

Overview and FAQ for partners

February 2024

Microsoft Cloud for Retail



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| Icon of a checklist document clipboard with a gear besides it | About this document |

Purpose: This Microsoft Cloud for Retail Overview and FAQ is designed to help partners answer common questions about Microsoft Cloud for Retail and understand how they enable and benefit from the cloud offerings.

Audience: Microsoft partners and others interested in learning more about Microsoft Cloud for Retail and related partner opportunities.

When to use: Use this document when seeking to understand the Microsoft industry clouds or Microsoft Cloud for Retail. This document is not designed to be customer facing or provide customer-facing messaging. In addition to this FAQ, we recommend that you take advantage of the full breadth of partner resources on the [Microsoft Cloud for Retail Partner Assets](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/asset#/?industry=Retail) page, which includes customer-facing material.

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| Icon of a checklist | January 11, 2024 disclosure announcement |

Q: What was announced in January 2024 for Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Retailers globally have experienced continued change and uncertainty over the past few years – from evolving shopper expectations to continued staffing shortages. To address these challenges, retailers are turning to technology. In the era of AI, they have an opportunity to use data-backed generative AI solutions to help unlock customized shopping experiences, enhance store associates’ performance and productivity, and uncover insights that ultimately lead to better customer engagement and satisfaction across the shopper journey. According to a Microsoft commissioned study through IDC, retail organizations are realizing a return on their AI investments within nine months, and for every $1 a retailer invests in AI, it is seeing an average return of $3.45x.

Microsoft Cloud for Retail can now help retailers harness the power of AI to unlock growth across their entire business, realizing value quickly through the following templates and data solutions. On January 11, 2024, Microsoft announced new generative AI and data solutions for retailers – encompassing the shopper and store associate experiences and the underlying data foundation that helps power AI across the entire retail business.

The following capabilities were introduced:

* Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure Open AI Service
* Copilot template for store operations on Azure Open AI Service.
* Retail data solutions in Fabric

And the following descriptor changes have been made:

* Smart Store Analytics is now the application template for smart store analytics in Power BI
* Store Operations Assist is now the application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams.

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| Icon of a laptop with a document shown in the screen | Introduction to industry clouds |

Q: What are Microsoft industry clouds?

Microsoft industry clouds are new extensions of existing Microsoft Cloud services. Each of these offerings is designed to work as one, bringing together the breadth of our solutions with new capabilities, customizations, and standards tailored specifically for each industry. Customers do not need to migrate any existing deployments to take advantage of these capabilities as industry clouds do not have dedicated data centers.

The clouds are composed of industry-specific pillars. Each pillar represents a high-level business outcome that the customer is trying to achieve (e.g., elevate the shopping experience). Each solution play has a set of “customer scenarios,” that apply a technical capability to solve customers’ specific pain points.

Q: What value do the industry clouds offer that surpasses traditional cloud services?

Microsoft industry clouds combine the power and value of Microsoft 365, Azure, Dynamics 365, and Microsoft Power Platform with capabilities tailored to specific industry needs. Those industry-specific capabilities are built with components that are available exclusively as part of the industry clouds and are not available as part of Microsoft’s other cloud services: Industry apps, sample apps, workflows, AI models, connectors, open standards, third-party connectors, industry data models, common data services (CDS), and Synapse. These solutions lower the barrier to entry for new development and reduce time-to-market, enabling you to deliver more value to your customers in less time.

Q: Why is Microsoft focused on industries?

Microsoft’s deep commitment to industry is not new. We know businesses increasingly need to apply tools and technology to ensure resiliency. While this need for resilience and agility is applicable to every organization, retailers face specific challenges and need solutions unique to their industry. That’s why Microsoft has invested in industry-specific cloud solutions – vertical offerings tailored to address the unique needs of industries while removing friction and accelerating the speed to value.

Q: How is Microsoft’s Industry Cloud differentiated from the competition?

Microsoft is bringing together not just data and applications, but ecosystems and APIs to accelerate business outcomes. Our industry clouds provide:

* Simplified packaging model for industry-relevant IP across the Microsoft Cloud
* Built on the Microsoft foundation of compliance, security, and trust
* Engineering-backed roadmap and lifecycle commitment
* Industry expertise and support

A key differentiator is Microsoft’s unique ability to provide solutions across the end-to-end shopper journey. Microsoft Cloud for Retail connects high value business workloads across PaaS and SaaS, built on a platform of trust. Microsoft uniquely competes on multiple fronts in retail: against PaaS providers, as well as SaaS dominant players. These competitors have taken two separate approaches. SaaS competitors offer "Commerce Cloud" applications based on a combination of acquired and organically built technologies.

