

RYZER Pulse

GTM Motion

Microsoft Announcements

Patch Tuesday

RYZER Feedback

## Microsoft Just Ended the Buffer. Partners Without a System Feel It First.

From May 4, 2026, every CSP subscription that reaches end-of-term follows one of three paths: renew, cancel with immediate service loss, or roll into an Extended Service Term billed at the monthly rate plus a 3% uplift (23% if no monthly SKU exists). The 30-day free grace period is gone.

For partners running a structured renewal motion, this changes one line in a workflow. For partners who have been relying on the grace period as a decision buffer, this is a billing and customer relationship problem arriving on a fixed date.

Here's what the system failure looks like in practice: a partner has 200 customer subscriptions. Some are set to auto-renew. Some have auto-renew off — historically a safe “pause” that triggered a free buffer. Since mid-February, Microsoft has been converting those auto-renew-off subscriptions to EST automatically. The partner didn't change anything. Their customers are now accumulating paid EST charges. If no one is watching, this runs until someone notices an invoice.

The partners who won't feel this are the ones who already operate a standing renewal review. They know which subscriptions are expiring in the next 90 days. They have a documented decision per customer — renew, cancel, or hold in EST intentionally. They are not reacting to Microsoft's enforcement date. They are running a motion that makes enforcement dates irrelevant.

The partners who will feel it are operating on memory and inertia. They set subscriptions up when a customer was onboarded and haven't revisited end-of-term settings since. Microsoft's change doesn't create their problem. It makes the problem visible with a cost attached.

EST isn't the issue. The issue is whether a partner has a system that governs end-of-term decisions before Microsoft governs them automatically.

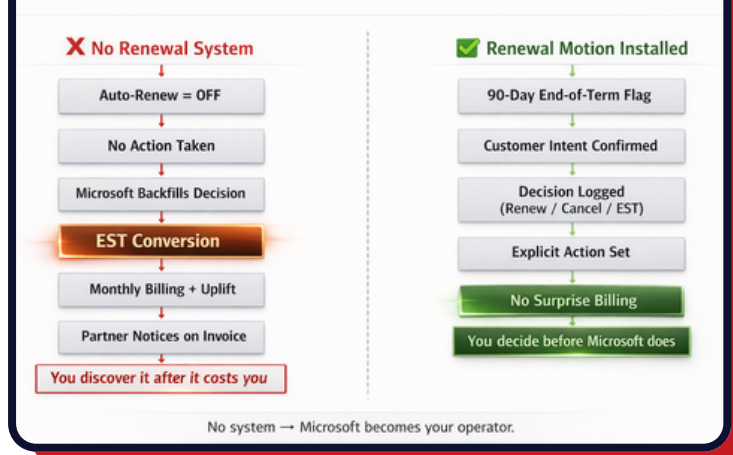
[Availability note: EST production availability February 16, 2026. EST price list available February 1, 2026. Enforcement date: May 4, 2026. Applies to commercial, education, nonprofit, and GCC subscriptions with term-end dates after May 4. CSP channel only. Specialized offer availability: March 13, 2026.]

"Microsoft didn't take away the grace period. It took away the illusion that not deciding was an option."



Sandie Knight

### How Microsoft Decides When You Don't



## RYZER Tips

- Auto-renew-off subscriptions were converted to EST by Microsoft in mid-February — if you haven't audited your portfolio since then, you don't know your current EST exposure.
- EST bills at monthly rate plus 3% uplift, or 23% where no monthly SKU exists — indecision has a line item.
- Setting auto-renew to false no longer cancels a subscription — Microsoft converts it back to EST within 24 hours; explicit cancel action required.
- The partners unaffected by May 4 aren't better-informed — they have a renewal motion that surfaces end-of-term dates before Microsoft acts on them.

If May 4 feels like a deadline rather than a non-event, your subscription governance motion has a gap. Book a RYZE strategy session and leave knowing exactly where your Microsoft operating motion is creating silent liability — and what it takes to close it.

[Book a FREE RYZE Strategy Session](#)

**The heartbeat of the partner community.** Each week we surface real stories and questions from Microsoft partners –pulled from Patch Tuesday calls, field conversations, and direct feedback—to help you spot patterns, avoid pitfalls, and stay ahead.

**“We have hundreds of subscriptions. We can’t audit all of them before May 4. Where do we start?”**

Start with subscriptions expiring in the next 90 days – those hit enforcement first. Use Partner Center’s AI Assist EST download to see exactly where Microsoft has already made decisions on your behalf. Prioritize any subscription without a confirmed customer intent behind it.

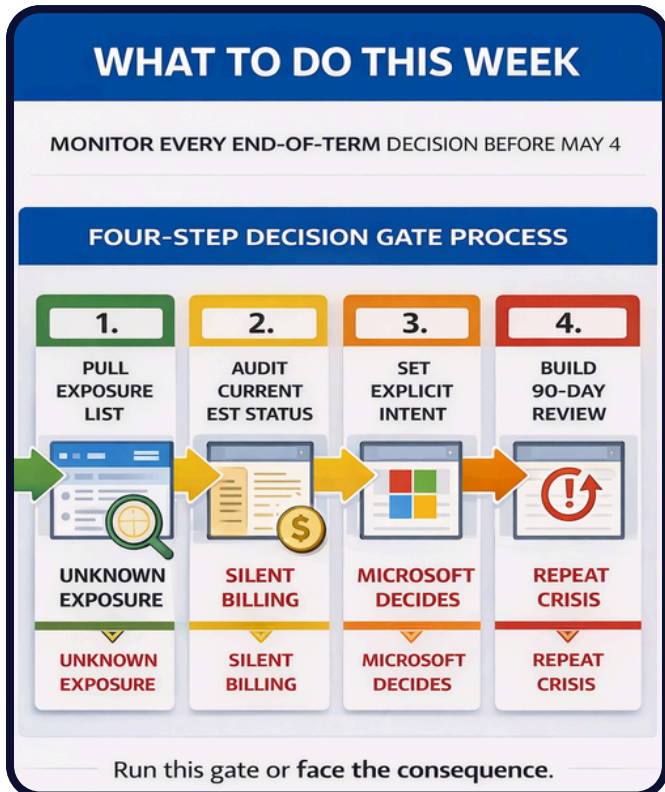
**“Is EST always bad? Should we be canceling everything that rolled into it?”**

EST is the right tool when a partner needs time to confirm a customer’s renewal decision without losing service. The problem is EST as a default, not EST as a choice. Set it intentionally, track the billing, and move the customer to a decision.

**“Our customers are SMBs. They don’t know what EST means. How do we handle the conversation?”**

Don’t explain EST – confirm intent. Services keep running (renew or EST), stop immediately (cancel), or bridge on a paid short-term hold (EST). If you’re having that conversation before the term ends, the mechanic never comes up.

## GTM Motion



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## Patch Tuesday Preview

RYZE MEMBERS ONLY

**Tuesday, March 24th - 1PM EST**

**Packaging Our Services into a Motion Microsoft Can Reuse**

- Services structured into a repeatable motion Microsoft wants to run again.

## RYZER Feedback

We want to hear from you!

**This week’s question:** *If every CSP subscription you manage reached end-of-term tomorrow, how many would have an explicit, documented decision behind the setting – and how many would be on whatever the default was when they were created?*

Send your reply to [ryzeup@ryze-partners.com](mailto:ryzeup@ryze-partners.com). We’ll feature a few partner perspectives in an upcoming issue of the RYZE Report.

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