

Microsoft Azure: Welcome to the Modern Workplace

How to enable your workforce – and
expand your company capabilities



A future business foundation

Businesses are experiencing unprecedented needs for Cloud services, and enterprises like yours are the enablers of the worldwide Cloud revolution.

As your business evolves and you manage more customers and staff than ever, it pays to have a solution that's prepared for these seismic shifts in business. This is where Azure comes in.

Azure is Microsoft's cloud computing service, allowing for the development of powerful Cloud technologies and the delivery of a virtualised IT infrastructure. Its ever-growing list of features means anything you need – be it analytics, storage, ransomware protection or raw computing power – is delivered via a single, Cloud-enabled environment. Being completely scalable, Azure is chargeable by volume; you only pay for the services you use, as you use them.

In this eBook, we'll introduce:

- The technical capabilities of Microsoft Azure
- Use cases for Azure as your company needs evolve
- The added value of Microsoft Azure to your infrastructure
- How Azure expands your company capabilities

By the final chapter, we hope you'll understand how Azure can help manage your staff, streamline your processes and improve your productivity. From there, you can explore Azure's game-changing benefits to your company's service offerings.

An introduction to Azure

Azure's offerings are expansive, and its scale is infinite – as such, it can be hard to pin down exactly what it is.

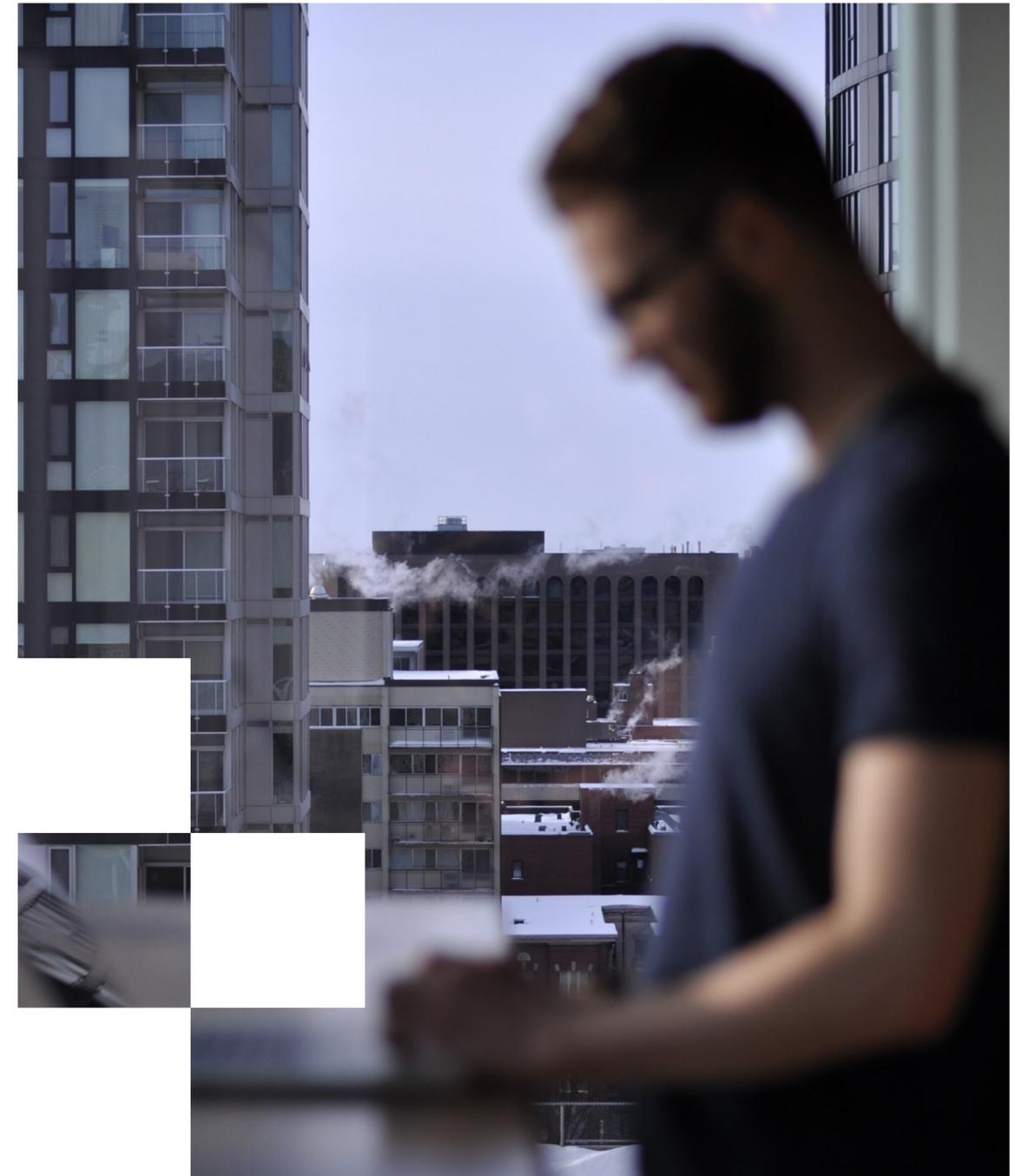
Most businesses will be familiar with the 'SaaS' model of Cloud solutions. Meaning Software-as-a-Service, these are solutions that can be accessed from any compatible device or supported web browser: Microsoft 365 is a common example.

