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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 “AppSource” and “Azure Marketplace” available to its community of customers and partners. These digital “storefronts” allow customers to find, try, and buy applications and services that accelerate their Digital Transformation, and help publishers like you grow businesses, thanks to an 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 online marketing efforts.

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

So where do you begin?

You will need to determine how best to leverage and market your new marketplace listing or “storefront”. This Best Practices Guide serves as a supplement to the Azure Marketplace and AppSource Publishing Guide. It is designed to provide you with marketing strategies and ideas that can help you draw more traffic to your listing, and engage with online prospects in more meaningful ways.
Chapter 2
Optimizing your marketplace listing

Microsoft will drive qualified visitors to AppSource and Azure Marketplaces. Your responsibility is to ensure the messaging and supporting content in your listing is differentiated and stands out among other offerings. Simply listing your solution’s features and functionality in a bulleted list is not very compelling. Focus on communicating more than just what your solution does or looks like by articulating why prospects need it. Effectively communicating the core value proposition and return on investment is paramount.

10 benefits of optimizing your marketplace listing

1. Gain new leads
2. Provide free trials during the buying cycle
3. Convert prospects to buyer faster
4. Lower cost of selling
5. Reach a global market
6. Leverage Microsoft’s investment in marketing and brand recognition
7. Make it easy for Microsoft team members to share your solutions with others
8. Showcase your core competencies and vertical domain expertise
9. Gain increased credibility
10. Test and validate new product or service market opportunities
Listing best practices

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

Use an icon or logo that reflects the value proposition of your solution

Get your prospects’ attention by asking a compelling benefit-based question they can relate to

Identify who your app is for

Make a trial available if you can

Describe why someone should try/buy your solution. Explain how you can help. Avoid long lists of features

Choose product categories carefully as these are primary search filters for visitors

Include a proof statement, statistic, or testimonial

To move prospects beyond interest and a free trial, take them to an optimized sales landing page on your website

Branding is important. Take time to consider what your app name will be

Customers often make buying decisions based on the information they read in peer reviews. Monitor this section closely
Optimizing your solution listing content

First impressions matter. Research shows it takes only seconds for a prospect to accept or reject your solution during the selection process. It is critical that you make your listing appealing so that it can resonate immediately with your target audience.

Branding is important

Choosing a name for your solution is a key decision. Avoid using technology-specific terms in your product name or acronyms that are emotionally meaningless. 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 solution name will communicate the core value customers will enjoy. Adding an industry-specific reference or indicator can increase relevance as well as conversion rates.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 family of products:
Example of industry specific relevant product name and logo from IndustryBuilt Software Corp.

Example of extended product line from AXtension®

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

- Does my product name convey anything meaningful to my prospect?
- 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 app 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 product for success

Product overview and description

In the product “Overview” section of your listing, we recommend you include the following components:

1. Clearly stated product value proposition

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

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

For assistance in defining your value proposition, see here.

2. Pique their 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

If you want to list features on your solution 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).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Messaging example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Non-emotion-generating feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>Somewhat emotionally appealing benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>Emotionally compelling and action-driven solution</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. **Target customers**

Indicate who your solution is geared for, so prospects know right away if it is designed for them. Is your solution suited best for small businesses or large enterprises? Is it optimized for a specific type of company such as a franchise or restaurant business? In which regions is it 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 quantitative statistic confirming the benefit of your solution. Prospects want proof of any claims that you make.
Supporting content

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. What can you include that effectively demonstrates your key value proposition in pictures rather than text? More effective than text are dashboards, solution screen shots, charts/graphs, customer stories and product demonstrations.

Videos generate a much higher level of engagement and viewing time, while conveying more than you can ever say with words. Microsoft marketplaces allow you to add images and video to your listing, so be sure to maximize 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”.
- Make your video easily shareable via email or LinkedIn; post it on YouTube.
- 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 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 in order to improve future content.
- Let prospects view what they are most interested in seeing; keep product demos at less than 5 minutes.
- Videos featuring a customer as the hero are more powerful than those in which you tell your own story.
Help your audience learn

Keep the overview section of your listing simple and use this space to provide additional resources and information. Also, deliver a concise, engaging message about why your prospects need your solution, how you can help them, and what your product does to meet their needs. Provide a direct link to your own website’s conversion landing page to convert more viewers into buyers.

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 buyers tend to consider peer reviews before they learn more about your product. 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!

