solution will be eligible to be featured in one of the categories found on the left-hand side of your listing. You'll receive at least 2 weeks of promotion. The category and timing of your featured placement will be based on availability.



Category placement on Microsoft AppSource

Azure Portal solution promotion – for Azure offers, the majority of marketplace traffic goes to the Azure Portal (portal.azure.com). You can showcase your offer where it will be discovered by developers looking to deploy a solution, with a two-week premium placement in Azure Portal. The category and timing of your featured placement will be based on availability.



Azure Portal solution promotion

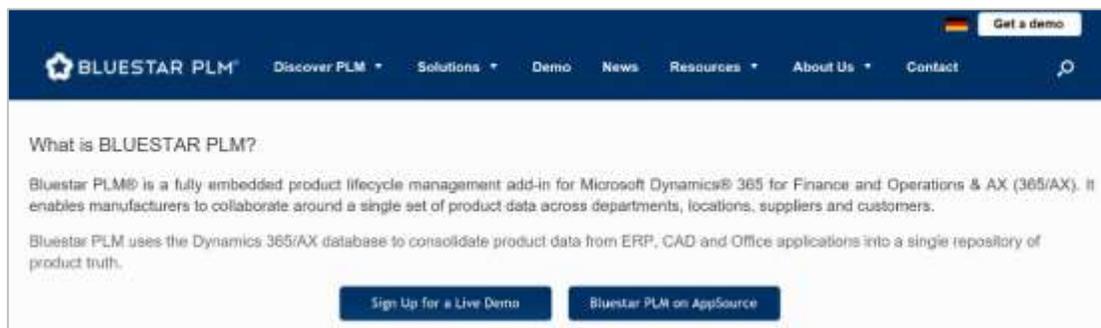
Speak to your Marketplace Rewards engagement manager about having your solution featured. If your request is accepted, time other marketing campaigns (social media posts, blog posts, SEM campaigns) to coincide with the period during which your solution is featured. This will help drive maximum impact of your campaign tactics.

Chapter 5

Techniques for driving traffic to your listing

You now understand the critical steps required to launch marketing campaigns that engage viewers and bring results. Here are some quick tips on how to draw greater traffic to your solution listing and sales landing page:

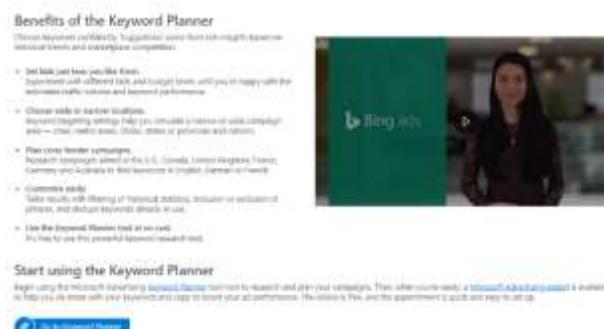
1. Indicate on your website and other marketing communications that your product or solution offering is available on Microsoft’s commercial marketplace, and that customers can easily access a trial offer there. Include social media share buttons on online pages and provide a link back to the marketplace. You can leverage the “Get it from” badges in our [Marketplace Marketing Toolkit](#) to promote your listing in content, web pages, or other sales or marketing collateral.



“Get it from” badges:

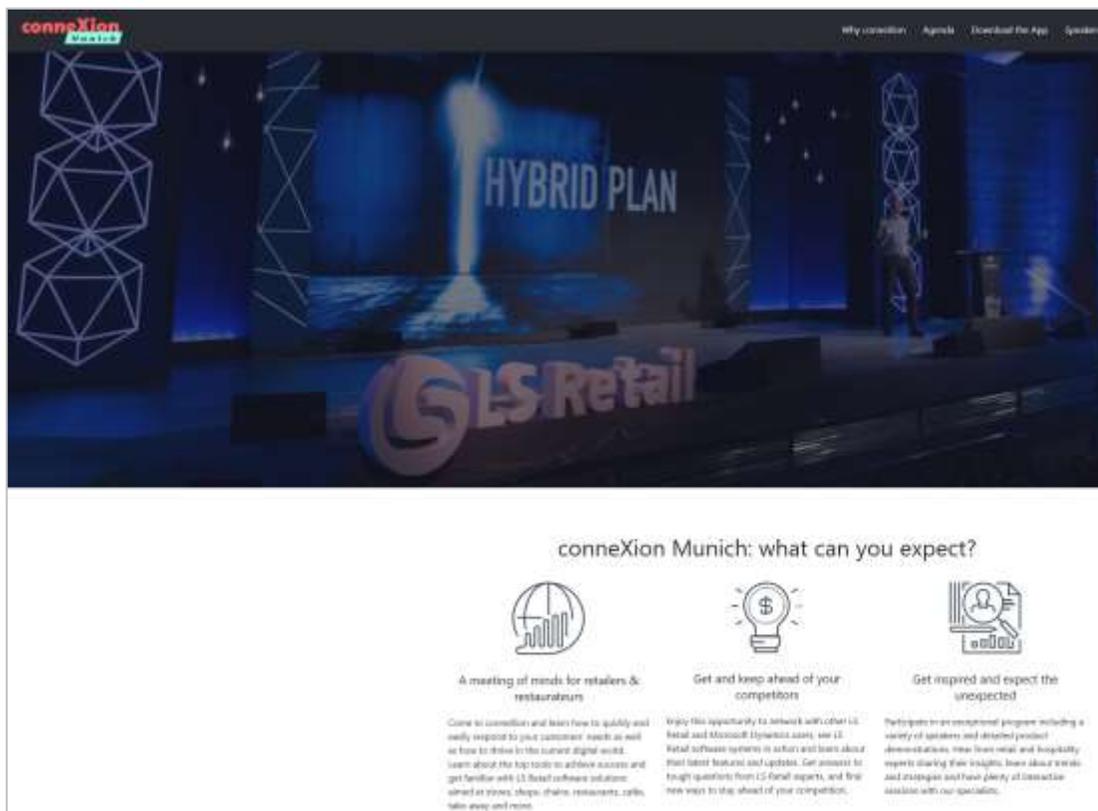
2. Use trusted, well-researched, and targeted industry terms to increase search rankings. Take advantage of keyword planning tools to choose your words more effectively.

