

<b>Page title (new) - maximum 60 characters:</b>	Making sense of MS solution designation changes   Atech
<b>Meta description (new) - maximum 155 characters:</b>	Gold no more. Find out what's next for MS Gold & Silver Partners and customers in this guide to MS solution designation changes.

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**Deliverable: Article**

# <h1>Making sense of the new Microsoft solution designations changes</h1>

Change is inevitable. Microsoft Partners are transforming how they demonstrate their capabilities. Transforming how customers can match the competencies they are looking for in a managed service provider with the needs of their next project.

Atech works in the same way – continually finding new ways to simplify our clients' IT stack and maximise ROI.

With that in mind, we thought we'd clear up some of the existing technologies. We'll also hone in on what is next on the horizon for Microsoft Gold Partners and customers.

## What is a Microsoft Gold and Silver Partner?

Until this point, most customers have been able to identify Microsoft Partners and distinguish between them based on their Microsoft competencies (otherwise known as their accreditations).

These Microsoft 'competencies' are attained by passing required exams and skills validation, meeting specific performance requirements, and paying an annual fee for silver or gold competency level.

This does not mean that MS competency accreditations could be attained by simply paying the annual fee. A range of criteria would need to be met first. The partner would then gain an invitation to earn the competency and then advertise their achievement to customers.

Microsoft [Competencies](#) were divided into four main categories, including:

- App and Infrastructure
- Business Applications
- Data and AI
- Modern Workplace and Security

## What's coming next for MS Partners?

Gold and Silver Partner competency requirements are changing. From 1st October 2022, Microsoft Partners will now be graded by their capability scores across three different solution designations, which are;

- **Performance:** measured by metrics such as net customer adds.
- **Skilling:** a company's dedication to upskilling and training existing employees. Points are awarded to staff members accredited with specified certifications.
- **Customer success:** based on customer usage growth and the number of successful deployments.

Solutions designations are assigned via a points system. Qualifying firms need to earn at least 70 points (including points in each of the above subcategories) out of a possible score of 100.

The new competency scoring system amalgamates achievements in a way that (one might argue) is more holistic. Perhaps the new system also makes it ever so slightly more challenging to attain than Gold & Silver statuses.

## What are Microsoft Advanced Specialisations?

Advanced Specialisations differ from Silver and Gold certifications in that they are based on a partner's expanded reach. Advanced specialisation status is measured by a brand's success in going above and beyond Microsoft's core capabilities to bring about better business outcomes.

At this level, standards are exacting - companies must provide adequate figures demonstrating their proven successes in meeting and scaling better customer outcomes for their audiences.

Atech is proud to have achieved Microsoft Azure Advanced Specialization in Azure Virtual Desktop, Identity & Access Management, and Threat Protection. Read more about [our accreditations](#) here.

## Changes to Azure Expert MSP

[Azure Expert MSPs](#) are Microsoft's foremost trusted managed services provider partners. In an independent audit of managed service offerings (encompassing reviews of people, processes, and technologies), Azure meets the highest delivery standards set in the industry. Azure Expert MSP verification is proof of excellence in both customer service and technical expertise.

However, earlier this year, Microsoft launched its replacement for Azure Expert MSP, NCE (New Commerce Experience). Customers now have more choice in how they purchase licensing. Businesses have the freedom to control spending in alignment with their overall objectives and expansion plans.

NCE centres around seat-based offers. So, no matter the size of your business, you will retain the right to choose only the features your organisation wants and needs. These improvements to Microsoft MSP certification provide enterprise solutions for non-enterprise companies. It's also significantly easier to purchase more business solutions as your company grows.

NCE offers choice and transparency in purchasing, ensuring the customer gets the best possible ROI. Atech shares these same values and always takes a customer-centric approach to our work.

## **What these accreditation changes mean for our customers**

The adjustments to Microsoft's accreditation criteria help to create a more streamlined and cost-efficient journey for the end customer. At Atech, we focus on enterprise IT problem-solving using advanced tech. Therefore, our business ethos matches Microsoft's updated list of certification requirements.

We envision that the changes in designation criteria will bring the following benefits to our customers:

### **Outcome #1: Simplified customer choice for services**

All Solutions Partner designations will be aligned to Microsoft Cloud and split into the following disciplines:

- Infrastructure
- Data and AI
- Digital and App Innovation
- Modern Workplace
- Security Applications
- Business Applications

### **Outcome #2: Holistic organisational measurement criteria**

A partner's capability score will measure performance, skilling, and customer success. These KPI metrics closely align with the everyday practices of modern companies.

## **Changes to Atech's list of MS accreditations**

By attaining these new solution designations, we will continue to demonstrate our vast range of capabilities. We deliver customer success time and time again in the following solution areas:

- Microsoft Partner of the Year 2022 Modern Endpoint Management finalist

## **Where there's customer demand for digital transformation, there's Atech**

Here at Atech, we believe the Microsoft solution designation changes echoes our mission to expand access to ideal-fit IT solutions to all types of businesses.

With our 15+ years of experience as IT managed service providers, we understand how businesses need IT solutions that can assure their future successes.

We put our customers at the heart of everything we do. So, we look forward to seeing how quickly the changes start to create positive outcomes for both customers and Atech as a Microsoft MSP and SOC Partner.

[Get in touch](#) to learn more about our advanced skills and capabilities and how they can help you realise your business's full potential in IT systems.