On the other hand, PaaS competitors have launched cloud solutions consisting of both their own capabilities and partner solution integrations. Microsoft is in the unique position to offer an end-to-end omni-channel Microsoft Cloud for Retail covering PaaS to SaaS. Through Microsoft Cloud for Retail, Microsoft will provide retailers with offerings built on a common platform and with consistent architectures, and deliver integrated, interoperable, and extensible capabilities. Our robust partner ecosystem extends the value of the platform with retail specific solutions to address the industry’s most urgent challenges, and future proof retail organizations to proactively be ready for what’s next.

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| Icon of a hand holding a document | Overview of Microsoft Cloud for Retail |

Q: What is Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail accelerates business growth by providing trusted retail industry solutions that integrate with retailer’s existing systems. Through this complete set of retail specific capabilities across the Microsoft Cloud portfolio, in addition to partner solutions, it becomes possible to seamlessly connect your customers, your people, and your data.

Specifically, the Cloud for Retail is composed of four industry pillars, which represents a high-level business outcome that the customer is trying to achieve (e.g., elevate the shopping experience). Within each pillar are a set of “customer scenarios,” solutions that apply a technical capability to solve a customer’s specific pain point. These customer scenarios offer existing and new capabilities that unlock the power of Microsoft Azure, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Dynamics 365, Microsoft Power Platform, and more. The Cloud for Retail offers the flexibility to adopt these customer scenarios in a modularized fashion.

* Maximize the value of your data: Unlock and democratize data across your business.
* Elevate the shopper experience: Unlock new shopping experiences with gen AI.
* Build a real-time, sustainable supply chain: Unlock your supply chain with intelligent assistance.
* Empower the store associate: Unlock store associate potential with digital tools.

Ultimately, the Cloud for Retail provides trusted and integrated capabilities that make it easier for organizations to act with intelligence, innovate for growth, and respond with agility to be more resilient to change and thrive during times of uncertainty. The purpose-built Microsoft Cloud for Retail now includes the following offerings:

* Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service: Elevate the shopping experience by enabling rich customer conversations to surface the right products matched to each customer’s  
  unique needs.
* Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service: Equip store associates with the power of AI to better help customers and be more productive with natural language queries of store operating procedures, and leadership with natural language prompt-enabled task creation.
* Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric: Maximize the value of all your retail data and uncover the insights that lead to more informed actions across the shopper journey.
* Application template for smart store analytics in Power BI: Enhance your smart store business with AI-powered predictive analytics and insights.
* Application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams: Equip store associates to better help customers and be more productive with tasks such as inventory checks, store audits, and clienteling, while enabling leadership to manage store operations with robust analytics.
* Retail channel churn model: Predict customer churn by channel with industry-leading AI/ML.

Q: What retail verticals does the cloud support?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail supports enterprise to mid-size retail organizations across the majority of retail categories, commerce channels, and verticals. The capabilities span grocery stores, specialty retailers, quick service restaurants, convenience stores, big box retailers, department stores, e-commerce pure plays, marketplaces, and more.

Cloud for Retail provides solutions for organizations considering updating and streamlining their legacy systems that don’t communicate with one another; organizations considering moving to the cloud and modernizing their data estate; and those that want to move away from multi-year implementation cycles toward a service model with continuous product updates.

Like most of our investments across industries, we have a growing ecosystem of retail partners that can help organizations with integration services, and/or build-upon, extend, and enable the value of the Microsoft Cloud to customize solutions that address the most pressing challenges retailers are facing today.

Q: What are the customer scenarios are included in Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail includes the following capabilities within the context of four retail value propositions. These include:

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| Maximize the value of your data |

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| Unified customer profile | Get a 360° view of the customer with a data and analytics platform built for AI. |
| Data solutions | Unify retail data from disparate system and ease the journey to AI readiness. |
| Shopper and operational analytics | Ask questions of your data in natural language for rapid, trust-worthy insights. |
| Retail media | Unlock ad revenue and lower acquisition costs with first-party shopper data. |

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| Elevate the shopper experience |

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| Intelligent stores | Maximize sales and satisfaction with convenient, personalized shopping. |
| Unified commerce | Increase product discovery and conversions with new gen AI powered applications. |
| Real-time personalization | Enable personalized shopping journeys and campaigns by leveraging gen AI. |
| Digital advertising solutions | Drive growth, acquire new customers, and increase lifetime value. |
| Seamless customer service | Enhance customer support with AI-powered, conversational chatbots. |

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| Build a real-time retail supply chain: Unlock your supply chain with intelligent assistance |