Visit the [Microsoft Advertising Keyword Planner](#) or [Google Ads Keyword Planner](#) to get started.



3. Interact with those in your target segment. Make your presence known at industry events and conferences so that you can position your organization as a thought leader. Have links to your website posted on industry blogs, newsletters, and other relevant online publications. Show that you are an active member in your prospects' community. Cross links will help increase your search engine rankings as well.

4. Adopt the "conversational marketing" trend by engaging in two-way communication, creating a customer community, and aiming to provide customers and prospects with more than just a product experience. Create and post shareable educational videos. Help your customers gain recognition for their innovative implementations and showcase their successes. Leverage the power of referrals and focus on nurturing customer advocates.



LS Retail Customer Conference

5. Create links between channels (e.g., from your marketplace business profile and offer listing to your website, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, etc.). Leverage the "Get it from" badge in the [Marketplace Marketing Toolkit](#). Whatever platforms you are using, if you create a network between all of your touchpoints, you will be sure to gain an increase in traffic flow.

Chapter 6

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), and display media advertising

To increase the chances that your listing will be found on Microsoft's commercial marketplace, you should also apply search engine optimization (SEO) best practices. SEO refers to the process of optimizing your business profile, offer listing, and sales conversion page so that they will appear high in organic search results. Search engines regularly send automated, web-surfing software called "crawlers" out into the web to review and analyze website pages, searching for any updates and changes. These crawlers are gatekeepers to a search engine's ranking system. The more relevant your landing page updates are for the customer, the more frequently these crawlers re-analyze your listing, which benefits you.

Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace also let prospects find your business profile and offer listing using specific category filters. Be sure to align with these key search terms if you have industry domain expertise or workload specialization.

In addition to web search, users will also be able to find your business profile and offer listings using the marketplace search engine located in the top navigation bar of each storefront. Buyers can search by offer name, publisher, or specific keywords to get a filtered list of results. The marketplace search engine will render search results using a weighted scoring model. The search term used by the customer will be matched against the offer's title, the publisher name, the offer's short and long description as well as the search keywords added to the offer during the publishing process. Each of these inputs is weighted and the search algorithm will yield results based on these weights. Therefore, to ensure the highest search scoring possible, any keywords tagged to the offer in Partner Center should also be included in the content of the product detail page as well.

Steps to boost your search ranking

Content and keyword optimization

1. Keyword research – look for keywords which communicate the message of your business or offer. Look at blogs, Reddit, Facebook, and other social media to see what people think about the page. Choose high monthly search volume keywords and add them to the body content and to the headers of your business profile and offer listing. Review your competition. Picking the same keywords as competitors or other vendors will drive up the price of those keywords.
2. Keyword optimization – it is also important to know how to use keywords and where to place them within your marketplace business profile and offer listing. Are you using keywords at least 4 times in your content? Does your listing title and first paragraph contain your most important keywords? Avoid practices such as duplicate content and keyword stuffing (adding keywords that don't add value to the reader).
3. Content promotion – promote your content across channels, including your website and social media and build both internal and external links. Reach out to industry analysts, bloggers, partners, or other technology consultants for a review, a mention, or even just a quick link (within context of course) to your business profile or offer listing. It's imperative to create outbound links to related content as well.

Make your content fresh and relevant

Your content should be specific on a given topic and be kept up to date. Modify your business profile, offer listing and sales conversion pages regularly. Update screen shots, videos, text, and more. Search engines demand that you keep your listing current to show up in search results. Make sure you have a consistent message across all channels. Think about how all message touchpoints connect to accelerate your customer's decision.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

You may also choose to invest funds into promoting your marketplace business profile, offer listings, and sales conversion page to increase visibility in search engine results. In other words, your page can achieve a higher ranking in search engine results and appear above the organic

search results. This is referred to as search engine marketing (SEM) or pay-per-click (PPC).

Digital media advertising

There are also many paid options to gain increased awareness and attract higher visitor volumes using targeted display or banner advertising. Because of the complexity involved, we recommend working with a media buying agency or expert who can help you target and optimize your initial media plan to yield the highest return on investment. Hiring an expert will help you learn best practices and avoid mistakes. Important steps include choosing the right medium, defining your target buyer, assessing costs, identifying goals, designing effective advertisements, optimizing campaigns, and measuring and tracking results.

Digital media advertising examples

The screenshot shows a website with a navigation bar containing links for TOPICS, WEBINARS, DOWNLOADS, DICTIONARY, TUTORIALS, Q & A, TRENDING, VIRTUALIZATION, MACHINE LEARNING, BIG DATA, and ENTERPRISE. The main content area features an article titled "SaaS Benefits... and Challenges" with a sub-headline "Tech moves fast! Stay ahead of the curve with Techopedia!" and a "Subscribe" button. A list of bullet points is visible below the article. On the right side, a Microsoft Azure advertisement is displayed, featuring the text "Scalable. Flexible. Secure." and "Start with Azure Storage and get a \$250 (CAD) credit for 30 days." The ad includes a laptop image and a "TRY AZURE FREE" button. A red dashed box highlights the advertisement, and a red arrow points to it from the right.

FORTUNE The Challenge Every Tech Company is Facing Right N...

Based on the recent Best Workplaces in Technology list findings, there are some key factors that the very best tech organizations utilize to develop a high-performance, high-trust organization. But what about the thousands of other tech companies that cannot boast such incredible workplace cultures? Truth be told, they should be worried. Whether they're in Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, or Austin, non-tech companies are aiming to scratch their most important resource: their people. So what can a company do to limit the potential brain drain?

Get your free Beginner's Guide now. [Download Now](#)

1. Have a clear path for advancement and growth in the organization

It sounds simple and fairly obvious, yet the number of companies that don't have career paths and opportunities for ongoing development is astonishing. Almost more than any other field, it is imperative that tech professionals are able to see where their careers might take them and how they might learn whatever the next great skill or language might be. Don't think you have the time to spend on career development conversations? Imagine how much time you won't have if your critical tech staff leaves.