Then there are more elaborate solutions: Platform-as-a-Service, or 'PaaS', provides a hosted development or storage platform for users to work within; if you're familiar with SharePoint, it's the perfect comparison.

There's also the broader reaching Infrastructure-as-a-Service solution, or 'IaaS', which leverages the Cloud to create full infrastructural support, including networking and virtual hardware.

Azure is so broad an environment that it arguably encompasses all three examples.

Azure is less a product, and more a problem solver – and with that, a great way to tackle your technical needs now and for the future. Being Hybrid-first, it's also compatible with your existing Windows solutions, including all those mentioned above.



Microsoft arranges its Azure services into numerous categories, the most prevalent including:



Computing

By virtualising hardware in the Cloud, Azure provides high-intensity computing power without requiring any hardware purchases. So, if you're experiencing periods of high service loads which strain your current technology, Azure's raw computing power tackles the increased demand – as and when you need.

With Azure's computing capabilities, your business can:

- Access workplace devices from anywhere with Azure Virtual Desktop
- Develop powerful web and mobile apps using Azure as a development platform
- Schedule and automate common computing tasks when required, paying only for the time and volume needed
-



Networking

Azure Virtual Network is what Microsoft describes as the 'building block' of a private network. Connecting virtualised machines, on-premises devices and internet endpoints, it provides the same capabilities as your own data centres but expanded upon with Azure's scalable services.

With Azure's networking capabilities, your business can:

- Secure and approve incoming connections to company
- networks with VPNs
- Provide scalable firewalls without the need to manage or maintain them
- Develop virtual networks which connect your Azure solutions to your on-prem datacentres

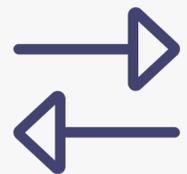


Storage

Azure's large-scale storage is flexible enough to store and protect data, applications and virtual machines, while secure enough to protect them from common data threats such as Ransomware.

With Azure's storage capabilities, your business can:

- Backup both your on-premises and virtual devices, as well as disks, shared files and databases
- Provide flexible, large-scale storage for unstructured data with Binary Large Object (BLOB) Storage
- Protect bulk legacy data that isn't regularly accessed but needs retaining and securing



Migration

Azure makes migration to the Cloud simple and secure, with numerous solutions for hybrid Cloud businesses

With Azure's migration capabilities, your business can:

- Move on-premises databases into the Cloud, simply and securely
- Maintain business continuity with a fully built-in Azure disaster recovery service
- Manage and monitor the cost of Cloud migration with simplified spending and billing



Security

Neither your users nor your business are immune from cyber threats, so both need trusted cyber protections. Azure provisions numerous security solutions with public Cloud security in mind and is covered by exactly the security you'd expect from a company like Microsoft.