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| Demand planning and optimization | Predict demand and generate accurate, AI-powered inventory forecasts, alerts, and plans. |
| Supply chain visibility | Optimize inventory levels and stock allocation across stores with intelligent assistance. |
| Flexible fulfillment | Automate and optimize order management, giving customers choices across channels. |

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| Empower the store associate |

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| Real-time store communication and collaboration | Leverage modern tools for connecting your team while also enabling store associates to get the info they need using their own words. |
| Retail workforce management | Empower the team with greater flexibility, efficiency, and service capabilities with easy-to-use tools and seamless access to workflows and data. |
| Process automation and career development | Expand what your stores and people can do through automation, streamlining processes and providing access to training and upskilling. |

Q: What business opportunities can Microsoft Cloud for Retail create, and what roles in the customer’s organization stand to benefit?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail creates the following opportunities for roles across the organization including CEO; Chief Operations Officer or VP/Director of Operations; Chief Information Officer or VP/Director of IT; and Chief Marketing Officer/VP or Director of Marketing:

* Act with intelligence: Know your customer and act with the power of all your data. Trust in a secure, single source of truth and gain insights that empower you to anticipate the unexpected and exceed expectations across the entire shopper journey.
* Innovate for growth: Grow your top-line and bottom-line through engaging omnichannel experiences, personalized service, and new business models, powered by AI and automation.
* Respond with agility: Optimize every stage of your supply chain, from the factory floor to the store shelf to the individual shopper and reduce operating costs while delivering exceptional service.

Q: Are there any customers already using this solution?

There are a multitude of retail organizations and partners in the process of deploying and/or using various Microsoft Cloud for Retail capabilities. Learn more on [Microsoft Customer Stories](https://customers.microsoft.com/en-us/search?sq=&ff=story_industry_friendlyname%26%3ERetailers&p=0&so=story_publish_date%20desc).

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| Icon of a hand holding a document | Microsoft Cloud for Retail copilot templates |

## Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service (Public preview)

Q: What is the copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service (Public preview)?

The copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service empowers retailers to elevate the shopping experience by enabling rich customer conversations on the right products matched to each customer’s unique needs.

Built on Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service, the copilot template for personalized shopping provides expert shopping help through ordinary conversation, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. The Microsoft Cloud for Retail copilot template for personalized shopping leverages retailer data such as the product catalog pricing, and inventory availability, to provide shoppers with timely and useful suggestions. This brand-new approach to commerce comes from advancements in generative AI – all built with responsible AI principles in mind.

View an overview video on the [Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKxHW1JVBv0)

## Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service (Public preview)

Q: What is the copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service (Public preview)?

Copilot template for store operations from Microsoft Cloud for Retail is a generative AI-powered LLM based solution that enables Q&A from store documentation such as store operating procedures and natural language-based task creation (form filling). With the copilot template for store operations, associates can use natural language to access the information quickly and easily they need in the flow of work, increasing their productivity and efficiency. With the copilot template for store operations, store employees can quickly get answers to their questions on store operating procedures, HR policies and benefits. In addition, the copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service can save time for associates and management through voice enabled task creation and assignment.

View an overview video on [Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPY6-duDLok)

Q: What are the system’s capabilities?

Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service is built on a machine learning model called GPT-3.5. Trained on a vast number of text samples from the internet, GPT-3.5 generates new text that looks and sounds like text written by a human. Content rewrite masks any personal data in generated ideas and shows only the results that are long enough and unique enough to be useful.

Q: What can copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service do?

With copilot template for store operations, store associates can quickly get answers to their questions on store operating procedures, HR policies and benefits by asking questions in natural language.

Associates can provide a voice command or text, which helps automatically create a task as Gen AI capabilities populate details based on the input provided. This feature simplifies and automates creation of tasks and saves time for associates.

Q: What are the languages supported for copilot template for store operations currently?

Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service is currently supported in English language only. We plan to localize the solution to other languages where Azure OpenAI is present and based on customer requests.

Q: Can copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service be used by voice?

Yes, store associates can use voice and chat. Microsoft relies on the mobile device operations system for voice support and users need to allow permissions in their mobile. The customer must test the voice prompts in a UAT before using it in production because mobile phone OS drives voice capability.

Q: Can copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service be used in Teams?

We have an exciting roadmap for copilot template for store operations: the ability to use it in Teams will be available in private preview in the coming months.

Q: How does a customer deploy this copilot template?

Customers, that own the underlying licenses, can deploy this copilot this template through [Microsoft Solution Center](https://solutions.microsoft.com/). For detailed instructions, head over to the [Microsoft Cloud for Retail Learn](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/overview-store-operations-assist).