1. Have a defined point of view on compensation

Technology employees, generally, are higher-paid. But the answer to keeping them isn't just to raise salaries across the board. That is a zero-sum game. There is always going to be someone that pays more.

Learn how today Download our free whitepaper now. [Download Now](#)

Have a clear definition of your compensation position:

- Where do you intend to fall in terms of pay for the industry? There is no right

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by Catherine Rosewood



Chapter 7

Converting visitors into prospects

Give prospects control

After you are successful in drawing attention to your business profile and offer listing, it is important to provide prospects with the next immediate step that will move them along the buying journey. Purchasers want control throughout their decision-making process; they decide when and how they get the information they need. It is therefore critical to provide as many engagement options as possible, so that they can plan their own buying journey. Trials should be customer-led and require no purchase or configuration.

Read [detailed guidance on offering Test Drives](#) on your marketplace offer listing.

The strategic purpose and value of a free trial

When you offer a free trial and a competitor does not, you immediately have an advantage. You appear more trustworthy and transparent, leaving your prospect with a positive bias towards your company. The aim of offering a trial is to drive the visitor from interest to desire. A trial can help you demonstrate your solution's value and nudge a prospect toward commitment and activation.

Trial options

Offering prospects a trial experience increases engagement as well as exposure to your solution. 27% of app searches in the marketplace are filtered by users to look for solutions with trials. Without a trial you are decreasing your chances of being found by users.

There are different "trial" offer options, and each has its pros and cons. By providing more than one option to visitors, you allow them to choose their own experience, based on where they are in the buying journey. Below are three trial options you can offer prospects:

	Key benefits	Choose this option if...
Free trial	Enables customers to try your product before they buy and includes an automatic method to convert to paid use. Also provides proofs of concept for the customer and joint engagement with Microsoft sales teams.	<p>Your solution is a virtual machine or solution template.</p> <p>Your solution is a SaaS offering, and you offer a multitenant SaaS product.</p> <p>You have a first-run experience to get a customer up and running quickly.</p> <p>You have a single tenant but are adding customers as guest users.</p>
Test drive	Enables customers to try your product before they buy. Also provides a guided experience of your solution on a pre-configured setup.	<p>Your solution is a virtual machine, solution template, or SaaS app with a single tenant, or is difficult to provision.</p> <p>You don't have a method to convert your trial to a paid offer.</p>
Interactive demo	Allows customers to see your product in action without the complexity of setup.	Your solution requires a complex setup that would be hard to achieve in the trial period.

A **customer led free trial** provides prospects with the most control over their trial experience. They can chart their own paths and self-determine their interactions on their own schedules. You may be able to limit how long a prospect can interact with the trial environment to a single visit, to a number of single visits, or to the full length of a trial period. By keeping your trial short, you encourage prospects to increase engagement and you create a sense of urgency, which can also compress your sales cycle. Include a call-to-action to accelerate conversion to paid use of your solution.

A **test drive** can be used when your solution is deployed via one or more Virtual Machines via IaaS or SaaS apps. The benefit of this approach is the automated provisioning of a virtual appliance or entire solution environment, couched in a partner-hosted “guided tour” of the solution for customer evaluation, at no additional cost. The prospect does not need to be an existing Microsoft customer.

Benefits of a test drive

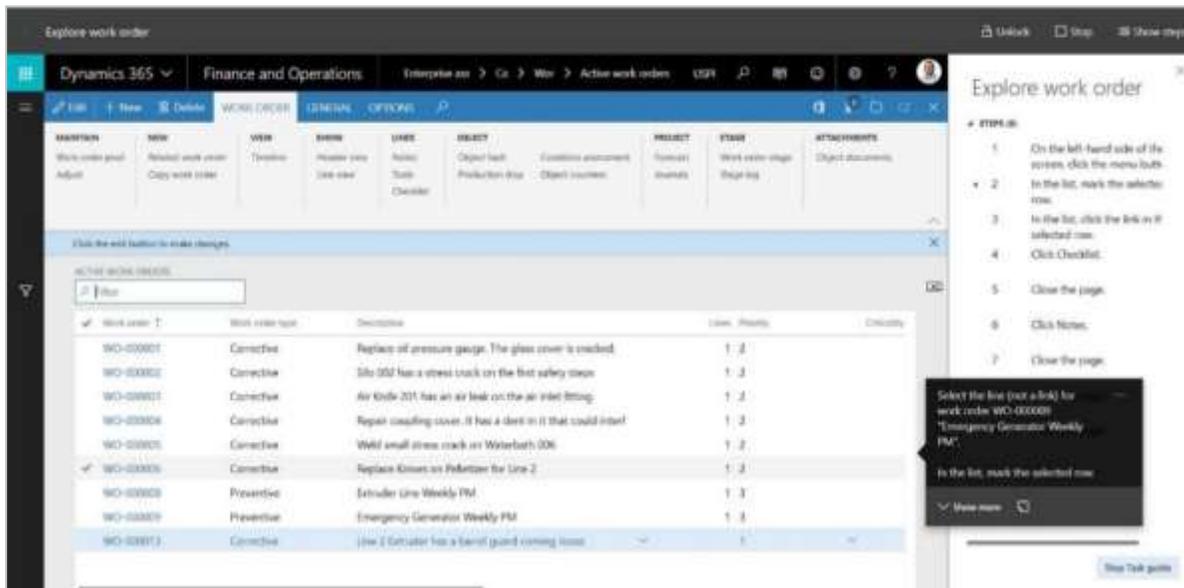
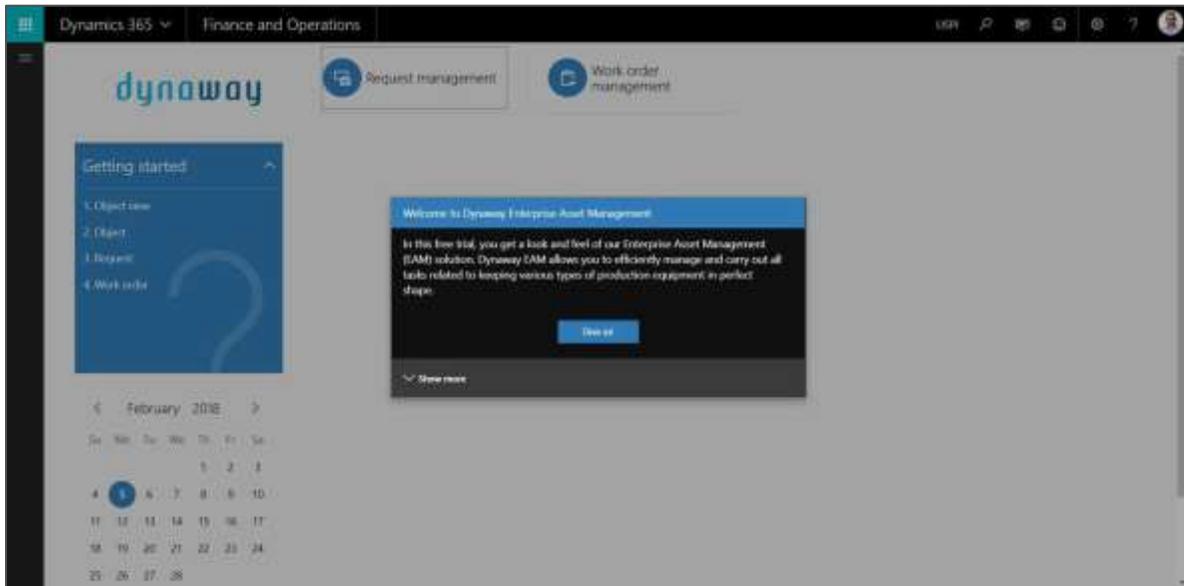
- 27% of user search requests are refined to only show offers with trials or test drives
- Offers with test drives generate 38% more leads than offers without
- 6% of new customer acquisitions on Azure Marketplace stem from test drives by prospective buyers
- Enables Microsoft field sellers to better assess your product for co-sell efforts