Provide a tangible experience

Customers like to try before they buy. Many marketplace visitors will quickly filter publishers by “free trial” or “test drive”. The stronger your trial experience, the more interested your prospects will be. Consider offering a “Test Drive” or other type of trial.
Consider product positioning

Customers often compare solutions, so it is important to differentiate yours from competitors, to hold a clear and unique position. Before you finalize your listing, benchmark your messaging and content against that of competitors.

**Differentiation checklist**

- Is the messaging on our listing different from that of competitors?
- Have we clearly highlighted the value we offer customers?
- Have we identified key compelling business pains and benefits rather than just listing features?
- Have we articulated what we are best at?
- Have we mentioned who will benefit most from our solution?
- Do we offer prospects a self-driven buying journey?
- Does our messaging and language speak to a specific buyer persona?
- Have we carved out a unique position in the market?
Chapter 3
Sales landing page

Once you have successfully optimized your Microsoft marketplace listing, 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. 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.

Dynaway EAM for Manufacturing

Dynaway A/S

Overview | Reviews

Enterprise Asset Management/CMMS for Manufacturing

Dynaway EAM for Manufacturing is the de facto standard for Enterprise Asset Management for Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Finance and Operations. Its seamless integration to the Dynamics 365 platform enables efficient, continuous planned maintenance of your production equipment. Using Dynaway EAM for Manufacturing cuts costs by helping reduce the risk of machine downtime and minimize unplanned production interruptions, improving overall production performance.

Dynaway EAM for Manufacturing Enables:

- Improved machine effectiveness with preventive maintenance capabilities
- Insight into downtime with intelligent business reporting
- Optimized uptime and extended equipment life expectancy
- Improved visibility regarding production performance
- Automated management of maintenance processes and assets
- Optimized work order scheduling
- Efficient spare parts management, ensuring complete overview of item consumption on assets
- Advanced work order management
- Preventive, predictive, and reactive maintenance
- Reduced production costs via enhanced visibility of assets across sites and departments
- Visibility into real-time asset costing information
- Advanced cost control on assets, locations, builds, work hours, and work orders
- Reduction in maintenance overtime, labor, and contractor costs
- Online and offline access to information and management of processes via the Mobile Client
- Service portal on the Mobile Client for efficient request handling
- Planning board on the Mobile Client for quick scheduling and rescheduling of work orders
- Kanban board on the Mobile Client, optimized for completing work orders in teams

Try the Dynaway EAM for Manufacturing solution today

- The Maintenance Worker solves maintenance tasks, completes work orders, creates requests
- The Maintenance Planner manages planning and scheduling of work orders
- The Maintenance Supervisor manages work orders and requests, maintains asset master data
- The Maintenance Manager is in charge of the maintenance organization and the related budget

Click here to learn more about EAM on Microsoft’s Manufacturing Sales Accelerators website:
Dynaway EAM – Built on Microsoft Cloud Technology

Click here to learn more about EAM on our website: Dynaway EAM solution

Learn more
Dynaway EAM Resources
Enterprise Asset Management White Paper
Customer Case Study – Kent Corporation
Sales landing page best practices

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

Leverage your company brand to give your new app 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

Would you like to sell more, without working harder?
With the Shopify connector your are adding an online channel to your business.

Are your competitors selling online and you are not? Don’t get left behind, make sure your customers are able to order online 24/7.

100% protected
Scared of online payment protocols and security?
You get it safe, all pages, credit card transaction information are 100% protected.

Sell more

Don’t miss out!

100% protected

Scared of online payment protocols and security?
You get it safe, all pages, credit card transaction information are 100% protected.

Connect your Shopify store with Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central

Shopify is a complete e-commerce solution that allows you to set up an online store to sell your goods. It helps you manage your business, automate your marketing, manage your customers’ data, and manage your inventory and finances.

Focus on growing your business

Integrating your customers into a complete, simple, and effective solution for marketing and payments, e-commerce. The Shopify e-commerce platform with your Financials system Dynamics 365 Business Central allows you to integrate your processes such as order processing, shipping & inventory. Now you can focus on what you are most growing your business.
Sales landing page best practices cont.

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.

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

- Be up and running in minutes with our easy setup
- Save time, simply upload your product list
- Customize your store just the way you want it
- Instant payment status in Dynamics 365 Business Central
- No extra order processing needed
- Automatic e-mail confirmation

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.
Sales landing page best practices cont.

