Vol. 2, No. 41, October 17, 2026

RYZE REPORT *The Operating Edge for Microsoft Partners*

© 2026 RYZE PARTNERS LLC

The Badge Changed. The Path Did Not.

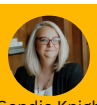
We have written about designations seven times this year. We are back because since June the names themselves changed, and every page your firm sends a customer carries them.

Microsoft collapsed six customer-facing badges into three: AI Business Solutions, Cloud & AI Platforms, and Security. It folded seven specializations into three, retired Adoption and Change Management with no replacement, and added two, Clinical Applications and Frontier Partner.



The trap is reading that as six designations becoming three. Microsoft says the six paths still set requirements, scoring, benefits and specializations, and none were removed. Only the badge changed. So eligibility runs on path names, and anything a customer sees runs on badge names.

The mergers carry a catch. Holders of Analytics or Data Warehouse Migration moved into the new Analytics specialization automatically. Business Intelligence holders did not; they qualify from scratch. Adoption and Change Management lapses at each holder's anniversary date. Two certifications, AZ-500 and PL-200, retired August 31; SC-500 and AB-410 now count in their place.

> ***"Qualify on the path. Sell on the badge. Keep one list of both."***
>
> 
>
> Sandie Knight

None of this breaks a designation you hold today. It breaks the documents built around it: the website footer, the proposal template, the training plan with a retired exam on it.

A firm running a system keeps one list of what it holds, in Microsoft's current names, and every page reads from that list. A firm without one ships whichever name was current when each document was written, and finds out which ones are stale one customer at a time.

RYZER Tips

- **Qualify on the six path names and sell on the three badge names;** a firm that mixes them either misstates an eligibility claim or dates every customer page.
- **What you held in June is not automatically what you hold now,** so the list has to be rebuilt from Partner Center, not carried forward from last year's deck.

What Opportunities Are Hiding in Your Data?

Let us help you uncover them.
Contact RYZE for a free Cloud Ascent and ASPX analysis to identify untapped opportunities in your customer base and where to focus next.

Contact us for your free analysis →

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.

"Microsoft says no action is required. Why change anything?"
No action is required to keep the designation. The same notice tells partner admins to get the new badges from Logo Builder and refresh customer-facing materials. Swap the badge files once, then build every later document from the one list.

"We held Business Intelligence. Do we hold Analytics now?"
No. Microsoft states that partners enrolled only in Business Intelligence are not automatically enrolled in the merged Analytics specialization. Check your specializations page in Partner Center; if Analytics is missing, measure your firm against the new bar of $15,000 in Azure consumed revenue across three customers over three months, five certified people, and an audit.



Microsoft News & Events

Office LTSC 2021 Reaches End of Support
Support for Office LTSC 2021, Project LTSC 2021, and Visio LTSC 2021 ended on October 13, creating an opportunity for partners to help customers modernize with Microsoft 365 and cloud-based productivity solutions.

October CSP Pricelist Updated
Microsoft republished the October CSP pricelist with corrected pricing as of October 8, and partners should download the latest version to ensure accurate quoting and billing.

Microsoft 365 Copilot Licensing Changes Coming Dec 1
Microsoft will introduce new Microsoft 365 Copilot purchase options that no longer require a qualifying Microsoft 365 base subscription, while current offers will be renamed with an "(add-on)" designation beginning October 16.

SQL Modernization Day - October 20
Microsoft is hosting a free SQL Modernization Day livestream featuring eight sessions on SQL Server migration, Azure SQL modernization, Microsoft Fabric, and new AI-enabled database capabilities.

Azure CSP Promotions Introduced
Microsoft announced new Azure CSP promotions offering discounts on Azure database modernization, Microsoft Fabric, and Azure AI workloads, helping partners drive customer adoption while maintaining existing partner economics.

Patch Tuesday Xtra Preview

OPEN TO ALL MICROSOFT PARTNERS

Tuesday, October 20th - 1PM EST

SPECIAL PATCH TUESDAY XTRA

Cloud Ascent in FY27:
Turn Microsoft Data Into Partner Opportunities

Special Guest: Katie Fullmer, Cloud Ascent Program Lead, Microsoft

Turn Cloud Ascent data into action by identifying and prioritizing your best Copilot, Security, Azure, and Dynamics customer opportunities.

REGISTER

RYZER Feedback

We want to hear from you!

This week's question: *When did someone last check the Microsoft names on your website against Partner Center?*

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

© 2026 RYZE PARTNERS LLC