A **partner-led interactive demo** requires prospects to identify themselves and to wait for you to contact them to arrange a demonstration or trial. While this allows you to uncover more information, qualify prospects, and provide a more tailored and customized trial experience, it takes control away from prospects. It may also add an unnecessary hurdle in the buying process and increases your sales costs. The benefit of this option is that you can provide a trial experience without provisioning for complex solutions. This option allows prospective customers to see the key features of your solution that they are most interested in, while in turn providing you with valuable leads that can be nurtured. Demonstrate sensitivity by providing other viewing options in addition to your partner-led demo.

While self-running demos can depict visually rich, simulated user experiences, they offer limited interactive opportunity. If you do offer automated demos, it's better to have a few that are 3-5 minutes long instead of having one single extended demo. Prospects want to be able to dive in and out as they explore what is relevant to their specific needs. You can also offer a chat option on your sales landing page that allows prospects to get answers to their questions throughout the buying process.

Regardless of which type of trial you offer, structure it in a way that speaks to a specific buyer persona. Offer use case scenarios if possible. As outlined earlier, determine who your target buyers are and what is driving them to look for a solution. Then ensure your trial guides them through what is most important to them and addresses their concerns. Each buyer type will be interested in different capabilities and benefits, so your trial should reflect these variances in focused and compelling ways.

Sample guided tour provided by Dynaway:



Chapter 8

Effective trial nurture process

Once you capture prospects' interest on the marketplace business profile or offer listing and they start a trial or engage with you, it is essential to have a clearly defined trial nurture process. The goal during a trial is to help the customer understand how your solution or service can address their enterprise concerns and challenges, which will trigger a deeper level of interest.

Whatever the duration of your trial, the nurture focus period should kick in as soon as possible and begin no longer than 14 days from the onset of customer explorations. This trial duration length is effective for the customer to evaluate and better understand the product value and be ready to engage in the next step of the purchase journey.

Define a marketing nurture process

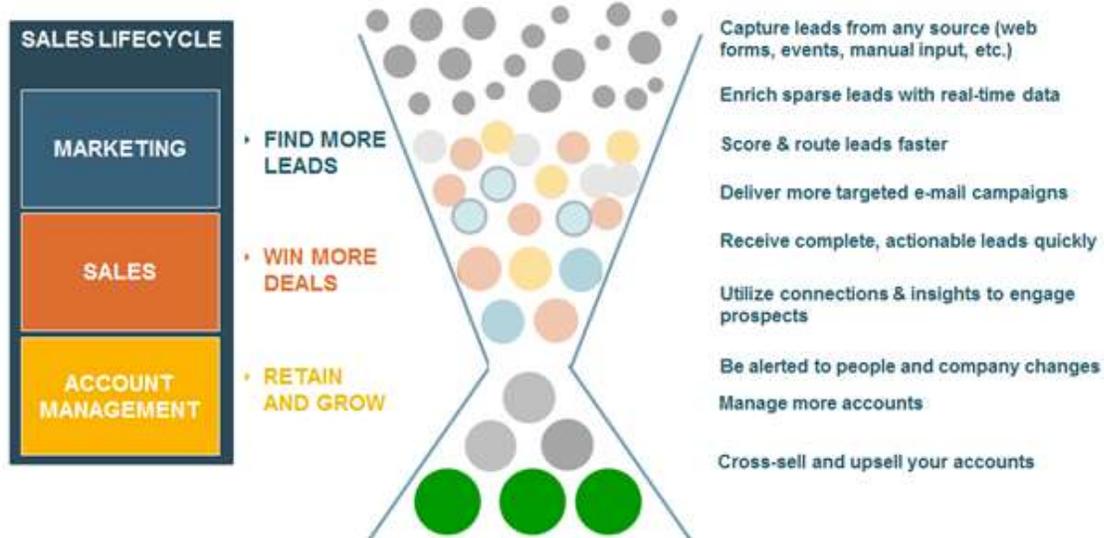
All your marketplace leads should be nurtured and monitored along a deliberate evaluation path and nurture process. Touchpoints for prospects benefit from being well executed—both during and after trial, workshop, proof of concept, or other engagement. For best results, you will need to proactively engaged and monitor, guide, and nurture potential customers along a path that actively removes obstacles, while encouraging high engagement and interest.

