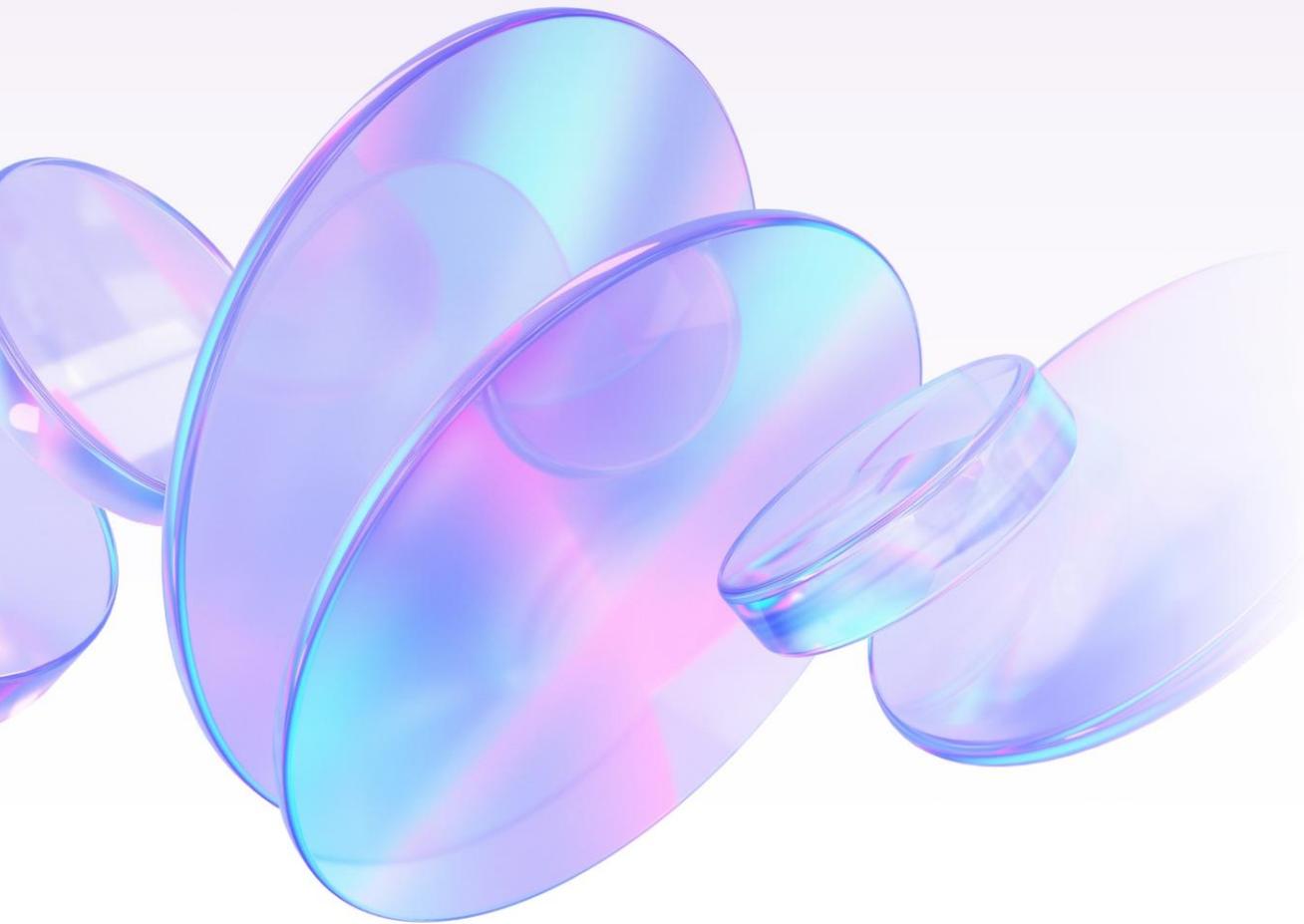




From EA to CSP

**Optimise, Simplify, and Unlock Value with Modern
Microsoft Licensing**

Prepared for Microsoft Partners



Summary

As organisations embrace cloud-first strategies, traditional licensing models such as the **Enterprise Agreement (EA)** and **Microsoft Customer Agreement for Enterprises (MCA-E)** may not always offer the flexibility and responsiveness needed in today's dynamic business environment. This guide helps Microsoft partners identify customers who could benefit from transitioning to the **Cloud Solution Provider (CSP)** program—Microsoft's modern, partner-led licensing model designed to support agility, cost-efficiency, and innovation. CSP offers monthly billing flexibility, simplified invoicing, and personalised partner support, making it a strong fit for organisations seeking scalable and adaptable cloud solutions.

Introduction

Microsoft's licensing landscape is shifting. Traditional agreements such as EA and MCA-E were designed for large enterprises with predictable needs. However, today's organisations require more flexibility, faster provisioning, and strategic support. The CSP program meets these demands by enabling partners to deliver tailored licensing solutions, proactive guidance, and consolidated billing. This guide provides a consultative framework to help partners uncover opportunities and position CSP effectively.

Strategic Questions to Guide Customer Conversations

How is your Microsoft licensing currently managed and renewed?