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|  | Microsoft Cloud for Retail application templates |

Q: What are the Microsoft Cloud for Retail application templates?

Microsoft continues to invest, build, and expand industry-specific templates, data solutions, and connectors that accelerate time-to-value for our customers and partners. With the current wave, we are changing the descriptors of the following existing application templates:

* Smart Store Analytics is now the application template for smart store analytics in Power BI on first mention; smart store analytics thereafter.
* Store Operations Assist is now application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams. This descriptor covers the full offering of the application template.

## Application template for smart store analytics in Power BI

Q: What is the application template for smart store analytics in Power BI?

Enhance in-store experiences and operational efficiency with predictive models that optimize store layout, product catalog, shelf placement, and inventory. As retailers introduce new smart store formats, new customer signals emerge. Store digitization is the next wave of intelligence and optimization to help retailers elevate the customer experience and increase profits.

Q: Why is Microsoft partnering with AiFi?

Our vision for our partnership with AiFi is to become the smart store solution for retailers worldwide. AiFi handles store setup, logistics and support, Microsoft optimizes the AiFi edge workloads for Azure and delivers actionable insights on AiFi smart store data. Learn more about AiFi at [Microsoft Azure Marketplace](https://azuremarketplace.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/apps/aifiinc1650652949208.autonomous-shopping).\

Q: Are there any customers using the product?

Smart store analytics is being used across 70+ stores at a number of retailers worldwide, including Zabka and Oxxo. AiFi technology gives stores the ability to deep dive into customer behavior, gaining new understandings and customer insights, while smart store analytics allows them to pull various data together, analyze it, and use it to create new ways to elevate the shopping experience for customers.

Q: What are the potential privacy risks that come with shopper tracking, and how are Microsoft and AiFi addressing them?

The technology is completely anonymous and doesn’t use facial recognition or biometrics. Instead, once a customer enters the store, a virtual avatar is created that utilizes computer vision to identify when an item is picked up and put into a bag and purchased. Because AiFi’s technology never uses personal data or information, customers’ identities are completely protected, and the issue of bias is not present.

Q: Do you need to have AiFi’s autonomous store solution in order to use smart store analytics?

Yes. Prerequisites for smart store analytics include both first party and third-party licenses and equipment. Microsoft partner, AiFi, handles store setup, logistics, and support. Microsoft provides PowerApps, Power BI Premium, and optimizes the AiFi edge workloads for Azure to deliver actionable insights on AiFi smart store data with predictive models that optimize store layout, product recommendations, shelf placement and inventory.

## Application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams

Q: What is the application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams?

Provide tools to store associates for day-to-day activities and clienteling in a single pane of glass, while also allowing store leadership to manage store activities with dashboard-based analytics and insights. Retailers are experiencing record turnover as staff face a growing list of stressors. Empower store associates with the technology they need to complete increasingly complex duties from curbside fulfillment to complex customer service scenarios.

Q: How is Microsoft Teams supporting frontline workers in the retail industry, and how is it different than what is provided by Microsoft Cloud for Retail store assistant?

Microsoft 365 and Teams for frontline workers is a set of products and features that customers can configure in various ways to bring to life multiple frontline worker use cases. It is primarily comprised of first-party products within Teams (e.g., Shifts, Tasks) combined with Microsoft Viva and other frontline worker-enabling seeded product value from Microsoft 365. It also incorporates some cross-cloud value (e.g., Power Apps, Security).

Application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams is a single solution that leverages Dynamics 365, Microsoft 365, and Microsoft Teams—combined with new retail clienteling-specific product functionality—to deliver the retail workforce management use case, part of the Cloud for Retail. To deploy it, a customer would need to purchase the requisite Dynamics 365, Microsoft 365, and Teams licenses.

Q: When should retailers leverage application template for store operations vs. Microsoft 365 and Teams?

There are comprehensive advantages to integrating application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams with Planner in retail operations, including:

* Offers retail associates AI-driven decision-making capabilities
* Streamlines operations with industry-specific customization
* Reduces the need for multiple applications
* Enhances productivity through a unified, user-friendly workflow

Frontline workers and managers utilize Planner for daily tasks, while regional managers and central operations use Planner alongside application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams Admin dashboard for task management and reporting, allowing customization based on organizational preferences.

Q: How does this application template integrate with Microsoft Teams?

The application template integrates seamlessly with Microsoft Teams to provide an enriching and unified experience to frontline workers as well as front line and back-office managers. The integration enables front line workers or managers to homogenously work across diverse teams and store operations.

