



# *Ten Questions*

## **to Ask When Choosing a New Microsoft CSP Distributor**

A guide for Indirect partners

[dickerdata.com.au/microsoft](https://dickerdata.com.au/microsoft)



# The right answer starts with the right questions



## **There's a LOT going on for Microsoft partners right now.**

With Microsoft raising minimum revenue thresholds for distributors, some partners may soon be looking for a new distributor or reevaluating their existing partnership to strategically position themselves. At the same time, partners themselves must navigate new Indirect CSP rules bringing higher revenue thresholds, enhanced security requirements and updated verification standards.

The good news is that with the right distributor, these changes actually improve pathways to incentives, lower barriers to programs and broaden access to Microsoft resources and support. With so much going on, now is an ideal time to reassess your distributor options to maximise these new revenue streams along with operational efficiency.

## **Where there's change, there's opportunity.**

The right distributor partnership amplifies what you do best, turning Microsoft's evolving requirements into competitive advantages. With operational complexity expertly handled, you can focus on what drives revenue while accessing expertise and relationships that would take years to build independently.

## **The right partnership makes the difference.**

With a quality distributor, you can leverage their proven people, programs and connections while focusing your time and resources on looking after customers and growing your business.

## **Choose once, choose right.**

**To help you assess potential distributors, we've prepared 10 essential questions to identify a genuine strategic partner invested in your success.**

*If you're feeling torn, you're not alone. It's hard enough keeping up, let alone getting ahead.*



## QUESTION 1:

# What's your local partner onboarding track record?

Partnering with a distributor is both a strategically important and technically specialised challenge. Local experience matters.

From aligning with your strategic plans right down into the weeds of your client platform integrations, a smooth onboarding demands expertise and processes unique to the local market.

What to look for:

- **Proven results:** Documented case studies and testimonials from similar Australian and New Zealand partners they've successfully onboarded.
- **Reference customers:** Willingness to introduce you to partners to discuss their experience and results.
- **Local knowledge:** Deep understanding of the ANZ market and regulations, with educational resources to support you.

Follow-up questions:

- Can you share recent case studies from similar partners in my region?
- Can I speak to them about their experience and results?
- Who do you work closely with at Microsoft Australia and New Zealand?



**Bottom line:** Microsoft may be a global giant, but you and your customers are local. Choose a distributor with experts on the ground whose ANZ partners can vouch for their results.



## QUESTION 2:

# How do you ensure a seamless transition?

When dealing with business-critical platforms and client relationships, downtime is not an option.

Gaps in service delivery risk your customer loyalty, cash flow and reputation. The devil is in the details; the solution is proven processes.

What to look for:

- **Structured methodology:** Clear timelines, milestones and contingency planning, each with documented processes.
- **Technical validation:** Proven processes for MPN ID confirmation, Azure Active Directory tenant setup, billing details and Partner Center tenant association.
- **Dedicated transition team:** Local specialists providing white-glove guidance with defined roles and escalation procedures.
- **Customer communication:** Help to explain any changes to your customers and plan their migration.

Follow-up questions:

- What's your typical timeline for a transition?
- Can you walk me through your step-by-step transition methodology?
- What happens if unexpected issues arise during customer data mapping or migration?



**Bottom line:** The right distributor will make the transition feel effortless on your end. You'll barely notice it's happening while your customers experience zero disruption.





### QUESTION 3:

## How do you ensure the highest level of support?

Today's customers expect enterprise-grade support around the clock, regardless of your team size.

The right distributor should provide you with access to premium support capabilities that enhance what you can offer customers and gives you peace of mind.

What to look for:

- **Premium support:** Microsoft Premier Support level service including on-site assistance, Technical Account Managers and specialist services.
- **Customer support extension:** Support that covers your internal team and your customers.
- **24/7 response guarantees:** Clear response times and escalation procedures for critical issues.

Follow-up questions:

- What level of Microsoft support do you provide access to, and how does it compare to what we might get elsewhere?
- What happens if my customer has a critical issue at 2am on a Sunday?



**Bottom line:** The right partnership should eliminate your \$25,000+ Microsoft support costs while enhancing what you can offer customers.



#### QUESTION 4:

## How well-connected is your local Microsoft team?



The best distributors become an extension of your team, with specialists who can unlock Microsoft value.

The right distributor opens access to the entire Microsoft ecosystem. The size, expertise and connections of their local team directly determine what opportunities become available to you.