- Include proof of value and benefits using customer quotes or testimonials.
- Don’t make general and abstract claims. Use data as often as possible to support your claims.
- Reduce prospect frustration by indicating where your app or services are available.
- Include a link back to your listing on AppSource and the Azure Marketplace.

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

Christopher D Gages
President & COO
Quantico Boot LLC

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

38 %
38% of buyers are using online sales channels exclusively to do their purchasing.

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

Ready to start playing with your own webshop?

Download & try it now. It’s free!

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available in:</th>
<th>Other countries?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🇺🇸 🇬🇧 🇪🇺 🇳🇱 🇨🇦</td>
<td>Contact us Find us on Microsoft AppSource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Source: Marketing Management, IBM Customer Engagement, February.*
Chapter 4

Go-to-market campaigns

Having an optimized solution listing and sales landing page enables you to leverage the marketplace opportunity to gain traction. 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 solution listing, 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 both engage your target prospects’ emotions, as well as provide relevant emails, blogs and other content that speak directly to these prospects while addressing their particular 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 suitable 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 by writing blogs that highlight key challenges facing your target industries.

The AppSource marketplace has an industry-related search box. Take advantage of this filter if you have industry expertise that 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 listing or 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 you have a solution just for them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Azure Marketplace</th>
<th>AppSource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target audience</strong></td>
<td>IT professionals, developers (specialist roles include DBAs, SecOps, DevOps, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 also don’t trust the content of sales materials or advertisements as much as they used to. This means you need to 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 them. This can include the sharing of:

- 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
5. **Avoid using too much emotionless text**

Most partners use too much text in their marketing materials and communications. Adding an image to an email has been proven to increase open rates. Provide a link to a video or demo to encourage prospects to move to the next step in the buying journey. Include a link to your marketplace on all your marketing assets. Attract buyers’ attention, show them something they won’t want to miss, stand out from the rest! Include dashboards, images and other graphics in campaign content to deepen visual interest and increase consumption time.

6. **Make video the hero of your campaigns**

As discussed earlier, online video is the future of content marketing. Why? In our world of information overload, video is easy to engage with. Your campaign strategy needs to 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 listing at the end of all your videos.
7. Keep your campaign content simple

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

How to engage and not overwhelm the buyer’s mind

✓ Include lots of white space, cut text
✓ Use simple, descriptive, ordinary language
✓ Avoid emotionless stock photos
✓ Tell your story in infographic form
✓ Incorporate videos, trials, demos, and interactive content
Chapter 5
5 Techniques for driving traffic to your listing

Now that you understand the critical steps required to launch marketing campaigns that fully 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 the Microsoft 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 from your landing pages.

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

Bing:

Google:
https://adwords.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/
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. Attempt to 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 drive up 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.

5. Create links between channels (i.e. from your marketplace listing to your website, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter etc.). Whatever platforms you are using, if you create a network between all of your touchpoints, you will be guaranteed an increased traffic flow.
Chapter 6
Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

To increase the chances that your listing will be found on the Microsoft marketplaces, you should also apply search engine optimization (SEO) best practices. SEO refers to the process of optimizing your listing or sales conversion page so that it will appear high in the organic search results. Search engines regularly send automated, web-surfing software called "crawlers" out into the web to review and analyze URLs (such as your Microsoft marketplace listing or sales landing page), 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, the more frequently these crawlers re-analyze your listing, which benefits you.

Example of how Tribridge Health links its 3 inputted keywords into its AppSource listing and lets bots crawl throughout the listing allowing the company to slowly make its way up in search rankings.
The AppSource Marketplace also lets prospects find your app using key search words. Be sure to align with these key search terms if you have industry domain expertise or workload specialization.

Here’s a checklist of the steps you can take to get a boost in your search ranking:

1. **Make your content fresh and relevant**

First, your content should be specific on a given topic and be kept up to date. Modify your listing and sales conversion pages regularly. Update screen shots, videos, text, and more. Search engines demand that you keep your listing current.
2. **Add outbound and inbound links**

Search engine developers understand the internet is a place of sharing. The more a URL is shared by relevant and quality websites, the more merit it receives relative to others. 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 listing. It’s also imperative to create outbound links as well. On your conversion landing page, add links to relevant information sources such as customer websites, industry research, or other educational content your prospects can benefit from.