Below are the features that have been integrated between Microsoft Teams and application template for store operations:

* Teams Shifts: Retail managers can plan tasks based on shift timings at department or store level, thus planning efficiently the right task in the right store at the right shift for the right team.
* Teams Approvals: Front line managers can directly use Teams Approvals, for approving any request, from their team, that has been raised on the application template for store operations. This making the process more mobile and intuitive without the need to go on application template.
* Teams appointment: An appointment created in application template is seamlessly created as Teams appointment enabling customers/Store experts to receive calendar and email notifications. This enables retail organizations to build deeper customer relationships through B2C engagements through simplified customer joining experiences, seamless scheduling, and appointment analytics.
* Teams hierarchy: The organization hierarchy, team membership and security role assignment in application template can be dynamically derived from the frontline operations hierarchy in Teams admin center. As a result, retailers can now manage their teams and users in one place: Microsoft Teams.

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| Icon of a document besides a small bag with a dollar symbol | Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric |

Q: What are the retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric (Public preview)?

Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric are an industry specific set of capabilities on Microsoft Fabric that enables retailers to accelerate time to insight generation by unifying, enriching, and modeling retail data on Microsoft Fabric.

With seamless data harmonization, cross-application analytics, and AI applications, retailers can unlock the full potential of their data and drive their business forward. By using Microsoft Fabric, retailers can consolidate relevant retail data from multiple systems into a unified, governed hub providing a secure single source of truth for all data and analytics needs.

Our connector with Sitecore OrderCloud means that data for three important areas: product, customer, and orders, has been mapped to our industry data model, reducing engineering effort and accelerating time to insights.

View an overview video on [Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU0k29UcRXA)

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| Icon of multiple circles surrounding a user | Partner opportunity |

Q: What is the opportunity for partners?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail scales through partners and offers a value-additive platform for them to seamlessly integrate their solutions. You can empower your customers and deliver industry solutions faster by leveraging the Microsoft Cloud.

Here are the ways partners can benefit from going to the market jointly with Microsoft:

* Accelerate innovation with AI and reduce time to market: Deliver innovative solutions and increase deployment success leveraging the Microsoft Cloud platform and industry and AI capabilities that are built on a foundation of security and compliance.
* Quickly scale your go to market: Learn, develop, and launch industry solutions with Microsoft’s industry skilling, designations, and marketing assets.
* Win new customers with industry solutions: Reach more customers by scaling through the Microsoft commercial marketplace and co-selling alongside Microsoft sellers.

Q: What are the partner programs associated with Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program (MAICPP) is the next generation of our partner program empowering every partner to deliver customer value by using Microsoft AI and Microsoft Cloud. Through this program, Microsoft provides partners with a comprehensive portfolio of investments for all partner business models, at every stage of maturity, from startups to independent software vendors (ISV). To learn more about the benefits: [Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program benefits FAQ - Partner Center | Microsoft Learn](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/partner-center/benefits-faq-new)

Microsoft ISV Success Program is a program designed partners to help build apps faster, reach more customers and go to market faster. [ISV Success Program Overview | Microsoft ISV Hub](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/isv/program-benefits)

Microsoft Skilling enables partners to unlock training resources to build the skills they need today. The partners can discover the right learning options, including always on, self-service training and scheduled, instructor-led courses and events. Learn more: [Information for partners about training, enablement, and building skills (microsoft.com)](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/training#/)

Q: How do partners bring Microsoft Cloud for Retail to life?

Partners play a central role in our Cloud for Retail strategy. They are deeply integrated into our customer and prospect base across sub-verticals, and they extend the Microsoft Cloud Platform with industry-specific solutions.

We look to partners to facilitate integration of Cloud for Retail specific to each customer’s needs and environment, expand offerings and current capabilities while breaking into new markets, and transform customers’ businesses while helping them realize value.

Together, we offer customers an integrated Microsoft and partner solution.

Q: What role does SIs and GSIs play in enabling Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Global Systems Integrators (GSIs) and Systems Integrators (SIs) help deliver functional implementation of Microsoft Cloud for Retail by deploying, building-upon, and enabling cloud capabilities. They drive integration and interoperability with each retail customer’s on-premises and cloud-based solutions.

Because the Cloud for Retail is built on Microsoft Cloud’s extensible architecture, services partners customize our cloud capabilities to fit each customer’s unique needs. Additionally, they provide a breadth of services for data management and governance, as well as advisory services and planning, documentation, and readiness for organizational change and adoption.

Q: What role do ISVs play in enabling Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) build SaaS, PaaS and other software solutions on the Microsoft Cloud, including Microsoft Azure, Microsoft Dynamics 365, Power Platform, and Microsoft 365.

These partner-developed solutions include many that can integrate or connect to Microsoft Cloud for Retail capabilities through connectors, APIs, and other integration layers.