Why it matters: Understanding the renewal process reveals whether the customer is locked into rigid terms that limit agility.

Example: A customer with 1,200 seats on EA wants to reduce 200 licences due to downsizing but must wait until renewal.

CSP Advantage: CSP offers monthly flexibility with no long-term lock-in, allowing customers to scale licences based on actual usage.

How to position CSP: CSP gives you control to adjust licensing as your needs change—no need to wait for annual renewals or commit to fixed volumes.

Who provides your Microsoft licensing support today?

Why it matters: Identifying the support model helps uncover gaps in strategic guidance and responsiveness.

Example: Customer only hears from their CSP at renewal time, missing optimisation opportunities.

CSP Advantage: CSP partners offer proactive support aligned to business goals, not just transactional provisioning.

How to position CSP: With the right CSP partner, you get roadmap alignment and ongoing optimisation—not just licence fulfilment.

Do you have full visibility into your Microsoft licences?

Why it matters: Decentralised purchasing can lead to shadow IT and compliance risks.

Example: Marketing buys extra Microsoft 365 licences via a third-party vendor without IT approval.

CSP Advantage: CSP centralises licence management with reporting tools and usage insights.

How to position CSP: CSP consolidates licensing across departments, giving you full visibility and control.

Are you leveraging all benefits in your Microsoft agreement?

Why it matters: Customers often miss out on incentives, workshops, or funding due to lack of awareness.

Example: Customer unaware they qualify for Azure credits or FastTrack onboarding.

CSP Advantage: CSP simplifies access to Microsoft-funded programs and partner-led enablement services.

How to position CSP: CSP ensures you unlock all available value—from FastTrack to Azure credits.

How do you manage changes in user count or product mix?

Why it matters: Rigid licensing models make it difficult to adapt to organisational changes.

Example: Customer hires 50 new employees mid-year but can't add licences without renegotiating EA.

CSP Advantage: CSP allows monthly adjustments and automated provisioning.

How to position CSP: CSP is built for agility—scale and switch products easily.

Do you receive consolidated billing for licensing and services?

Why it matters: Separate invoices increase financial complexity and administrative overhead.

Example: Customer receives separate invoices for Microsoft licences, Azure, and managed services.

CSP Advantage: CSP provides a single, consolidated invoice for all services.

How to position CSP: CSP simplifies billing and streamlines financial reporting.

How quickly can you escalate Microsoft service issues?

Why it matters: Slow support responses can lead to extended downtime and business disruption.

Example: Customer experiences a Teams outage and waits 48 hours for resolution.

CSP Advantage: CSP partners offer direct escalation paths to Microsoft engineers.

How to position CSP: As a CSP partner, we ensure faster support when it matters most.

Are you planning cloud migrations or digital transformation in the next 12–18 months?

Why it matters: Aligning licensing with strategic IT plans ensures scalability and cost-efficiency.

Example: Customer planning to migrate on-prem servers to Azure but still on EA.

CSP Advantage: CSP supports transformation with scalable licensing and partner-led planning.

How to position CSP: CSP aligns with your roadmap—giving you flexible licensing and expert support.

Have you recently merged or acquired another company?

Why it matters: Mergers often result in fragmented licensing and compliance challenges.

Example: Two merged companies have separate EAs and duplicate licences.

CSP Advantage: CSP simplifies licence consolidation and alignment across entities.

How to position CSP: CSP unifies licensing across merged entities—reducing complexity.

Would you be open to a licensing health check?

Why it matters: Health checks uncover over-licensing and optimisation opportunities.

Example: Customer paying for unused Power BI Pro licences.

CSP Advantage: CSP enables ongoing cost control through usage analysis.

How to position CSP: We help you right-size your licensing and reduce waste.

Handling Common Customer Objections

Partners may encounter resistance when proposing a shift to CSP. Here are common objections and how to respond effectively:

Objection: We're locked into EA for another year.

Suggested Response: Let's start planning now so you're ready at renewal. CSP gives you more control and flexibility moving forward.

Objection: We already have a CSP, but they're not proactive.

Suggested Response: We offer strategic guidance, roadmap alignment, and optimisation—not just licence provisioning.

Objection: EA gives us better pricing.

Suggested Response: CSP pricing is competitive, and with monthly flexibility, you avoid over-licensing and reduce waste.

Objection: We don't want to manage licensing changes every month.

Suggested Response: We handle that for you. CSP enables automation and partner-managed provisioning.

Objection: We're comfortable with our current setup.

Suggested Response: Microsoft is shifting away from EA for smaller organisations. Transitioning now ensures you're aligned with future programs and incentives.

Partner Action Plan

To drive successful CSP transitions, partners should:

1. Use the strategic questions to guide customer conversations
2. Document responses and identify licensing gaps
3. Validate current agreements with Microsoft or licensing teams
4. Position CSP as the modern alternative aligned with Microsoft's strategy
5. Offer a licensing health check or roadmap session to explore CSP benefits

Conclusion

The shift from EA to CSP represents a strategic opportunity for both customers and partners. CSP empowers organisations with the flexibility, visibility, and support needed to thrive in a cloud-first world. By guiding

customers through this transition, partners can unlock new value, strengthen relationships, and align with Microsoft's commercial direction.