3. **Optimize keyword placement and metadata headers**

Search engines will default to reading your body text if you don’t force them to read your site’s metadata first. Metadata includes page headers and descriptions of the page’s content found within its code (max 155 characters). Where possible, ensure your listing has a page header or title that includes keywords your users will typically search for. Every site has a meta description that is displayed on a search engine’s results page. Do not talk about product features and functionality in your meta description if that isn’t what your prospects are looking for. Make sure to research the words and terms that are typed the most within your prospects’ industry. This may be one of the most valuable, high return activities you can do. Finally, avoid keyword stuffing. Many search engines penalize you (or even remove your ranking altogether), if they find you’ve been adding a slew of completely unrelated but over-optimized words or terms.

4. **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)**

You may also choose to invest funds into promoting your Microsoft marketplaces listing and sales conversion page to increase their 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, thereby increasing your chances of click-through. This is referred to as search engine marketing (SEM) or pay-per-click (PPC).
5. 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 in order 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.

In summary, search (both paid and SEO) is one of the most powerful mediums for creating and capturing demand for your solution. However, it can be expensive to maintain over the long term.
Digital media advertising examples
Chapter 7
Converting visitors into prospects

Give prospects control

After you are successful in drawing attention to your 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 should require no purchase or configuration.

For more detailed guidance on offering trials, click on the link, here.

The strategic purpose and value of a free trial

When you offer a free trial and a competitor does not, you immediately have an emotional 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. Letting buyers try before purchasing also increases your chances of being found on the Microsoft Marketplaces.

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 create their own experience, based on where they are in the buying journey. Below are several types of trial options that you can offer to your prospects:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key benefits</th>
<th>Choose this option if...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free trial</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your solution is a virtual machine or solution template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your solution is an SaaS offering, and you offer a multitenant SaaS product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have a first-run experience to get a customer up and running quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have a single tenant but are adding customers as guest users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test drive</strong></td>
<td>Enables customers to try your product before they buy. Also provides a guided experience of your solution on a pre-configured setup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your solution is a virtual machine, solution template, or SaaS app with a single tenant, or is difficult to provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You don't have a method to convert your trial to a paid offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive demo</strong></td>
<td>Allows customers to see your product in action without the complexity of setup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your solution requires a complex setup that would be hard to achieve in the trial period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Azure customer.
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 increase your sales costs. The benefit of this option is 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.

If you are not ready to offer a free trial or test drive, or in addition to offering an interactive partner-led demo, consider making **self-running demos available on your sales landing page**. These can provide prospects with a quick preview of your offering before they start a trial, test drive or while they are waiting for their interactive demo. However, while self-running demos can depict visually rich, simulated user experiences, they offer limited interactive opportunity and no control to prospects. 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.

**Benefits of an Azure Marketplace test drive**

- 27% of search engine results are refined to only show offers with 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

✓ 27% of search engine results are refined to only show offers with 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
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 have captured prospects’ interest on the Microsoft marketplace or on your conversion landing page and they have started a trial, it is essential to have a clearly defined trial nurture process. Your goal during the trial is to help them understand how your solution can address their business 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 should be long enough for anyone to effectively evaluate your core product value and be ready to engage with your organization.

Define a marketing nurture process

Trial users should be nurtured and monitored along a deliberate evaluation path and nurture process. Touchpoints for trial users must be well thought out — both during and after signups. For best results, you will need to monitor, guide, and nurture users along a path that actively removes obstacles while encouraging a high level of engagement and interest.

Your nurture tracks will vary based on whether or not you have in-app intelligence to monitor trial user behavior throughout interaction with your application. If you have these insights, you can trigger an action-based email sequence that gently nudges users towards a desired outcome. If your users are overlooking key features, offer them auto-resources, tips, guides, tutorials, and other documentation, all of which will help them use the product more effectively while deepening their understanding of your solution.

If you cannot monitor trial user behavior, you should plan your 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. Don’t encourage users to buy until the end of this sequence, after you have educated them and earned their trust.
Sample marketing lead nurture process map:
Nurture cycle

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

**Welcome Email**
It is important to welcome your trial user. This type of email has the highest open rate of any email at 60%. Within the email, explain the value that users can expect from your solution, and provide resources or guidance on how to easily get started. Tell them you will be keeping in touch with them to ensure they have a positive learning experience.