With Azure's security capabilities, you're able to

- Protect against Direct Denial of Service threats with Azure DDoS Protection
- Protect on-premises data, virtual machines and even other Cloud services with Azure Defender
- View your security posture across servers, storage and networks with Azure Security Centre

These are just a few of the solutions Azure offers. With more than 600 currently available and that number set to rise across several IT specialties, we've merely scratched the surface of Azure's technical capabilities.

For certain businesses, Azure's web, security and mobile solutions could be the perfect entry, or evolution, to their Cloud-empowered working.

Azure Case Scenarios

So many technical solutions are custom built for purpose: Disaster Recovery, Cyber Security and Data Storage are just three examples of bespoke, understandable services.

Consider any common business needs and it's likely that Azure can deliver them, so here's just a few examples of how Azure achieves yours.

Azure as a Hardware Upgrade

While software regularly receives product upgrades, hardware isn't quite as iterative; and as the capabilities of applications grow, your devices might start to struggle under the load.

There's only so much storage space available on a physical drive, for example, and only so much computing power in a processor. It's hard to determine if any one hardware investment is too much, or not enough.

Azure's virtualisation not only provides the added computing capabilities, it does so without the need for any hardware investments. In being entirely flexible, the solution can be scaled in proportion to your needs, with the pricing reflected fairly and accurately.

Azure as a Driver for Transformation

Microsoft is fast standardising 'The Modern Workplace' – a transformative way of working favouring collaboration, connectivity, flexibility and productivity. And it's an idea the working world has embraced: a Harvard Business Review sees 78% of senior executives considering it an essential way of working. For the Microsoft-using business, Azure is one part of a much larger setup incorporating SharePoint, 365 and Enterprise Mobility, and helps you to bring these together into a cohesive, Cloud-empowered whole.

Azure as an Innovator

No business is identical, and as yours grows, its needs will become ever more bespoke. This is your opportunity to leverage Azure at its most proactive.

You've the ability to analyse call volumes, print volumes and time of increased workloads, to name just a few data sources. This is an opportunity to anticipate changing needs and start creating bespoke processes through Azure.

From here, your business can start to separate itself from its competitors; leveraging your data, knowledge and processes to create solutions that work to your strengths alone.

The Azure Lifespan

Azure's scalability and wide service repertoire mean it's more than just a replacement for your on-prem hardware.

Empower Your Business

Consider the number of databases, process, servers, users, networks devices and apps you rely on and ask yourself how Azure could simplify them, harmonise them – even empower them.

You're not expected to learn Azure inside out, nor does Azure need to be complex; indeed, an Azure service with FITTS can take care of any complexities for you.

Azure is more than just a tool, it's the whole toolbox, with you free to take out whatever gets the job done. Consider your challenges, opportunities, even your competition, and get the most from your Azure subscription by exploring your options for each.

Expand Your Service Portfolio

Azure can be used for more than your internal requirements; consider the ways it can improve customer relations and transactions too. With a platform allowing for the development of complex applications, offering support for several coding languages, you could already be developing new web-based apps or services that greatly improve the customer experience.

If you've an idea for business development, Azure allows you to safely deploy and test it in a controlled sandbox environment; so, when you've an ingenious new solution that separate you from your competitors, you've the space to fine-tune it for perfection.

