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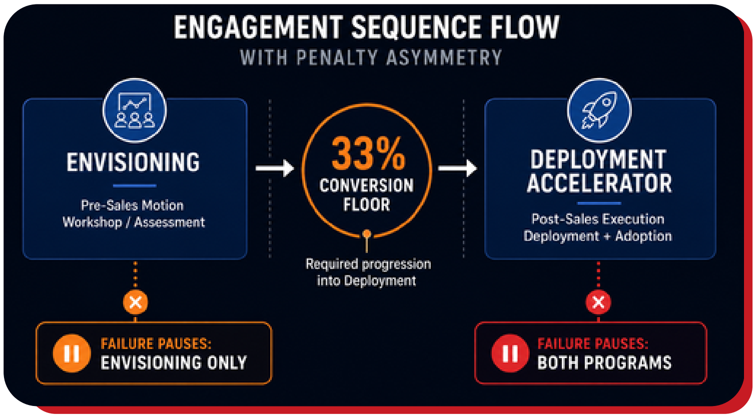
RYZE REPORT
The Operating Edge for Microsoft Partners

Microsoft's Incentive Structure Is a Sequence. Most Partners Are Running It Like a Menu.

The Microsoft Commerce Incentives engagement catalog maps every funded activity to a stage in the customer lifecycle — Envisioning feeds Deployment Accelerator, pre-sales converts to post-sales, activity connects to transaction. That structure isn't organizational tidiness. It's the architecture Microsoft uses to measure whether a partner is running a complete motion or collecting individual payments.

Most partners pick MCI engagements based on what pays, what fits the customer in front of them, and what they're qualified for. The performance measurement system is built to break that behavior. A partner who runs Envisioning engagements but never converts them into Deployment Accelerators will fail the 33% pre-to-post-sales conversion threshold and get paused.



The penalty structure makes Microsoft's priority explicit. If your Envisioning rate fails, you lose Envisioning claims only. If your Deployment Accelerator rate fails, Microsoft pauses both Envisioning and Deployment claims. The system punishes incomplete sequences harder than failed pre-sales. Microsoft is telling you, through the penalty math, that the sequence flows toward post-sales — and partners who don't complete the full motion lose access to the front end too.

> ***"Microsoft pays partners to start engagements. It lets them keep starting engagements only if they finish them."***
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> Rob Fegan

Azure Accelerate enforces the same logic with a hard ratio: no more than three pre-sales engagements for every one post-sales. Run nine assessments and convert only two, and you're out of compliance.

This changes how partners should select engagements. Before claiming an Envisioning, know which Deployment Accelerator it feeds. Before running a pre-sales assessment, confirm the post-sales conversion path exists — customer budget, realistic scope, partner capacity to deliver. The incentive catalog is not a list of standalone earning opportunities. It is a sequence with built-in scoring that rewards partners who complete the full motion and removes those who don't.

The discipline is not in winning individual engagements. It is in building the conversion path before the first claim gets submitted.

RYZER Tips

- **Microsoft's incentive penalty structure is asymmetric** — a failing Deployment Accelerator rate pauses both Deployment and Envisioning claims, but a failing Envisioning rate only pauses Envisioning.
- **Azure Accelerate caps pre-sales volume at a 3:1 ratio to post-sales** — run nine assessments and convert only two, and you've exceeded the limit.
- **The engagement catalog maps to customer lifecycle stages by design** — partners who treat each engagement as standalone are building a portfolio record the scoring system is designed to penalize.

RYZER Pulse

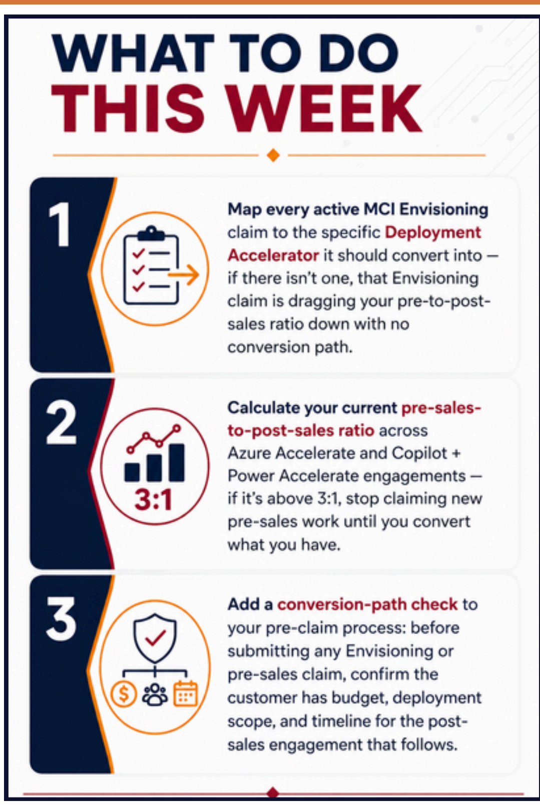
The heartbeat of the partner community. Each week we surface real stories and questions from Microsoft partners—pulled from Patch Tuesday calls, field conversations, and direct feedback—to help you spot patterns, avoid pitfalls, and stay ahead.

"We run a lot of Envisioning engagements because they're easier to claim. Is that a problem?"
Yes, if they don't convert. Microsoft requires 33% of pre-sales engagements to turn into post-sales. High Envisioning volume without Deployment follow-through creates the ratio that pauses your access.

" Why does a failing Deployment rate pause both engagement types?"
Because Microsoft prioritizes completion. Weak pre-sales hurts one stage. Weak post-sales signals the whole motion is broken. The system rewards partners who finish the sequence.

"Does the 3:1 pre-to-post-sales ratio apply across all solution areas?"
No. The hard 3:1 rule is Azure Accelerate. Modern Work and Security use a 33% portfolio conversion threshold instead. Different math, same principle: Microsoft measures completion, not activity.

GTM Motion



Microsoft News & Events

Ultimate Partner Live! May 11 - 13

Microsoft Build 2026: June 2-3 In-person/On-line

SAVE THE DATE! MCAPS for Partners is July 22, 2026
(registration details coming soon!)

Microsoft Partner FY27 GTM Kickoff - July 28

How Frontier Firms are rebuilding the operating model for the age of AI

May 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, May 12th - 1PM EST

Prep for our RYZER Connect (P2P Networking Session) on 6/2

RYZER Feedback

We want to hear from you!

This week's question: ***Of your last five Envisioning engagements, how many converted into a funded Deployment Accelerator — and was that conversion planned before the Envisioning claim was submitted?***

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

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