Q: I am an ISV or SI that offers capabilities to retail customers. Is Microsoft now competing with me?

No, Microsoft is not competing with our partners. Cloud for Retail offers a vast array of interoperable building blocks designed to solve problems unique to the Retail industry. Microsoft’s growing ecosystem of services and ISV partners extend the robust cloud capabilities of the Cloud for Retail. Partners can extend the solutions available in Microsoft Cloud for Retail to customize or augment what a customer would experience out of the box. Partners can also create new and differentiated experiences using these building blocks.

Microsoft Cloud for Retail helps customers with security and compliance requirements. Partners who integrate with or build upon Microsoft Cloud for Retail are requested to adhere to and will benefit from inherited platform controls built in to meet customer demand.

Q: In my role as an SI, I have created industry-specific accelerators and solutions, some of which overlap with the customer scenarios of Microsoft industry clouds. How can I decide what IP to continue investing in? Can you share a roadmap so that I can confirm my investments won't conflict with future customer scenarios?

Microsoft does not and will not control partners' intellectual property or provide guidance on your IP investments. That said, we are invested in being transparent about our industry cloud customer scenario roadmap, information that you can use to inform your investment decisions. We urge partners to consider customer value, cost to market, and agility of solution deployment when evaluating first-party native solutions vs. building solutions atop Microsoft Cloud for Retail platforms. If you would like to learn more about our roadmap, you may reach out to your Partner Development Manager to set up a roadmap briefing under NDA.

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| Icon of a shield with a tick symbol at the center | Industry standards and compliance |

Q: How does Microsoft Cloud for Retail help me meet my compliance requirements?

You can find the most up-to-date information about Microsoft Cloud for Retail compliance on [Microsoft Learn.](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/)

Q: Are there industry standards that Microsoft Cloud for Retail meets out-of-the-box that are not met out-of-the-box by Azure public cloud?

Just like Microsoft’s existing core services within Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, and Azure, the solutions within Microsoft Cloud for Retail are designed to support compliance requirements. Beyond the foundational platform customer scenarios that Microsoft Cloud for Retail is built on, it contains first-party scenarios that make it easier and quicker to build solutions and lower maintenance costs. This in turn helps customers accelerate deployments and remove friction in addressing regulatory compliance:

* We provide greater interoperability and transparency into shared responsibility with our unique tools and programs, solving some of the initial industry customer adoption challenges related to risk assurance & support.
* We support customers through their compliance journey by integrating and streamlining our security, compliance, and assurance documentation and related learning resources.

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| Icon of a hand holding and navigating a phone with a dollar symbol at the center | Pricing and licensing |

Q: Is there a Microsoft Cloud for Retail subscription?

To remove friction and accelerate time to value for customers and partners, we are evolving the packaging model for industry clouds. Industry solution templates (e.g. Store Operations Assist) will now be available at no additional cost for Microsoft Cloud for Retail customers who own the pre-requisite licenses. Customers and partners will be able to take advantage of these vertical solutions and add incremental value to their existing Microsoft Cloud investments.

With the above alignment and subscription model changes, we believe the industry cloud solutions will continue to help increase adoption of our horizontal commercial solution areas (CSAs). These changes will provide customers with simplicity and predictability when engaging with Microsoft and expand industry clouds to represent the totality of the Microsoft Cloud (across CSAs, partners, and industry-specific IP). We will continue to invest, build, and expand industry-specific solution templates that accelerate time-to-value for our customers and partners.

The purpose-built Microsoft Cloud for Retail solution templates include the following offerings at this time:

* Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service
* Copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service
* Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric:
* Application template for smart store analytics in Power BI
* Application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams
* Retail channel churn model

Q: What are the pre-requisites that customers should meet?

Certain Microsoft Cloud for Retail capabilities require the purchase of more than one underlying product license, whereas other capabilities can be enabled by a single product purchase. Customers will have different underlying needs and may already have unused licenses. Microsoft Cloud for Retail capabilities are built in a modular way so that customers can do more with less and only purchase what they need.

