# Specializations

## Submitting customer references

### What is a customer reference?

A customer reference is a snapshot of a customer win. It's shorter than a formal case study, but it should still showcase your specialization in the relevant service or solution and highlight customer benefits, showing how their business has improved thanks to your services.

References provide evidence of your capabilities—both technical and customer-facing. They raise the standard for program eligibility, helping us identify and select the right partners to participate. Your references will not be publicized unless you and your customer agree to it.

Microsoft partners must submit three relevant customer references as part of the criteria for earning a Security specialization. Use the customer reference template we've provided to explain the customer situation, your solution, the Microsoft technology used, key usage and adoption drivers, and business impact and key learnings. To get more inspiration, review our Gallery of Partner Success.

### Submission instructions

**The customer reference template is provided in PowerPoint format. Please complete one slide for each reference.**

In order to be considered, your submission must:
- Relate to a customer win from within the past 24 months
- Feature a named customer
- Be submitted in English

Your customer references must include:
- Customer situation and challenge
- Key drivers and customer business objectives
- Your solution
  - How you helped overcome the challenge to meet the objective
  - A list of the Microsoft technology you used
- Value provided and customer outcome
  - Results – quantitative results preferred; POCs and workshops do not qualify
- Insights and lessons learned
- Include the name and contact information of one individual whom we can contact for each reference

When you're finished, upload the file to your application on the Partner Center dashboard.