What to look for:

- **Local Microsoft specialists:** ANZ-based experts covering strategic growth, licensing, technology, sales and marketing, with certifications including MVPs, Microsoft Certified Trainers and Partner Center specialists.
- **Microsoft relationships:** Personal connections with Microsoft field account managers and programs including co-selling, early access programs and strategic partnerships.
- **Funding expertise:** Proven ability to access Microsoft funding streams and benefits, such as Azure deployment funds, which can cover 50-80% of project costs.

Follow-up questions:

- How many certified Microsoft specialists do you have in ANZ?
- What types of Microsoft funding could you unlock for us?
- Can your team join us for important customer meetings, pitches and tenders, and bring in Microsoft team members when needed?

**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor whose Microsoft specialists can unlock relationships, funding and benefits you didn't know were available, both locally and globally.



## QUESTION 5:

# How do you plan and track partner growth?

Look for a partnership that works like a strategic consulting relationship, backed by proven results.

Most distributors promise growth, but results come down to planning and execution. Seek a distributor who starts with where you are now, builds a data-driven roadmap and demonstrates delivery with real examples.

What to look for:

- **Planning methodology:** Business assessment using AI-powered tools, a step-by-step roadmap, commercial guidance, technical training, regular business reviews and accountability tracking.
- **Evidence of growth:** Examples of growth in monthly recurring revenue, new customer wins, market expansion and margin improvement for similar partners.
- **Validated operations:** Track record of certification achievement, tender wins, automated efficiencies and adding new solutions like AI or security.

Follow-up questions:

- Can you show me strategic growth plans and relevant revenue examples?
- How do you track results and can I validate this by speaking to current partners?
- How have you helped partners enter new markets and add specialist services?

**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor who treats your growth and profitability like their own, backed by clear methodology, regular check-ins and success stories they're proud to share.



## QUESTION 6:

# What's your market position and business model?

You need confidence that your distributor can open doors and elevate your brand without stepping on your toes.

If they offer direct services alongside distribution, it is essential to understand how they manage potential conflicts.

What to look for:

- **Leadership credentials:** Microsoft awards for ANZ performance, proven #1 positions in specific sectors and established local presence.
- **Partner-first model:** Clear commitment to partner success with transparent policies on customer engagement, lead sharing and conflict resolution when interests overlap.
- **Local expertise:** Comprehensive certifications, success in emerging solution areas and deep understanding of segments relevant to your business.

Follow-up questions:

- What Microsoft awards or recognition do you have in the ANZ region?
- What percentage of your business comes through partners vs direct services?
- How do you handle situations where your services might compete with ours?



**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor whose reputation enhances yours with a business model that won't compete with you.





## QUESTION 7:

# What programs will accelerate our growth?

Look for distributors who actively invest in your success with programs that create competitive advantages you couldn't access alone.

Distributors should offer structured programs to accelerate growth at every stage, from onboarding to capability building to hands-on market execution.

What to look for:

- **Technical and pre-sales:** Specialists who can help win deals, provide solution architecture, proof-of-concepts and help with tenders and complex customer scenarios.
- **Operational efficiency:** Cloud readiness assessments, automated provisioning, migration support, certification training and tools that streamline operations.
- **Go-to-market accelerators:** Marketing-as-a-service, MDF access, co-funded campaigns, training programs and Partner to Partner collaboration.

Follow-up questions:

- How many programs do you offer spanning onboarding, enablement and go-to-market success?
- Which of your programs would you recommend for a business at our stage?
- What unique and exclusive partner programs do you offer?



**Bottom line:** Choose a partner whose programs create genuine competitive advantages and measurable growth acceleration.



## QUESTION 8:

# How will you help us reduce costs and improve margins?



Effective distributors not only help you reduce operational costs through licensing optimisation, automation and shared resources, but also create opportunities for higher-value services.

Rather than focusing solely on licensing margins, the most profitable partners focus on consulting, IP creation and professional services revenue. Microsoft research shows that services-led partners make US \$8.45 for every \$1 of Microsoft licensing revenue.\* Choose a strategic partner that can help you build repeatable, profitable services that deliver greater profit to your business.

What to look for:

- **Cost optimisation:** Access to volume licensing discounts, reduced compliance overheads through shared expertise and streamlined processes that free up resources for revenue-generating activities.
- **Operational efficiency:** User-friendly cloud marketplace with zero-touch provisioning, comprehensive billing tools, automated processes and 24/7 support.
- **Revenue optimisation:** Access to shared specialists, programs and support resources that help you develop repeatable, profitable services while reducing internal overhead.