Your chosen nurture process will vary based on whether you have in-app intelligence to monitor trial user behavior throughout interaction with the solution being trialed. If you can gather these insights, you can trigger an action-based email sequence that gently nudges potential new customers towards a desired outcome. If trial users are overlooking key features, you can offer self-serve resources, tips, guides, tutorials, and other documentation, all of which help a higher product engagement and interest which deepens and is effective in being more apt to be ready to purchase.

For services or apps that lack a trial, you can plan a nurture track based on a timed sequence of pre-determined nurture emails. Striking a balance between staying top-of-mind and being aggressive is important. We recommend encouraging users to buy towards the end of this nurture sequence, after trust is earned and they have the depth to understand the capabilities and features of your solution offering.

Sample marketing lead nurture process map

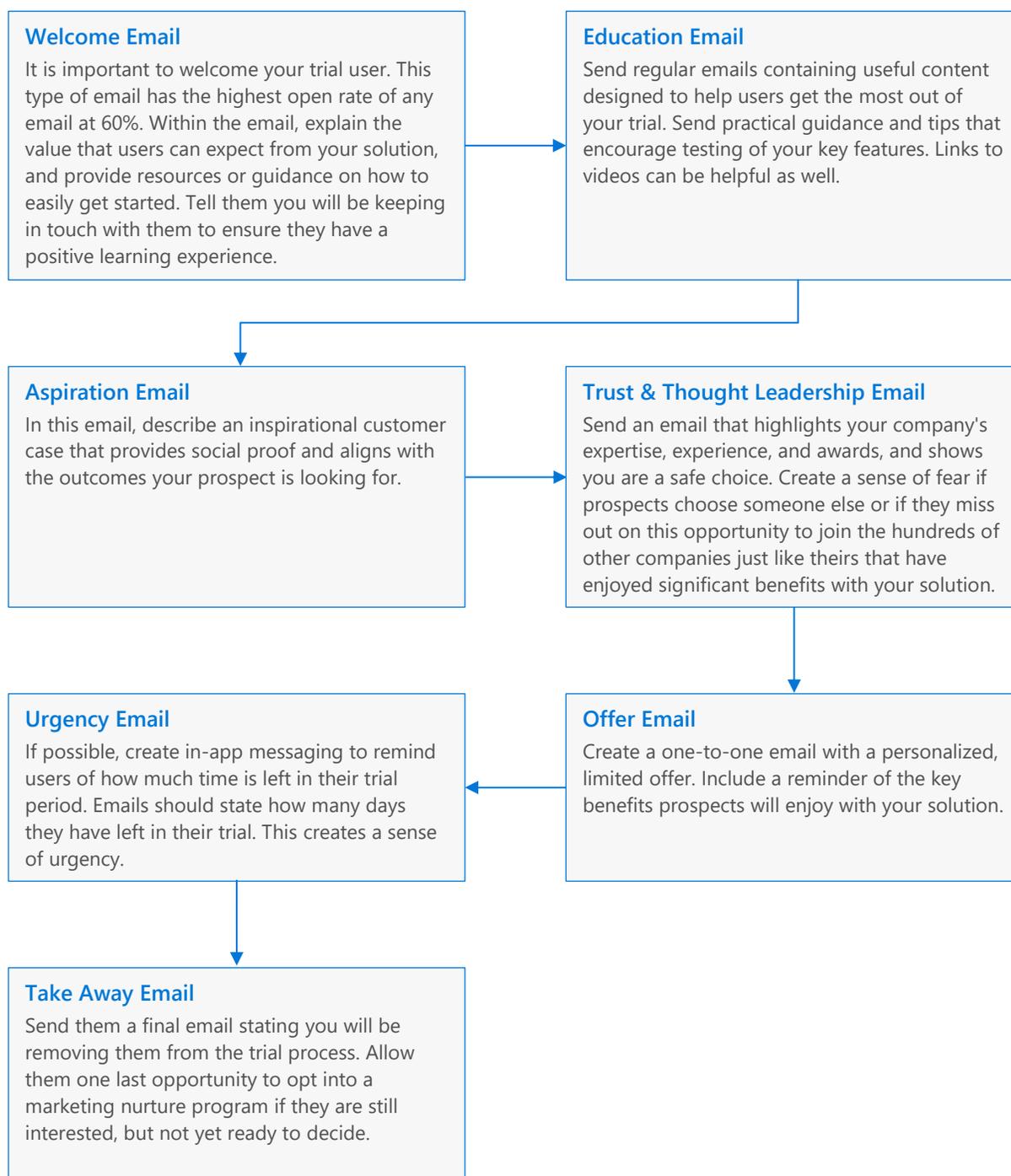
INTELLIGENT CONTENT MARKETING



[Source: Lead-to Revenue, Marketing Sales \(Inside View\)](#)

Nurture cycle

Regardless of the nurture track, the following types of emails are effective during the nurture cycle:



Tracking leads

To receive leads from Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace, you must enable your CRM (e.g., Marketo, Microsoft Dynamics, or Salesforce) to accept lead data. All offer types, regardless of storefront, product integration, or billing capabilities, will receive leads based on this database integration. Review [guidance on lead management in the marketplace](#) to learn more.

