



The Operating Edge for Microsoft Partners

© 2026 RYZE PARTNERS LLC

RYZER Pulse

GTM Motion

Microsoft Announcements

Patch Tuesday

RYZER Feedback

Microsoft Is Scoring Your Incentive Work. A Failing Grade Locks You Out.

Most partners treat Microsoft Commerce Incentive engagements as one-off revenue events — claim the customer, deliver the hours, collect the fee, move on. That worked when MCI was structured as a pay-for-activity program. It isn't anymore.

Microsoft now measures whether funded engagements produce actual customer outcomes — incremental revenue, seat growth, or usage increases — and scores each partner's track record as a portfolio. The floor is 33%. If fewer than one in three of your completed engagements hits the performance threshold, Microsoft pauses your ability to claim new ones. Not warns. Pauses.

The scoring isn't a single pass/fail check at the end. Completed engagements are tracked monthly for 12 months after proof-of-execution is submitted. Quarterly milestones require 25% of the growth target at three months, 50% at six, 75% at nine, and 100% at twelve. Microsoft is watching the trajectory. A partner who delivers a Copilot deployment but drives no incremental usage by month three is already behind — and that engagement is dragging down the portfolio rate before it formally fails.

"The incentive isn't the payment. It's continued access to the program. The payment is just proof you earned it.."



Sandie Knight

This changes what claiming an engagement means operationally. A claim is no longer "we delivered services and Microsoft paid us." A claim is a 12-month commitment to drive measurable growth on that customer's tenant. Partners who claim engagements they can't convert — customers without executive sponsorship, tenants without realistic adoption paths, accounts where the partner has no post-deployment relationship — are not just wasting effort. They are building a portfolio record that will eventually shut them out of funded work entirely.

The partners who will keep access to MCI engagements in FY26 and beyond are the ones who qualify before they claim. That means evaluating whether the customer has the organizational readiness to drive adoption, whether the partner has the post-sales relationship to influence usage, and whether the engagement size matches the realistic growth potential — before submitting the claim. The discipline is not in delivering the engagement. It is in deciding which engagements to take.



RYZER Tips

- **Microsoft** scores every funded engagement against revenue or usage growth targets for 12 months after proof-of-execution — partners below 33% get paused.
- **Performance** rates are calculated at the PartnerOne level per engagement type — a failing Copilot rate locks you out of Copilot claims but doesn't affect Security.
- **Partners** who maintain their performance rate and hit their earning cap can be considered for a cap increase of up to 50%.

Book a RYZE strategy session and leave knowing your current portfolio rate—and what to fix before it costs you access.

[Book a FREE RYZE Strategy Session](#)

WEBINAR: Co-Selling with Confidence April 24th @ 11AM EST

REGISTER

RYZER Pulse

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've been claiming MCI engagements for two years and never been paused. Why worry now?”

Performance measurement applies to engagements claimed from July 1, 2025 onward. Your historical claims predate the scoring system. Every engagement you claim now is tracked and counted against your portfolio rate.

“What counts as a “successful” engagement under performance measurement?”

Each engagement type has specific revenue or usage growth targets tied to size. A Copilot Deployment Accelerator at Small tier requires \$100,000 in incremental Copilot revenue or 1,000 Copilot Chat MAU within 12 months. Confirm your targets in the MCI portal before you claim.s the constraint quickly once someone completes it.

“If we get paused, how do we get back in?”

Microsoft reviews paused partners monthly and reactivates within seven business days once rates are above threshold. The practical cost is lost momentum – every month paused is a month competitors are claiming funded work you can't.

GTM Motion

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK



Pull your MCI engagement portfolio from Partner Center and calculate your current success rate – completed engagements with measurable customer growth divided by total completed.



Flag active claims showing no incremental revenue or usegrowth, since proof-of-execution – these are dragging your portfolio rate toward the 33% floor.



Define a pre-claim qualification checklist:

- Executive sponsorship confirmed
- Realistic adoption path
- Post-deployment relationship in place – before any new claim gets submitted.

Microsoft News & Events

[Microsoft Partner FY27 GTM Kickoff - July 28](#)

[Using Marketplace to Increase Azure Spend -April 29](#)

[Implement Agent 365 Workshop: April 29 - May 1](#)

[Ultimate Partner Live! May 11 - 13](#)

[Microsoft Build 2026: June 2-3 In-person/On-line](#)

Session Catalog is LIVE

[NEW! Partner Upsell and Proposal Planning Tool \(PUPP\)](#)

[April Partner Center Announcements](#)

[Microsoft Partner Blog](#)

[Americas Partner Blog](#)

[Multi-Country Partner News & Resources](#)

[Microsoft Events Portal](#)

[Microsoft Learn](#)

[Partner News | Microsoft Community Hub](#)

[Microsoft Marketplace Community](#)

Patch Tuesday Preview

RYZE MEMBERS ONLY

[Tuesday, April 21st - 1PM EST](#)

Working Session:
Review your Microsoft Offer



RYZER Feedback

We want to hear from you!

This week’s question: Of your last ten MCI engagements, how many produced measurable customer growth – and do you know that number without looking it up?

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

Follow us on LinkedIn

Not a current subscriber? [Subscribe here](#)

Missed an issue? [Access Archive Library](#)