To light up the capabilities of Microsoft Cloud for Retail the following pre-requisites are needed:

* Copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service

Microsoft Fabric or Azure SQL for the supported storage (required)

Azure OpenAI Service (GPT4 Turbo 1106 Preview + Text embedding) (required)

Azure AI Search (required)

Azure Functions (required)

Bing Search API (optional, required if customer utilizes public websites to answer questions)

* Copilot template for AI store operations on Azure OpenAI Service

Azure OpenAI Service (GPT 3.5 + Text embedding) (required)

Azure AI Search (required)

Azure Blob storage (required)

Power Apps (required)

* Retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric

Microsoft Fabric (required)

Sitecore OrderCloud ISV license (optional – required to take advantage of Sitecore OrderCloud Connector)

Note: *Frequently bought together AI/ML model is a notable part of the data solutions offered*

* Application template for smart store analytics in Power BI

Power Apps (required)

Power BI (required)

Azure Synapse (recommended)

AiFi (ISV) license and equipment (required) – customers must purchase this separately

* Application template for store operations in Power Apps and Microsoft Teams

Power Apps (required)

Microsoft 365 Frontline Worker license (required)

Teams Premium Add-on (recommended - to enable the virtual appointments feature)

Power BI (recommended - for analytics dashboard)

Dynamics 365 Customer Insights (recommended – for more advanced CDP capabilities)

* Retail channel churn model

Dynamics 365 Customer Insights (required)

Q: Will the Microsoft Cloud for Retail solution templates also include necessary horizontal pre-requisites?

No, customers will have different underlying needs and may already have unused licenses. Our solutions are built in a modular way so that customers can do more with less and only purchase what they need.

Q: Are the retail-specific copilot templates, application templates, and data solutions mandatory to reap the benefits of the Microsoft Cloud?

No, the offerings are not mandatory, and components like industry-specific data models are often made freely available. However, the retail-specific copilot templates, application templates, and data solutions provide faster time to value for retail industry use cases and maximize retailer success.

Q: Is 3rd party IP included in the retail-specific copilot templates, application templates, or data solutions?

No 3rd party IP is included, customers will need to BYOL (bring your own license), however the templates and solutions can contain IP that provides integration to leading 3rd party ISV applications through connectors and APIs (e.g., AiFi).

Q: What type of technical support is available for customers who have accessed the free downloaded customizations?

Customers are eligible to receive the same support as the underlying pre-requisite product that is compatible with the download. For example, if the customer is leveraging Dynamics 365, support that is included is:

1. Unlimited break/fix support on all Microsoft technologies included in the solution, 24/7 support for severity A and B issues, fast response times (Sev A: 1 hour, Sev B: 4 hours, Sev C: 8 hours), and billing support.
2. Access to frequently updated self-help resources, and hands-on training via Microsoft Learn.

Please refer to the underlying product support terms for details.

Q: What if customers already pay for Unified Support?

Customers have the option to still purchase Unified Support. Microsoft Unified Support provides a comprehensive, organization-wide support experience covering all Microsoft technologies. It includes substantial benefits on top of the support included with prerequisite cloud services.

Q: Is FastTrack available for Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Customers that are eligible for the FastTrack Program will receive implementation support only on the underlying prerequisite cloud services.

Q: Are partners able to utilize their partner support plans to assist customers with technical issues?

Yes. Partners have access to Microsoft backed support offerings to help their customers with support related issues.

Q: Will additional capabilities be added over time?

We will continue to ship updates bi-annually with new and updated capabilities offered for the Microsoft Cloud for Retail.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Icon of multiple lines with circles in each end points all connected to a cloud | Deploying Microsoft Cloud for Retail |

## Technical information

Q: Are there reference architectures available for Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Yes, and you can learn more about successful, robust cloud deployments in the Microsoft Cloud for Retail [reference architecture center](https://aka.ms/industry-architecture-retail).

Q: Is it a sovereign cloud?

No, it is not a sovereign cloud and runs within existing Microsoft data centers.

Q: Is implementing the industry data model an out-of-the-box experience?

The application building process will vary depending on the partner’s IP needs. Microsoft provides API endpoints for the data integration to facilitate data ingestion into Microsoft data platforms adhering to the industry data model. There are several industry-leading Microsoft and partner solutions, as well as tooling, that can be used for mapping and migrating the data.

Q: Will I have to re-platform my existing applications and solutions that run on Azure or other Microsoft platforms?

No, existing partner-built solutions on Azure, Microsoft 365, Power Platform, and Microsoft Dynamics 365 will run as they do today and do not have to be re-platformed.

Q: What is the optimal way of getting the customer’s data aligned to work with Cloud for Retail?

Adopting the [industry-specific data model](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/common-data-model/use)s is the optimal mechanism to align customer’s data with Microsoft Industry Clouds. We have other Microsoft technologies leveraging data models to provide simplified data processing and AI functionality.

Q: Are there specific tenancy requirements to ensure the data and AI components work?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail solutions are built on data platforms including: Dataverse, Dynamics 365 Customer Insights, Azure Synapse, and Azure Data Lake. While these services each have their own tenancy requirements, most multi-tenant security requirements can be met through features like service endpoints, Azure Private Link, or VPN services configured at the Azure Virtual Network level. For Microsoft Cloud for Retail AI services, like Intelligent Recommendations, endpoint access is secured via an Azure AD Application Registration, on a per tenant basis, which provides access via a client ID and secret key. Access to data hosted on third party solutions can be accomplished by APIs exposed by those applications which typically provide access through federated identities.