Speed up and Simplify

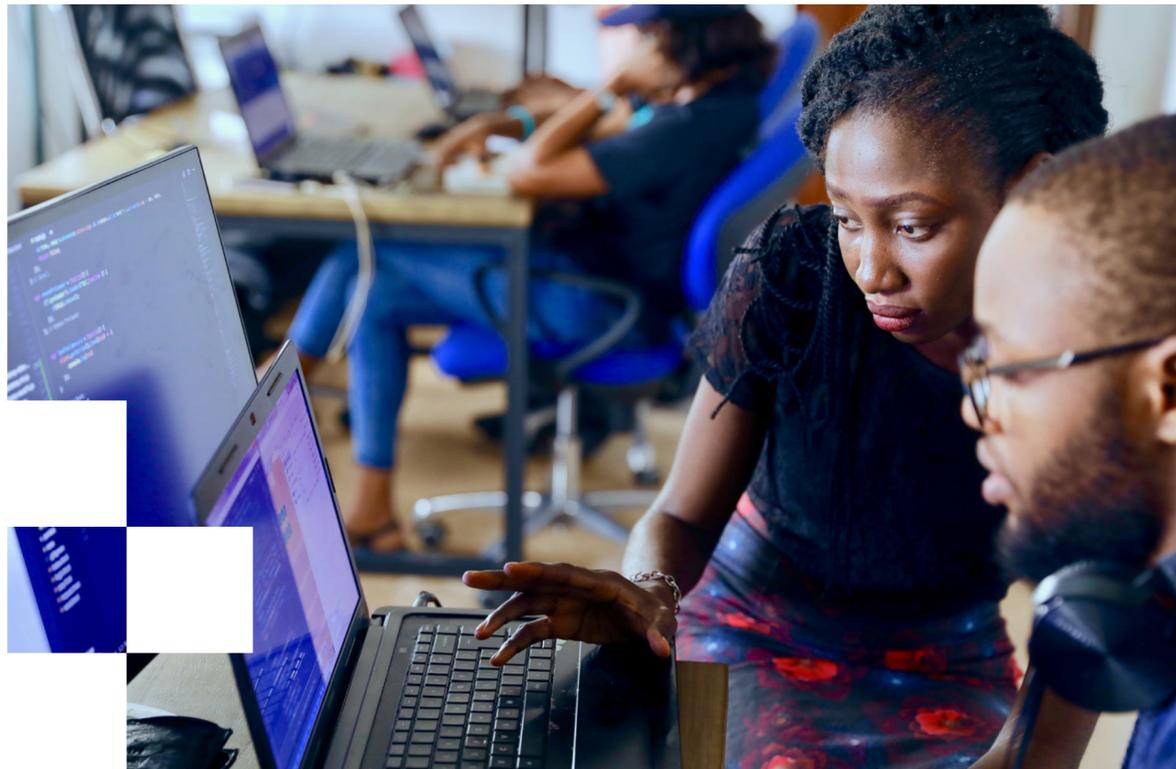
If you're a business that's already familiar with the Microsoft ecosystem, Azure provides one of the next logical steps in your Cloud journey. Its compatibility with Microsoft systems simplifies migration and ensures that they all benefit from Azure's value- added services.

The Azure platform keeps everything united; you no longer have to fit your solutions around new or incompatible technologies, and your solutions become even easier to deploy.

Your Business Journey

With Azure being the platform of choice for over 95% of Fortune 500 companies, it's easy to assume it's something of an 'elitist' service. Yet Azure's adoption among so many businesses has little to do with their size, and more to do with the versatility of the service.

Wherever you are in your business journey – and however small your business might be – Azure remains infinitely scalable, its solutions only as big as you need them to be.



Small Businesses and Startups

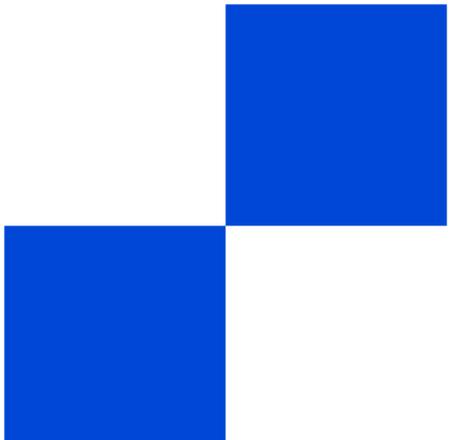
Arguably, when it comes to kickstarting a Cloud-capable workforce, few businesses can have their cake and eat it quite like the startups and the small enterprises. Admittedly, a Cloud-enabled business doesn't happen overnight, nor is it appropriate for every business so early on - but Cloud maturity has reached the stage where it can subsidise a company easily and early.

