

Selling virtualization: a mid-market to partner reseller discussion guide

Purpose

This discussion guide helps partners capitalize on the growing segment of mid-market companies (25–250 PCs) within the broader SMB segment. In this guide, partners will find additional data points and sales resources to support their efforts to promote Microsoft server solutions as the right choice to simplify IT, save money, and support growth through a modern, virtualized server infrastructure.

Customer overview

- The mid-market segment is a broad range and spans businesses with 25–250 Windows PCs and 5–50 Windows Server servers
- Microsoft recognizes that needs change across this broad range and have further segmented the mid-market (definitions below)
- 1–5 IT “generalists” running company IT
- May have considerable legacy software and systems
- IT processes and procedures not clearly defined
- May have some IT policies, but only at a high level
- Likely to have some budget for IT
- Many are guarded about allowing outside vendors to access their systems due to trust and complexity

Business background

Since the global economic downturn, many mid-market companies have had to make do with aging systems, infrastructure, and processes. As the economy improves, business executives seek strategies to simplify IT, save money, and grow their businesses. They also need to migrate away from old technologies, enhance IT infrastructure, and control IT costs. The majority of mid-market companies are still running the Windows Server 2003 (or earlier) operating system and need to establish the foundation today to realize the maximum benefits of a modernized IT infrastructure.

Opportunities by segment

The offerings vary across the mid-market segment. For most companies, IT needs grow and become more complex as companies grow.

Lower mid-market (LMM): virtualization*

LMM company characteristics: Basic infrastructure; server optimization; moving from physical to virtual environments. Products: Windows Server 2012.

**For our partner resellers, we see LMM Virtualization as the largest opportunity within the MM segment all up.*

Core mid-market (CMM): virtualization and management

Standardization and centralized management of physical and virtual infrastructure offering client management, service availability, and performance monitoring. Products: Windows Server 2012 and System Center 2012.

Upper mid-market (UMM): automated virtualization and management

Dynamic infrastructure with automated management capabilities delivered on-premises or via hoster. Products: Windows Server 2012 and System Center 2012.

Hero products

Microsoft products for these opportunities in mid-market companies are:

Windows Server 2012—a virtualization technology. The virtualization needs of the customer will drive the Windows Server SKU decision.

Microsoft System Center 2012—an IT management solution. For segments within mid-market where management is a requirement, it is recommended that customers deploy the most important components of System Center 2012, including Configuration Manager, Operations Manager, Virtual Machine Manager, and Data Protection Manager.

Selling virtualization to the LMM

Microsoft elevator pitch

Server purchases can feel daunting to the customer, giving you the opportunity to be a trusted advisor as customers work through the decision-making process. There are two main opportunities for selling into the mid-market audience:

Virtualization: Offer customers a comprehensive virtualization solution built on the cost-effective and flexible Windows Server 2012 operating system.

Upgrading: By upgrading aging servers today, customers can start saving money and growing their business through products designed to help them get the most out of existing resources. They can reduce complexity, provide continuous availability, and provide affordable storage and access almost anywhere, from any device.

- Use tools like the Microsoft Assessment and Planning (MAP) Toolkit to assess customers’ environments and recommend that they upgrade their aging servers. The MAP Toolkit is an agentless inventory, assessment, and reporting tool that can

securely assess IT environments for various platform migrations.

- Built-in virtualization frees up budget to apply to systems management through System Center or investments like SQL Server, SharePoint, Microsoft Dynamics, or Windows 8 upgrades.

Key differentiators

- Low cost of acquisition and ongoing operation
- Easy integration with existing systems
- Built-in features on a familiar platform
- Optimized physical and virtual infrastructure
- Comprehensive and flexible

Driving the conversation

In this section, we describe typical needs we hear from customers, accompanied by the solutions you can offer your customers by combining Microsoft products and your expert advice and services, the benefits specific to the solution, customer evidence, conversation starting points, and tips on handling objections.

Customer need: *simplify IT*

Make it easier for me and my company to simplify the ways we manage and benefit from our IT investments so we’re spending less time “putting out fires” and more time advancing the business.

The answer

Microsoft and its partner ecosystem can provide you with product and service offerings that greatly simplify IT by providing the following benefits.

Benefits

- **A complete virtualization platform.** Virtualizing your infrastructure gives you the ability to respond to business needs faster, support self-service delivery, and, when you are ready, take that next step to the cloud.
- **Improved management.** Providing automation for a broader set of management tasks and simplifying deployment keeps you focused on more strategic initiatives.
- **Enhanced data security and compliance.** Control access to company-sensitive and customer-sensitive data by making authorization and information-auditing management more central, flexible, and natural.

Conversation starters

- How many applications and servers do you own? How old are they, on average?
- How are you currently managing your servers?
- What are you doing with virtualization today?

