



CASE STUDY

Avanade partners with Microsoft FastTrack to support faster, seamless deployment of Microsoft 365 for clients worldwide

We use our vast experience deploying Microsoft 365 to help clients migrate to the cloud

“Working with Avanade as a FastTrack ready partner has enabled us to help our clients adopt Office 365 and leverage the full power of the cloud.”

— Mark Varney, Principal Program Manager, Microsoft

The story at a glance

Who does the largest software provider in the world turn to when it needs help ensuring that its clients successfully migrate to the cloud? Microsoft partnered with Avanade to help its clients move faster and more seamlessly to Microsoft 365.

In the process, we've helped Microsoft scale globally to activate more than 750,000 Microsoft 365 accounts worldwide. And we've used that knowledge to make our own clients' Microsoft Office 365 migration journeys even better.

Background

As the leading platform and productivity company for the mobile-first, cloud-first world, Microsoft's mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

While cloud-based solutions deliver many business benefits, including speed and agility, there are still barriers to adoption even for businesses that have purchased Microsoft 365 licenses but have not yet deployed the solution. Many perceive the costs of and complexity around migrating to the cloud to be too high or they lack the internal resources or skills to seamlessly migrate existing data to the new platform.

Creating a FastTrack to the cloud

Microsoft developed FastTrack, a comprehensive service designed to help smooth the transition to the Microsoft Cloud. By providing expert support, best practices and tools to enterprises, corporate accounts and small businesses that had purchased but not yet deployed Office 365, Microsoft sought to increase the number of active users and improve overall client satisfaction rates.

To expand the service's scope and reach, Microsoft has teamed with partners such as Avanade to help deliver FastTrack. Avanade has a long history with Microsoft, which was one of its founders when the company formed in 2001. Today we are one of Microsoft's premier global partners. And because we have deployed more Office 365 seats across Exchange, SharePoint and Skype for Business Online than any other Microsoft partner, we could begin working quickly to support Microsoft FastTrack.

We worked closely with Microsoft to prove the FastTrack concept and hypothesis: that trained and certified partners could effectively execute the methodology with speedy outcomes. By leveraging our extensive resources, skills and globally dispersed professionals, Microsoft aimed to:

- Increase the number of Office 365 active users and improve overall client satisfaction rates.
- Create a repeatable “factory type” framework with a standardized and well-defined process that could be followed by qualified global partners.
- Establish a managed services approach to lower the costs, streamline the approach and scale fast.

“We had a lot to prove in the initial rollout of FastTrack from a partner perspective,” said Patric Grimwood, Senior Program Manager and Worldwide Partner Operations Manager for Microsoft FastTrack. “We knew the success of FastTrack would hinge on our partners' ability to carry out the process with each client efficiently, knowing that every client was different. We also needed to work out all the aspects of relying on partners to execute, from the methodology to how we collectively defined success.”

The secret to success: Adapting the partner model

Over the course of 18 months, we worked closely with Microsoft to pioneer the partner-led FastTrack engagement model, starting with a consistent onboarding and adoption process for clients that can rapidly deploy Office 365. With deployment complete, FastTrack partners can then focus on two other elements: increasing the number of active users within an organization and further driving productivity through the adoption of other cloud-based tools, such as SharePoint Online and Skype for Business.

Through our experience with FastTrack, we concluded that organizations needed help with more than just deploying the Office 365 suite – they also needed to be able to convey its value across a diverse group of business stakeholders outside the IT department. We incorporate numerous best practices to achieve this goal, including:

- **Connecting clients with a team of business consultants from the beginning.** These consultants speak to the business and key stakeholders – not just technologists – about the anticipated value and business benefits of moving to the cloud in a way that is easy to understand. This approach enables us to eliminate some of the initial hurdles stemming from misperceptions about the cloud that prevent companies from taking the leap.

- **Conveying the full business value of the cloud.** While the first step in an organization's cloud journey may be migrating to Microsoft Exchange Online, the benefits go far beyond email. Avanade works with FastTrack clients to demonstrate the full business value that comes from Office 365, including the role of SharePoint, Skype for Business and beyond. Helping clients see the potential in fully leveraging the power of the cloud is an integral part of the process with FastTrack.
- **Leveraging our relationship with Microsoft to improve the FastTrack for all partners.** We use our expertise in deploying the Microsoft stack and our deep relationships with decision makers to escalate issues to improve and adapt the approach so all partners can benefit. "We knew the only way it was going to work with partners is through transparency and trust," said Mark Varney, Microsoft's Principal Program Manager. "We needed partners with experience in working with us and history. We had that with Avanade, and their willingness to try something new with us was a key part of getting this off the ground."

With more Office 365 deployments under our belt than any other Microsoft partner and our added experience with FastTrack clients, we can support any business that is facing challenges with taking the first step

to migrating to the cloud. The experience we get from our work with the FastTrack program enables us to identify common roadblocks and incorporate our learnings from FastTrack clients into the deployments we have with our own clients.

Measurable results

In the first full year of the program, we have enabled Microsoft to:

- **Significantly increase the number of active Office 365 users.** Avanade has brought more than 750,000 active users to the cloud through the FastTrack program. This represents about one-third of all active users delivered by partners globally through FastTrack, making us one of Microsoft's top-performing partners.
- **Raise customer satisfaction rates.** We have achieved a consistently high satisfaction rate from those clients we have supported through the FastTrack program, based on survey information gathered post-deployment.
- **Expand the use of its other cloud-based solutions.** With successful deployment of Exchange Online, for example, we can engage with the client to deploy other solutions within the Microsoft Cloud ecosystem, driving additional business value.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 30,000 professionals in 24 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

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