In the early stages, you might find yourself needing a number of essential technologies, including basic storage, SaaS solutions, networking and security. Consolidating these into your Azure license could help lessen the costs and – perhaps more importantly – ensure long-term savings on their managing and maintenance.

Entering the Azure ecosystem early might help consolidate your technologies into an easily manageable environment, one that evolves simply and swiftly. It scales in either direction, and the prices of any solutions are kept proportionate: you needn't dedicate yourself to any contracts or licensing agreements.

Consider

- How Azure could supplement your existing Microsoft software, such as Microsoft 365
- Exploring solutions such as Virtual Machines, Azure Active Directory or Azure Virtual Desktop as an entry-level technology fleet
- Implementing Azure's Data Recovery and Security solutions for a compatible, secure solution to all your Cloud-accessible Azure data.



Medium and Mid-stage Enterprises

Azure provides what many consider the best Hybrid Cloud solutions available – more so than its closest industry competitor, Amazon Web Services. As such, it's a tremendous solution for the established business looking to transition more gradually to the Cloud.

Understandably, your medium enterprise will have complex on-premises systems and with those, a need for on-premises servers. Azure is developed with these Hybrid systems in mind. You may choose to keep an on-prem solution as opposed to a virtual alternative, and it's likely that any Azure services you adopt will still be compatible. Similarly, moving to an Azure solution can be done with minimum disruption, as its migration services make the bulk exchange of data simple and seamless.

Consider

- Hybrid-friendly Azure solutions, such as Azure Virtual Desktop, for greater consistency between your on-and-off-prem devices.
- Deploying Azure as an all new or additional option for your infrastructural needs
- Experimenting with the Azure's 'sandbox' solution and developing new solutions for customers and processes.

Large and Long-Running Enterprises

The breadth of Cloud services is growing, and so is your business. Familiarising yourself with Azure now means you can leverage its most powerful capabilities later. Machine Learning, for example, may not yet be standardised across industries, but for the forward-thinking business, it's already possible to start learning and leveraging its functions.

As a large enterprise, your aspirations are set to become industry leading. With Azure's ever-growing services, it's a safe bet that Microsoft will be anticipating – if not deciding – the next technological trend, with your business set to benefit most.

Consider

- Using Azure's Internet of Things support to take your technical reach beyond the typical.
- Exploring Azure's AI capabilities to humanise and harmonise workplace and customer processes

Simplifying Services

With support for existing Microsoft software, compatibility with numerous coding languages and a user interface accessible from within any operating system, Azure helps consolidate your technologies into a single, succinct infrastructure.

It's easy, amidst the many capabilities of Microsoft Azure, to let yourself get overwhelmed with the possibilities, but it's important to remember that Azure is open, flexible and scalable.

It's also supported by our team of specialists at FITTS. Our collective knowledge of Azure, coupled with our dedication to business transformation, means we can custom-develop your Azure solution to your company aspirations and your Microsoft environment.

Next step: Take a Cloud Infrastructure Assessment

Our cloud assessment will provide your business with a clear picture of what your current infrastructure is doing. Then within the context of your goals & objectives a defined roadmap to getting that optimised or migrated to the appropriate cloud platform with a clear indication of associated cost savings.

Our cloud assessment includes:

- An understanding of goals & objectives
- An assessment of current infrastructure and its business & people impact
- A review of any dependencies
- A report providing a roadmap to either optimisation of / or migration to relevant services and solutions
- Including predicted efficiencies and innovation gains.

Speak to us today to request your free Cloud Infrastructure Assessment or to discuss your bespoke cloud infrastructure requirements.

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