Best practices when engaging with new leads

1. **Consider how you reach out:** Social media outreaches (for example, on LinkedIn or Twitter) is not a replacement for an official email acknowledgement. It's recommended to reach out to the customer with the information they provided for outreach. Outreach outside of those mediums may elicit negative customer response.
2. **Personalized corporate email is best:** Initial email outreach to new lead(s) will have a higher engagement if sent from a personalized official corporate email that is not a <no-reply@your company domain>
 - Emails that come from <no-reply> are often auto-filtered into junk and spam. Ensure your mails are received and read by using a personal touch as follow-up.
 - Including a phone number option for your customer to reach you also improves responsiveness. Many customers just want to pick up the phone and connect with someone real-time.
3. **Provide context:** Even though the customer provided consent for outreach, context goes a long way to helping create a great customer experience. Let them know who you are, how you're connected to the offer they are interested in, trialed, or purchased, and let them know how you can support them with the offering. Avoid pushing a cross-sell or up-sell as this is not what the customer consented to when sharing their details.
4. **Keep it transactional:** When customers agreed to share their contact information in the marketplace, they agreed to be contacted with transactional communications and/or support for the product. They did not consent to marketing or promotional follow-up. Keep your customers happy by respecting these consent permissions.

Lead scoring

Nurturing the customer post-purchase is key to retaining and gaining future business. Sales organizations often share the challenge of managing many leads from multiple resources. In order to leverage Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace as a significant channel, the first step would be to enable your CRM to accept lead data, and then to start tracking and managing these leads according to your existing lead management process. One of the most common methods is using lead scoring, which ranks leads to determine a lead's sales-readiness. This mechanism will help focus your efforts and resources to drive for higher conversions - turn opportunities to wins. The marketplace supports many major CRM systems (e.g., Microsoft Dynamics, Salesforce, Marketo, etc.).

Dynamics 365, for example, offers predictive lead scoring (PLS), which leverages advanced machine learning capabilities. Anyone in your sales organization can benefit from the resulting scores, not just a data scientist or IT pro. This mechanism works as follows:

Predictive lead scoring

- Model training – In this step, Dynamics 365 analyzes the performance of historical leads in your CRM and identifies patterns unique to your business, as they are learned from your data.
- Scoring – Each open lead is correlated with the pattern learned from your historical data and given a score. The higher the score, the more likely the lead is to convert. Offers with test drives generate 38% more leads than offers without.

Another significant insight is provided by scoring leads across different campaign types. The algorithm can indicate when more qualified leads came from a specific campaign (e.g., social network campaign) and score the lead accordingly. Dynamics 365 Sales Insights detects important features such as campaign type and learns from them to improve future scoring.

In that sense, the marketplace allows you to easily identify leads that are more likely to convert.

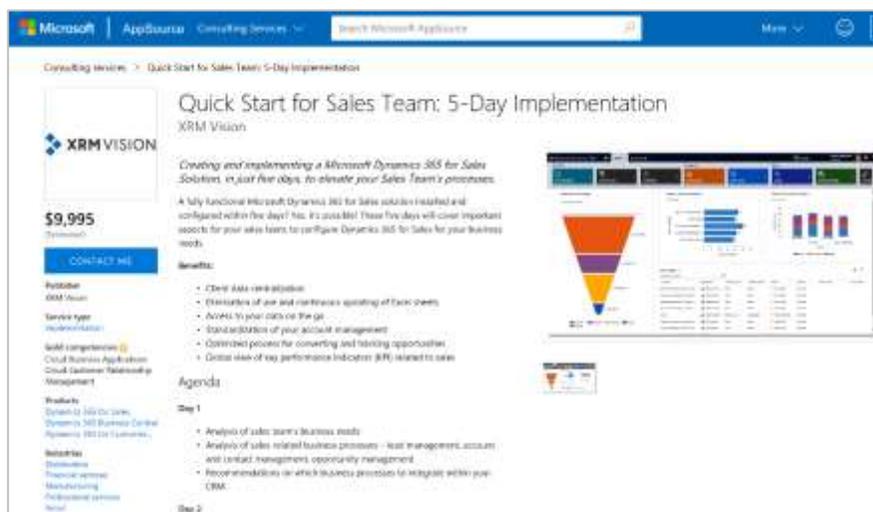
Marketplace leads can be scored differently according to the type of listing. For example, leads that came from a transactable offer are more likely to be qualified than a lead generated from a Contact Me listing. Leads who clicked Trial have showed intent and therefore can become more significant in your pipeline. In some cases, you can get valuable information about the lead, such as company name, title,

and geography. Remember that you can gather information about your prospects, such as visitors and call to action clicks by using campaign tracking. For more information, see chapter 4 (page 27).

Pricing

The commercial marketplace allows you to transact certain apps. There are varying transact capabilities between Microsoft AppSource and Azure Marketplace. To see a full list of capabilities and differences check out the [transact section of the Publisher Guide](#). You have Pay-as-You-Go and Bring-Your-Own-License billing options. When the Pay-as-You-Go Transact publishing option is used, your usage-based software licensing revenue is shared 97% / 3% between you and Microsoft, respectively. A single offer can be priced with both Pay-as-You-Go and Bring Your Own License billing models and can co-exist at the offer level as separate SKUs. This can be configured in your offer in Partner Center.

If directly transacting with customers on the marketplace is not available to you, and your prospects have completed a free trial, test drive or interactive demo, they will want to know if they can afford your solution. However, they may not yet be ready to engage with a salesperson to get a quote or proposal. Provide prospects with pricing information on your sales landing page and if possible, present them with sample packaged offers; this will allow them to get started with your solution right away. Shorten your sales cycle by giving prospects the opportunity to buy immediately after a trial.



Sample packaged implementation services from XRM Visio

Qualified partners can create professional services or consulting-type listings in both storefronts. This is a great opportunity to showcase your domain expertise and move the prospect from interest to purchase. The publishing requirements for this offer type are different from offers that are application-based, so visit the requirements in the [publisher guide](#) to determine if this is a useful opportunity for you. These offer types do not have a revenue share because they are meant to be a lead capture mechanism and not a transaction vehicle. They

do, however, have a stated price, and you should consider how this affects the perception of your product detail page. You can frame your service prices as fixed or variable, based on the scope of the engagement. Think about how that will affect a customer's understanding of what to expect from the service delivery.