Objection handling

Objection: My current solution works fine. Why would I spend more to modernize my IT environment?

Response: Excessive and outdated IT infrastructure can be inefficient to run and more expensive to maintain. By modernizing and standardizing your IT infrastructure, you can reduce operational costs and enhance efficiencies, leading to increased business agility, scalability to accommodate business growth, improved employee productivity, and the flexibility to take advantage of the cloud in the future.

Objection: Why do I need virtualization? I only have a few servers and they are meeting my needs.

Response: With virtualization, you can increase business capacity at a lower cost, reduce energy costs, and have an IT platform that can easily scale as business needs evolve. Virtualization allows you to consolidate your servers and manage everything from a single console. Disaster-recovery features reduce time lost to routine IT administrative functions or unanticipated outages.

Customer need: save money

We're always looking for ways to save money on IT. Help us identify ways to reduce costs while getting more from our IT investments.

The answer

For years, Microsoft has focused on helping customers reduce IT costs, and now we give you more ways to drive down costs without sacrificing performance.

Benefits

- **Affordable storage.** Now you can virtualize industry-standard storage across new and existing hardware to maximize investments.
- **Continuous availability.** Keep the business up and running by providing cost-effective, IT service built to prevent downtime; speed recovery when needed; and utilize online backup for an additional layer of data protection.
- **Increased scale and performance.** Scale your high-density environment to perform at the optimum level for the needs of your business.

Conversation starters

- How confident are you that you are currently utilizing the full potential of your servers?
- How efficient do you think your IT environment is today?

- How many people help support IT?
- How much time do you or they spend managing and maintaining your systems?

Objection handling

Objection: Why should I use Microsoft solutions for virtualization?

Response: Microsoft virtualization can give you a cost-effective, easy-to-manage solution to help drive down the cost of doing business—offering an immediate return on a relatively small investment and extending your current hardware investments. Live migration and clustering are included at no cost.

Customer need: grow my business

I want IT to be the catalyst for growing our business. Show me how we can translate our technology investments into real business value.

The answer

As a Microsoft partner, I/we can help you channel your energy into creating an agile business through innovative new capabilities and an approach designed to simplify technology.

Benefits

- **Access almost anywhere, from any device (device location access).** You and your team get secure access to your personalized work environment from virtually anywhere and on virtually any device with an Internet connection.
- **Business agility.** Take advantage of repeatable processes and reusable IT assets instead of reinventing the wheel for each project or opportunity.
- **Flexible solutions.** Everything you need and interoperable with what you have, Microsoft's software solutions and their partner ecosystem of hardware and services make it easy to upgrade existing business systems without the stress of undue costs.

Conversation starters

- What are your two biggest business priorities?
- How would you like IT to support your business needs?
- Have you thought about what the cloud may mean for your business?

Objection handling

Objection: My company doesn't currently see a need for these additional management products. How will they benefit us?

Response: With System Center you can manage all computers and servers in your business from a single console while also benefiting from the latest built-in tools that have been designed to make desktop and server management easier.

Objection: We can't just hire more IT staff. How can I grow while keeping the same resources?

Response: This is exactly Microsoft's strategy: to give you the tools you need to allow your existing staff to be more effective, so they spend less time walking around fixing things and more time supporting new business opportunities.

Top 5 reasons to choose Microsoft Hyper-V R2 SP1 over VMware vSphere 5

1. Tremendous industry recognition and strong adoption by customers.
2. Built-in virtualization and familiarity with Windows.
3. Hyper-V is best choice for virtualizing Microsoft workloads.
4. Comprehensive management capabilities with System Center 2012.
5. VMware private cloud solution on vSphere can cost up to 16 times more than a comparable Microsoft cloud solution on Hyper-V over a period of one to three years, per physical processor pricing with unlimited virtualization rights.

Windows Server 2012 helps to deliver the most dynamic, continuously available, cost-effective server platform for cloud optimized IT.

Windows Server 2012 Hyper-V provides a complete virtualization platform, supports industry-leading scale, and allows you to securely extend your data center to the cloud on your terms. To learn more, visit, www.microsoft.com/hyper-v

Additional resources

- [Microsoft Virtualization \(Windows Server 2012\): www.microsoft.com/windowsserver](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver)
- [Microsoft Partner Virtualization Opportunities: https://partner.microsoft.com/global/productssolutions/productsvirtualization](https://partner.microsoft.com/global/productssolutions/productsvirtualization)
- [Partner Windows Server Site: https://partner.microsoft.com/global/productssolutions/servers/windowsserver](https://partner.microsoft.com/global/productssolutions/servers/windowsserver)
- [MAP Toolkit: www.microsoft.com/map](http://www.microsoft.com/map)
- [Microsoft partner mid-market campaign materials: https://partner.microsoft.com/serverupgrade](https://partner.microsoft.com/serverupgrade)