Follow-up questions:

- Can you show me specific examples of cost savings and new revenue opportunities you've created for similar partners?
- What automated tools do you have for provisioning, billing and customer management?
- What programs and expertise do you offer to help us develop repeatable, profitable services revenue?

**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor who reduces your operational costs while helping you build higher-margin services. The best partnerships do both.

\* Source: IDC White Paper, sponsored by Microsoft, Microsoft Partners: [Driving Economic Value and AI Maturity](#), doc #US52483124, September 2024

## QUESTION 9:

# How do you keep us ahead on AI and Microsoft's evolving solutions?



Microsoft's major investment in AI and rapid innovation in cloud creates both opportunities and challenges for partners.

Your distributor should help you navigate this with early insights, structured learning programs and proactive guidance to keep you up to speed.

What to look for:

- **Training:** Microsoft Certified Trainers, AI specialists, Copilot deployment training, hands-on workshops and practical tools, especially for SMB and mid-market customers.
- **Guidance:** Proactive updates on changes, compliance support and strategic advice for achieving higher-tier designations.
- **Early access:** Beta program participation, connection to Microsoft product teams, AI-powered tools for identifying revenue opportunities and first access to new initiatives.

Follow-up questions:

- What's your process for alerting partners to critical Microsoft updates?
- What AI and innovation training do you provide?
- How quickly do you communicate Microsoft changes and help us adapt our strategy?

**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor who works with you to turn Microsoft's rapid innovation into a competitive advantage.



## QUESTION 10:

# Do you have an established Partner to Partner community?

Success in today's Microsoft ecosystem increasingly depends on working with other partners and solution providers.

Look for distributors who actively create collaboration opportunities and build genuine partnership connections, rather than offering services that compete with yours.

What to look for:

- **Active partner community:** Structured networking platforms and a marketplace for knowledge-sharing and accessing complementary solutions.
- **ISV relationships:** Access to exclusive vendor programs, solutions and joint go-to-market initiatives.
- **Revenue sharing:** Cross-selling opportunities and specialist partner referrals for complete solutions.

Follow-up questions:

- How does your partner community work in practice?
- Can you show examples of partnerships you've facilitated?
- What unique and exclusive vendor relationships do you provide access to?



**Bottom line:** Choose a distributor whose network multiplies your capabilities and creates new growth and revenue opportunities.







## **CHECKLIST:** **10 essential questions**

**1: What's your local partner onboarding track record?**

Microsoft may be a global giant, but you and your customers are local. Choose a distributor with experts on the ground whose ANZ partners can vouch for their results.

**2: How do you ensure a seamless transition?**

The right distributor will make the transition feel effortless on your end. You'll barely notice it's happening while your customers experience zero disruption.

**3: How do you ensure the highest level of support?**

The right distributor provides you and your customers with premium-level support that may be expensive or difficult to access independently.

**4: How well-connected is your local Microsoft team?**

Choose a distributor whose Microsoft specialists can unlock relationships, funding and benefits you didn't know were available, both locally and globally.

**5: How do you plan and track partner growth?**

Choose a distributor who treats your growth and profitability like their own, backed by clear methodology, regular check-ins and success stories they're proud to share.

**6: What's your market position and business model?**

Choose a distributor whose reputation enhances yours with a business model that won't compete with you.

**7: What programs will accelerate our growth?**

Choose a partner whose programs create genuine competitive advantages and measurable growth acceleration.

**8: How will you help us reduce costs and improve margins?**

Choose a distributor who reduces your operational costs while helping you build higher-margin services. The best partnerships do both..

**9: How do you keep us ahead on AI and Microsoft's evolving solutions?**

Choose a distributor who works with you to turn Microsoft's rapid innovation into a competitive advantage.

**10: Do you have an established Partner to Partner community?**

Choose a distributor whose network multiplies your capabilities and creates new growth and revenue opportunities.



# The Dicker Data Difference for Microsoft Partners

As you evaluate potential distributors, it's worth understanding what sets Dicker Data apart. We're ANZ's leading Microsoft specialist with a 45-year track record of helping partners thrive through change.

## ANZ'S #1 MICROSOFT CLOUD SPECIALISTS

### Leading ANZ distributor for Microsoft 365, Copilot, Azure and Business Applications

You're working with the #1 distributor for Microsoft CSP, #1 for Copilot, #1 for Azure SMB and #1 for Biz Apps – recognition that comes from consistently delivering results for our partners.

Our 50+ dedicated Microsoft specialists across ANZ include 5 Microsoft Certified Trainers, Microsoft MVPs and former Microsoft employees with 80+ certifications across the team. You gain access to Microsoft expertise that would cost hundreds of thousands to build internally.