**Education Email**
Send a daily email containing useful content designed to help users get the most out of your trial. Send practical guidance and tips that encourage testing of your key features. Links to videos can be helpful as well.

**Aspiration Email**
In this email, describe an inspirational customer case that provides social proof and aligns with the outcomes your prospect is looking for.

**Trust & Thought Leadership Email**
Send an email that highlights your company’s expertise, experience, and awards, and shows you are a safe choice. Create a sense of fear if prospects choose someone else or if they miss out on this opportunity to join the hundreds of other companies just like theirs that have enjoyed significant benefits with your solution.

**Urgency Email**
If possible, create in-app messaging to remind users of how much time is left in their trial period. Emails should state how many days they have left in their trial. This creates a sense of urgency.

**Offer Email**
Create a one-to-one email with a personalized, limited offer. Include a reminder of the key benefits prospects will enjoy with your solution.

**Take Away Email**
Send them a final email stating you will be removing them from the trial process. Allow them one last opportunity to opt into a marketing nurture program if they are still interested, but not yet ready to make a decision.
Tracking leads

To receive leads from AppSource and Azure Marketplace, you must enable your CRM (Marketo, Microsoft Dynamics, or Salesforce) to accept lead data.

Pricing

The Azure Marketplace allows you to transact. 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 80% / 20% between you and Microsoft respectively. A single offer can be priced at 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 the Cloud Partner Portal.

On AppSource you can also offer services. This is a great opportunity to showcase your domain expertise and move the prospect from interest to purchasing.

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 some 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 services offer from Edgewater Fullscope
To accelerate the buying decision, provide 3 or 4 different tiered packages to choose from. Your middle offering should be your highest-margin, most popular option. A low entry package will encourage a quick buying decision and remove barriers to purchasing. A high-priced package will make the middle option more attractive and also allow you to provide a premium option for more complicated implementations. In addition, consider offering fixed price, “quick start” 30 days or less deployment packages or proofs of concept to speed up purchasing decisions.

![LS Express pricing chart](image)

No upfront fees, just pay as you go.

<table>
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<th>Standard</th>
<th>Premium</th>
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</table>

Additional users and POS

- Point of Sale (POS) $79
- Full Financial user $46
- Office 365 Business Premium $125
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 net new customer acquisition. Set objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all of 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 4 KPIs to gain insight and improve your listing, landing page and campaigns:

Sales funnel efficiency
Track traffic source performance

You will explore many different marketing mediums with your new solution, including your Microsoft marketplace listing, SEO, possibly 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 in order 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 Cloud Partner Portal to uncover your analytics. Here you will gain insight into your Microsoft marketplace listing performance, identify the leads you have generated, and learn how to maximize your campaign activities.

In the Insights section of the Cloud Partner Portal, you will also see a high-level overview of your offer’s performance. The reports included in this section are:

- Summary snapshot of orders
- Usage
- Deployments
- Customer trends on the Insights home page
- 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
- Detailed reports show customer information, including company name and geographic location down to the zip/postal code, so you can compare your customers and compensate your sellers

Here are the specific attributes we provide about your customers:

- Reseller
- First Name
- Last Name
- Email
- Company Name
- Transaction Date
- Subscription name
- Azure Subscription Id (PAYG customers only)
- Cloud Instance Name
- Order Count
- Customer Country Region
- Customer City
- Customer Communication Culture
- Customer Zip/Postal Code
You can make optimal use of the information in these reports by reconciling it with your own internal data and by using it to better prioritize your marketing campaign actions.

The Analytics section of Cloud Partner Portal Insights provides a rich dashboard based on Power BI, which enables you to monitor traffic on your solution detail page. New features for this dashboard are constantly emerging. Also, within the Cloud Partner Portal, you can learn about the Microsoft Campaign, a mechanism by which you can set up campaigns and track them within the portal.

**Map prospect interactions**

Knowing how many interactions (e.g. emails, demonstrations, content downloads, blog visitations 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 priceless in the end.

**Marketing budget forecasts**

Most partners 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:**

- 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?

Track the above in one place and stay on top of performance with a simple marketing key performance indicator dashboard.
# Appendix

## Additional resources

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<td>see azure-marketplace-test-drive-program.pdf</td>
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<td>Go to market faster, reach the right customers, and increase your profit with customizable materials: <a href="https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/reach-customers/tools-and-services">https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/reach-customers/tools-and-services</a></td>
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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.