



Helping Customers Overcome the Top 4 Challenges of Microsoft 365

What is Microsoft 365, and why is it getting so much attention?

"... Microsoft 365 represents a significant opportunity for partners to grow their businesses. Microsoft 365 will drive growth by enabling our more than 64,000 cloud partners to differentiate their offerings, simplify their sales processes and increase their revenue."

Satya Nadella, Chief Executive Office of Microsoft at Inspire 2017

Why is Microsoft 365 (M365) getting so much attention these days? M365 is a complete office solution that provides everything you need to drive your business toward achieving your goals. This suite of services enables technology to be used for communication and collaboration, device and identity management, productivity in email, security and protection, and storage. The products have been designed to operate seamlessly in parallel or collaboratively to provide what is necessary for your everyday business needs, and provide solutions where you may have struggled to piece together functionality in the past. To be clear – M365 is one contiguous solution – with it, there is no need to buy other solutions anymore

The components include the following:

- **Identity and access management**, with Azure Active Directory and Active Directory Connect, to ensure that identities and access are kept current and consistent across your environment.
- **A trusted platform for all computing devices**, mobile or otherwise, with Windows 10.
- **Flexible and reliable communication, collaboration and calendar management** with Microsoft Office 365, Skype, Teams and SharePoint.
- **Storage that grows with your needs**, with OneDrive.

An unparalleled security suite, including data-level protection, document-level security, Anti-spam/Malware/Antivirus, Encryption with Data Loss Prevention (DLP), Azure Information Protection, Windows Defender and Exchange Online Advanced Threat Protection (EOATP), and Office 365 Message Encryption (OME).

Microsoft is focused on the development and support of M365 moving forward, ensuring platform longevity and ongoing product maintenance and support. In turn, they have begun to drive customers away from older, obsolete releases of on-premise software that may not provide robust functionality in each technology category. This is critically important, particularly when it comes to security. M365 products include the most stringent security features, with continuous improvement and updates, to ensure your environment, including systems, data and users, is protected.

What can M365 do for channel partners?

Opportunities to increase revenue and create stickiness are not easy to find. The Microsoft technology in M365 does just that – it creates new revenue streams, opportunity for growth, and makes your customers less likely to rip and replace or look elsewhere for 3rd party software solutions. M365 is comprehensive and flexible, and therefore services and solutions can be turned on and off and scaled to suit your customers' needs. Layering additional services on top of the product will



help to ensure that your customers are satisfied and using M365 to help achieve their goals. In other words - you implement it, properly manage and support it, and it sticks.

Sell M365 paired with support services to provide additional value to your customers, satisfying their need for functionality, capability, reliability, and ongoing proactive and reactive issue resolution. Becoming their trusted partner can open the door to additional revenue opportunities and help you grow and expand your business. Services that expand your portfolio and provide value to your customers could include proactive feature enablement, day to day management of product operations, infrastructure improvements, business continuity and recovery, support, connectivity and managed services for devices. Services in these categories take the burden off your customer's hands, improve efficiency of business, and help your customers achieve their goals without adding and maintaining additional staff.

What challenges prevent your customers from adopting M365 fully?

As with any technology solution, challenges that are not addressed can result in slower or only partial adoption. M365 presents its own challenges, all of which can be addressed. The top challenges are as follows:

Supporting Continued Product Convergence

M365 can be daunting to your customers due to the number of integrated components to implement and support. The challenge is not only understanding best practices for the use and support of all the components of M365, but also onboarding them in such a way that supports integration and ease of use. In addition, it can be difficult to understand the vast amount of product capabilities to ensure that they are gaining the most benefit from each, leveraging their investment as their business needs evolve. Having this knowledge at their fingertips, or available through a partner, can prevent customers from looking elsewhere for specific capabilities from 3rd party vendors.

Keeping up with Azure as a Backend

The products that comprise M365 all tie back to Azure in many ways. Understanding how Azure works is not enough – your customers need to know how Azure integrates with each Microsoft product to properly support and manage the technology. For this reason, it is critically important to be able to keep pace with Microsoft's frequent updates to their

Azure-based technology. Changes are made with rapid velocity. In order to stay current, service providers must be able to relay what these changes mean to the customer.

Best Practices

It is not enough to understand the technology products that comprise M365 – best practices are critical in properly implementing and managing so many interconnected products. Comprehensive processes to support implementation and use ensure consistency and effectiveness of the solutions. These processes help customers use technology to meet business goals.

Some examples to demonstrate the importance of best practices are as follows:

- Without understanding messaging and anti-spam/anti-virus best practices, implementation of EOATP provides little value.
- Without a working knowledge of disaster recovery best practices and recovery time and recovery point objectives, implementing Azure Site Recovery is virtually impossible.

Security

Security is the mortar that holds the foundation of your customers' M365 environment together. It is pervasive throughout the entire user experience, intrinsic to every product within M365, and critical to vitality of their business. Every M365 component that your customers are using addresses security – from the platform itself to messaging and collaboration, it is a concern that Microsoft takes very seriously. Previously, security products were included in the EM+S product bundle or purchased, implemented, and managed separately from 3rd party specialized vendors. Now, security permeates every aspect of the M365 environment and the Microsoft CSP suite. These security solutions are updated regularly, ensuring your customers always have the most current solutions to address the most pressing security issues.



These security solutions include:

- **Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection (OATP)**, which provides the ability to monitor and ensure that links and attachments sent via email are safe
- **Office 365 Data Loss Prevention (DLP)**, which ensures that customers can protect certain kinds of information from being transmitted via email, and remain compliant with security policies, HIPAA, PCI, etc.
- **Azure Information Protection (AIP)**, which helps customers protect sensitive data throughout lifecycle – both within files and during transmission externally and internally within their organization.

The Secure Score dashboard within Office 365, which provides recommended security measures, can be a very useful point of reference. However, it is important to follow best practices when deciding which measures are valuable to your customers. Some features may make your environment more secure, but may also cause accessibility problems for some users.

With security, as with all M365 features, product capability awareness is critically important to understand what features are available to your customers, and which features are best suited for their specific business needs. This awareness is also important as it can save a lot of time and money that would otherwise be spent researching 3rd party solutions that are unnecessary. But awareness alone is not enough. Best practices are critical to ensure you are turning on the appropriate features properly, when you need them.

With PlumChoice, you can overcome these challenges

A strong partnership can help your customers overcome their challenges with managing and implementing M365, and create that stickiness that results in long-term relationships and the opportunity for additive and complementary revenue streams.

With PlumChoice Cloud Services, you become that trusted partner. PlumChoice strengthens relationships and opens doors to create additional revenue opportunities. Our services offer expertise and best practices to address all aspects of M365 implementation, use, and optimization, including the following service categories:



- **Onboarding and Migration**, to assist with new product adoption, onboarding, and white-glove migration
- **Support Services**, available either direct to the end user or for the IT Admin
- **Advanced Services**, provided in an Advisory, Assisted, or Managed model
- **Project Services**, focused around Security, Cloud adoption, user experience and best practices
- **Administrative Services**, for user and group administration, device administration, site collection, and reporting

Help your customers use the features they need and get the most out of their M365 implementation without adding and managing staff and expertise.

Don't assume the challenges of M365 on your own. Contact us today to find out how PlumChoice Cloud Services can help you support your customers' M365 needs, increase product stickiness, and create new revenue streams.

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