To accelerate the buying decision, provide 3 or 4 different tiered packages. Your middle offering should ideally be your highest-margin, most popular option. A low entry package will encourage a quick buying decision and remove barriers to purchasing with potential for upselling later. A high-priced package will make the middle option more attractive and allow you to provide a premium option for more complicated implementations. In addition, consider offering fixed price, "quick start" 30-day-or-less deployments or a pilot project to speed up purchasing decisions.

Other pricing considerations

- What is your pricing model today?
- What are you going to monetize with your offer? A feature set, or services, or both? This might depend on what a customer will be deploying from the storefront: is it a fully functional app, or is it a subset of your product's full capabilities?
- Would one of the following standard pricing models apply to your feature set?
 - Flat rate, with monthly or annual billing
 - Billing per user, per consumption, or other usage-based (custom meter)
 - Billing per hour of consumption or usage
 - Hybrid (For example, flat rate plus a per usage fee)
- Would your sales organization need to shift their approach, based on the pricing?

When a customer comes to your marketplace offer, they should be able to easily calculate what their "total cost of ownership" (TCO) should be. This means that answering the above questions for your marketplace product and having specific dollar or other currency amounts on your "plans + pricing" tab will help them move forward with confidence with a deployment.

Chapter 9

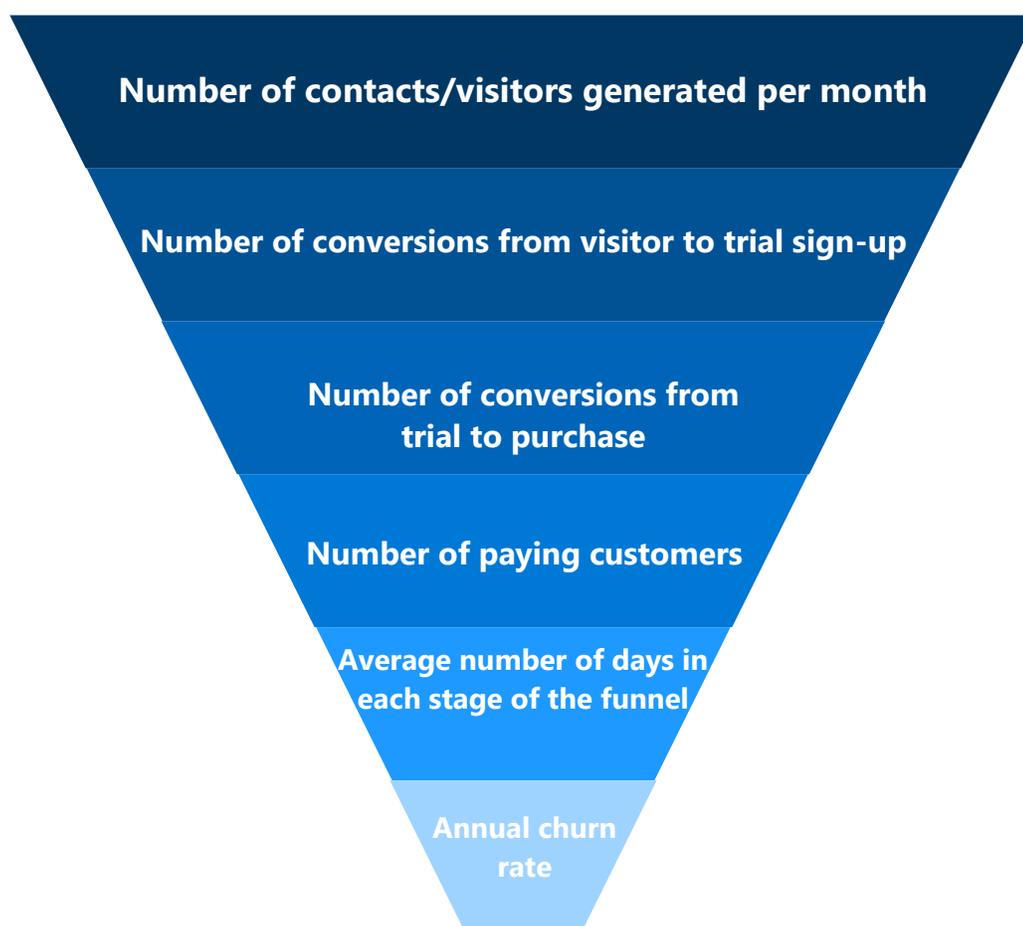
Reporting and analysis

Measure and optimize

Marketing is both an art and a science. Know what you want to achieve in terms of revenue generation and new customer acquisition. Set objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all your campaigns. Benchmark your monthly results and assess the impact of changes you make to your solution listing, landing page or trials along the way.

Set targets and regularly measure the following KPIs to gain insight and improve your business profile, offer listing, sales landing page, and campaigns:

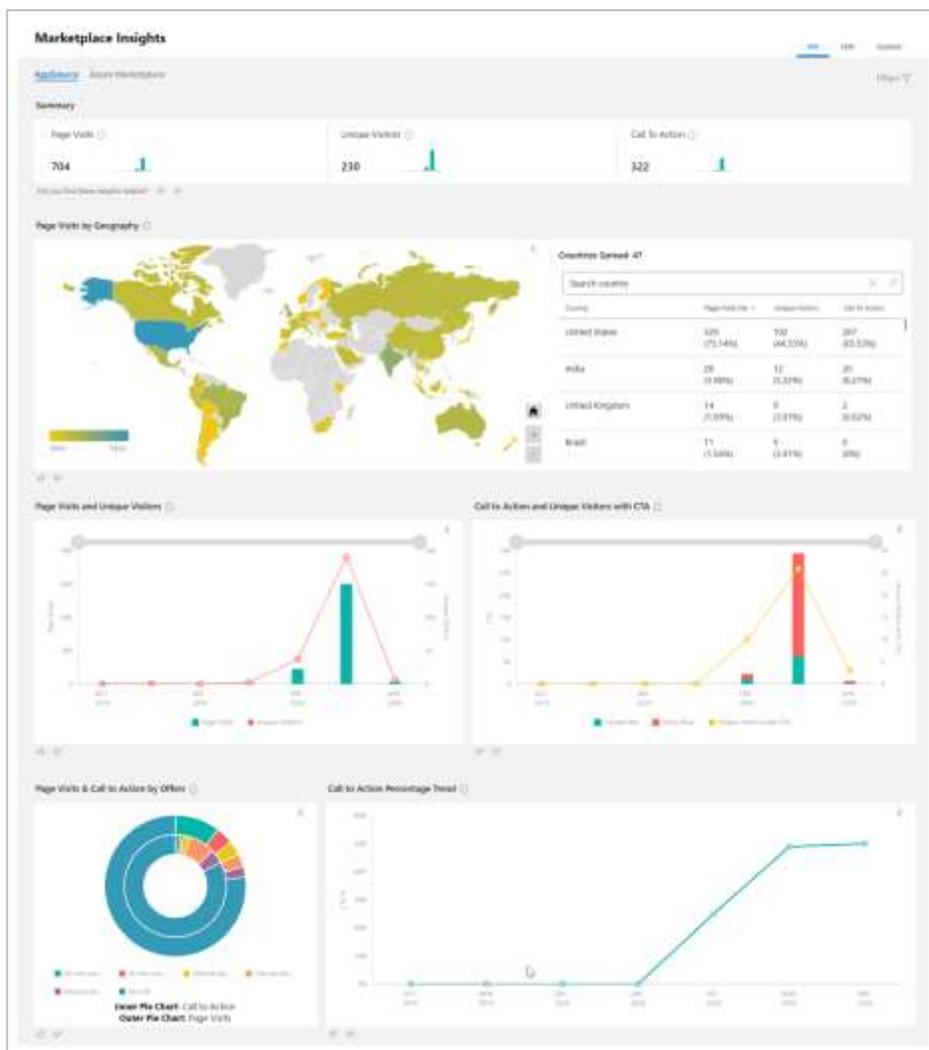
Sales funnel efficiency



Track traffic source performance

You will use many different marketing media to promote your new solution, including your Microsoft marketplace listing, SEO, paid advertising, social media campaigns, targeted email campaigns, and more. Tracking prospects by lead source will be important to ensure marketing effectiveness. Closely track and measure your results by medium and lead source in relation to your goals to ensure a high return on your marketing investment, and to further refine your messaging when necessary.

Your success is our success. You can visit the Partner Center [“Analyze”](#) dashboard to uncover your analytics. You can use it to monitor sales, evaluate performance, and optimize your offers in the marketplace. The improved analytics tools enable you to act on performance results and maintain better relationships with your customers and resellers.



Reports included in the Analyze dashboard

- Summary snapshot of orders
- Usage
- Deployments
- Customer trends
- Detailed orders, usage, and customer data
- Orders and usage listed in a monthly summary or as a six-month trend view
- Usage/orders categorized based on several criteria
- Insights reports with the following metrics:
 - Page visits
 - Unique visitors
 - Trends in page visits versus unique visitors
 - Trends in call to action clicks versus unique visitors
 - Trends by offer
 - Clicks on the call to action button
 - Visitors by geography
 - Referral domains (sources of your marketplace traffic)
- Detailed reports showing customer information, including geographic location, and, if the customer has consented to provide the information, their company name and location down to the ZIP/postal code, so you can compare your customers and compensate your sellers

These metrics are provided with easy-to-read visualizations, as well as a data table function where you can download your data in a CSV file and pivot it based on filters that are important to your business. This allows you to analyze your data and compare it to data you might be extracting from other marketing automation tools, to get a view of your marketing impact and your overall marketplace business.

A recommended best practice is to decide on what Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) you will measure for a campaign and use these reports to validate progress toward achieving these indicators.

Specific attributes we provide about your customers

- Reseller
- First Name
- Last Name
- Email
- Company Name
- Transaction Date
- Subscription name
- Azure Subscription ID (PAY customers only)
- Cloud Instance Name
- Order Count
- Customer Country Region
- Customer City
- Customer Communication Culture
- Reseller Customer Zip/Postal Code

Map prospect interactions

Knowing how many interactions (e.g., emails, demonstrations, content downloads, blog visits, etc.) it takes before a customer will sign up for a trial and convert to a buyer will enable you to plan and tailor your marketing efforts accordingly. This may take some time to determine, but the insight gained will be very valuable.

Marketing budget forecasts

Most vendors under-invest in marketing. Business-to-business firms typically spend between 7%-10% of their gross revenue on marketing. Allocate adequate budget to (a) ensure you have the marketing resources to follow up and qualify leads, (b) drive marketing nurture programs and campaigns, and (c) develop marketing content that educates prospects.

Questions to ask when making marketing investment decisions and establishing budget control measures

You can track the following in one place and stay on top of performance with a simple marketing key performance indicator dashboard:

- What is my allowable cost to acquire a new customer?
- What is the customer's estimated lifetime value?
- What can I expect the average monthly value of each new customer to be?
- What is the average acquisition timeframe for each customer in months?
- What is the expected annual churn rate?

Appendix

Additional resources

Microsoft Azure Marketplace	https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com
Microsoft AppSource	https://appsource.microsoft.com
Azure Marketplace and Microsoft AppSource Publishing Guide	https://aka.ms/marketplacepublisherguide
Create a business profile	https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/partner-center/create-a-marketing-profile
Publishing a Test Drive on Azure Marketplace	https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/marketplace/test-drive-technical-configuration
Microsoft Azure Resources	https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/resources/
Azure Expert Managed Services Provider (MSP)	https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/membership/azure-expert-msp
Microsoft Partner Network	https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/
Advanced specializations	https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/membership/advanced-specialization
Partner Marketing Center	Go to market faster, reach the right customers, and increase your profit with customizable materials: https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/reach-customers/tools-and-services
GTM benefits for all commercial marketplace publishers	https://aka.ms/marketplacerewards
Launch and grow your business with the support of the Microsoft GTM Services team	https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/solutions/go-to-market

This is a living document as marketplace marketing best practices are continually evolving. Be sure to check back for new ideas and updates to this guide.



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