We have a truly strategic relationship with Dicker Data. Nothing is too much trouble for them – it's a two-way street, and we certainly sense they want to be a part of it. They are ready, willing and able every time. We would not be where we are now without their support."

– Ian Nearhos, Head of Strategy, Truis



## Deep technical and commercial support

### Dedicated specialists who become an extension of your team

The team at Dicker Data works to understand your business goals and growth objectives. You'll gain access to technical specialists across Azure, Modern Work, Security, AI and Business Applications who support your customer engagements and help you win more deals.

Our pre-sales support includes solution architecting, tender responses and detailed licensing guidance to optimise customer value and your margins. We actively help you identify opportunities and design solutions that differentiate your practice.



They genuinely feel like they work in partnership with us. It feels like an extension of my own team when we're working together."

– Jason Wornham, GM, FUJIFILM

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## Streamlined operations and enhanced support

### Microsoft Premier Support for you and your customers

Partnering with Dicker Data gives you access to operational efficiencies that enhance your capabilities. This includes Microsoft Premier Support with 24/7/365 local coverage and 1-hour response times,

automated provisioning, API integration for zero-touch transactions and streamlined billing through our user-friendly Cloud Marketplace.



## Marketing acceleration

### Amplify your reach with proven programs and resources

Our custom lead-generation campaigns are built for your audience, backed by co-branded assets and sales tools. Through co-funded marketing and our Marketing-as-a-Service capabilities, you can expand your reach while focusing on delivering value to customers.



A lot of MSPs come from an engineering background where the sales and marketing pieces are hard work. So, the go-to-market opportunities Dicker Data provides are brilliant to help us evolve our brand and get greater exposure.”

– Paul Heaton, CEO, cubesys

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## Strategic growth programs

### Structured pathways to Microsoft success

From cloud readiness assessments and deployment support to Partner to Partner connections through Solution ConX, we create opportunities that multiply your capabilities.

Key programs include our AI Factory for proven AI solutions, Chorus for managed security services, EcpPro for streamlined MSP operations and Practice Accelerator for modernising your service offerings. Through partnerships like TechClick, we provide

funded Azure assessments and migrations. Training and certification-as-a-service keep your team ahead of the curve, while our data-driven insights help identify growth opportunities.



Dicker Data connects us with the tools and partnerships that can transform our business. The EcpPro partnership is a perfect example of how they’re invested in our success, not just our transactions.”

– Martin Thurgate, Director, Diamond IT





## Strategic Microsoft relationships

### Early access and co-investment opportunities

Our deep Microsoft relationship provides unique advantages: direct relationships with Microsoft product and engineering teams, early access to beta programs and co-investment in joint marketing

initiatives. This recognition as Microsoft's top-performing distributor across multiple categories unlocks unique opportunities, insights and funding.

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## Proven results, local expertise

### 45 years of Australian experience, built for the ANZ market

As an Australian-owned and operated ASX-listed technology distributor, we understand what ANZ partners need to succeed. Our track record includes successful transitions of established Microsoft specialists, and we're Australia's fastest-growing modern workplace distributor.



There's a reason why they're Australia's most trusted distributor."

– **David Crotty, Managing Director, Intergy Consulting**



## SUCCESS STORIES:

# Partners who have navigated changing Microsoft CSP partner models



### **cubesys democratises cloud expertise for SMB market**

How a switch to Indirect CSP with Dicker Data  
expanded market opportunities



Dicker Data has given us a superpower.  
Turning potential opportunities into a reality.”

– Paul Heaton, CEO, cubesys

[Read the full story →](#)



### **Playing to strengths drives growth**

How DDS IT and Dicker Data work together to  
power ambitious market expansion



You simply can't go wrong with Dicker  
Data – they're a great team, easy to work  
with and massively invested in your outcomes.”

– Simon Browne, CEO & Founder, DDS IT

[Read the full story →](#)



Let's navigate this change

*Together*

Choosing the right partner for your Direct to Indirect transition can accelerate your business growth and unlock new opportunities.

Dicker Data's experienced team is ready to discuss your situation, answer your questions and demonstrate how our proven approach can exponentially drive your growth.

Connect with our Microsoft specialists:

**Email:** [Microsoft.Sales@DickerData.com.au](mailto:Microsoft.Sales@DickerData.com.au) | **Phone:** (02) 8556 8061

**Visit:** [www.dickerdata.com.au/microsoft/partnering/transition](http://www.dickerdata.com.au/microsoft/partnering/transition)

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