Q: What pieces do you need to develop a sandbox for Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

You can find documentation on how to set up and configure Microsoft Cloud for Retail on [Microsoft Docs](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/configure-cloud-for-retail).

## Microsoft Cloud for Retail is available in the following regions and languages

Q: Is Microsoft Cloud for Retail available across all Azure regions?

Microsoft Cloud for Retail is not available to deploy from all regions but will continue to extend to more regions in the future. Visit [Microsoft Docs](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/availability) for the latest geographic and language availability.

Q: What regions and languages is Microsoft Cloud for Retail available in?

Below is a list of available countries, regions, and languages. Newly disclosed capabilities will be released first in English, then expanded.

Watch the [International availability of Microsoft Cloud for Retail](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/availability) page in the Microsoft Learn documentation for updates to the above. The Industry Cloud Engineering team is actively evaluating total addressable market, number of target entities, availability of dependent services, localization, and engineering efforts to deploy in new languages and geographies.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Languages |  | Available Datacenter Regions |
| Chinese (Traditional) |  | Asia Pacific |
| Czech |  | Australia |
| Danish |  | Brazil |
| Dutch |  | Canada |
| English |  | Europe |
| French |  | Japan |
| German |  | United Kingdom |
| Italian |  | United States |
| Japanese |  |
| Polish |  |
| Portuguese |  |
| Portuguese (BR) |  |
| Spanish |  |
| Swedish |  |

Q: What do we tell those retailers outside the available regions listed above? And can they deploy into a US tenant and migrate their deployment to another region?

Retailers can start to prepare now by deploying the Dynamics 365 and Microsoft 365 solutions that are available in their region, e.g., Commerce, Marketing and Microsoft 365 and Teams for frontline workers. At this time, Microsoft does not offer migration from a US tenant to another region.

## Customer impact

Q: How can I demo Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Information about how to trial the Cloud for Retail can be found [here on Microsoft Learn](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/training/modules/retail-capability-mapping/), and a shared tenant demo experience is available through the [Customer Digital Experience platform](https://cdx.transform.microsoft.com/experience-detail/1a4be2b1-89c6-4978-a69e-a2c481721f85).

If you need to demo from your own infrastructure, there are promo codes available that can help mitigate costs. Fill out [this form](https://experience.dynamics.com/requestlicense/) to get started.

You can also show your customers overview videos:

* [Microsoft Retail Unlocked](https://youtu.be/XhIemS18N-I)
* [Microsoft Cloud for Retail: copilot template for store operations on Azure OpenAI Service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPY6-duDLok)
* [Microsoft Cloud for Retail: copilot template for personalized shopping on Azure OpenAI Service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKxHW1JVBv0)
* [Microsoft Cloud for Retail: retail data solutions in Microsoft Fabric](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU0k29UcRXA)

Q: How will I know when new things are being included in Microsoft Cloud for Retail so I can prepare the customer and incorporate these changes into the customer’s roadmap?

You can reach out to your Partner Development Manager for a roadmap briefing under NDA. You can find the latest release plans, which include industry cloud developments, on Microsoft Docs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Icon of a document with half a gear besides it | Resources |

Q: Are there trainings I can attend or documentation that I can review to familiarize myself with Microsoft Cloud for Retail?

Documentation is available on [Microsoft Docs](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/retail/) and you can find resources on [Microsoft Partner Network](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/asset/collection/microsoft-cloud-retail-partner-assets#/). Training is available on [Microsoft Learn](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/training/modules/retail-cloud-overview/). Additional training will be available—contact your Partner Development Manager for more information.

Learn more and sign up for email updates at [Industry solutions | Retail (microsoft.com)](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/solutions/industry-solutions/retail-consumer-goods) and visit these additional websites:

* Explore solutions on [the Cloud for Retail AppSource Gallery](https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/marketplace/cloudsIndustry?page=1&industry=retail-and-consumer-goods)
* Access the [Cloud for Retail SI Playbook](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/asset/collection/microsoft-cloud-retail-partner-assets#/) for more information

Q: How do I stay informed about what’s to come?

The best way to stay informed is to stay connected with your Microsoft Partner Development Manager (PDMs). Partner information can also be found on the Microsoft Partner Network retail page at [Industry solutions | Retail (microsoft.com)](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/solutions/industry-solutions/retail-consumer-goods).



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