

Renew and grow with Microsoft Industry Cloud

A collection of Avanade Insights
blog posts with a focus on
**Microsoft industry clouds,
personalized by Avanade**

February 2022



How Microsoft industry clouds are shaping the future of business

Through the Covid 19 pandemic, we've seen the pace of change accelerate exponentially, compressing an up to ten-year prospective journey from on-premises to cloud based digital transformation to a journey now measured in months. The legacy systems that organizations had either been nursing along or ignoring suddenly became noticeably archaic and exposed. It has become abundantly clear that digitally mature organizations are able to move faster and extend their growth advantage over competitors during the past 18 months. To embrace continual change organizations must rethink what it means to be agile, resilient and put people first in this new hybrid world.

The Microsoft industry clouds are designed to be a platform that provides key answers to these challenges, delivering a solution that is relevant for industry-specific needs. The incremental value that can be realized from these industry clouds will come from how it's further personalized for each individual organization – something Avanade is uniquely positioned to do.

Microsoft industry clouds, personalized for your success

The hard lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic have been used to shape the Microsoft industry clouds. Built from the ground up during the pandemic with those learnings in mind, Microsoft has pivoted their existing technology, so it is now "industry first".

The industry clouds build on the Microsoft Cloud, which means, the power of Azure and capabilities like AI it extends, GitHub for application development, Power Platform to empower business users to create their own low code or no code applications, Teams, the collaborative lifestyle platform, and Dynamics 365 for business process automation.

Industry clouds extend the value of the Microsoft Cloud into industry-specific components and capabilities like an industry-specific common data model, and API connectors to Microsoft and third-party apps, open standards, workflows, templates and apps.



Together with Microsoft, Avanade is doing a huge amount of work – deep in the code, deep in the scenarios and deep in to use cases – to really help create and extend the value that industry clouds can bring to our clients.

The healthcare sector is a great example of how we can help personalize the industry cloud. We're co-innovating with Microsoft to develop a new generation of healthcare specific solutions that help clients rethink how to manage and embrace continual change with digital innovations. We are accelerating the expansion of specific technologies such as virtual visits, remote patient monitoring and advanced clinical analytics. Together we are creating a digital path forward using a flexible, secure cloud infrastructure to create a more agile, future-resilient healthcare organization.

Accelerating innovation through industry cloud

The ability to adapt at speed with new technologies can be a challenge for many sectors, preventing them from accessing growth opportunities. Microsoft industry cloud makes it easy to access emerging technologies, such as AI and IoT relevant to each industry.

Avanade can then take it a step further for our clients by helping them unlock the full power of industry cloud by personalizing the solution for their business. This accelerates the time it takes to extract value from new innovations and capitalize on opportunities that will renew and grow the business.

For customers in the retail sector, we know this will provide enormous business value as they look to meet changing consumer demands. When the pandemic hit, retailers were forced to transform ecommerce and develop new retail experiences out of necessity. The industry cloud has been designed so that we can build solutions to meet these new consumer expectations. We can help businesses bring industry specific tools, such as Chatbots and AI, quickly to market as the technology has already been translated to match their industry needs.

A people-first approach with industry cloud

Industry cloud provides a platform to improve workflows and operations for employees and enhance customer experiences with your business and brand.

We take an advisory role to help our clients bring these new ways of working to life for their organization. This in turn is intrinsically linked to the customer journey, with employees acting as the customer touchpoint. For example, we know healthcare providers and their patients will have very different experience expectations to their retail counterparts, and we can personalize the cloud capabilities to meet these differences. This gives you the competitive edge when it comes to attracting and retaining employees and customers.

Technologies within the industry cloud, such as AI, provide insights into market and consumer trends that help you differentiate the experience. Some reports claim AI will be [one of the top workloads running in the cloud by 2023](#).

Automation brought about by industry cloud also unlocks new CX opportunities. Consider the financial services sector; if a bank can free up back-office workers through process automation, this presents an opportunity to make these employees customer facing, which will add value to the banks CX ambitions. We bring the experience lens to your industry cloud, offering a consultancy approach that brings your CX and EX to life.

Industry cloud for operational resilience

Over the past 18-months, many organizations have become acutely aware of how unfit for purpose their current technologies are. The technologies that they were getting by with pre-Covid did not have the resilience to adapt to the size and pace of change. Just think of the CFO who couldn't close their books in April 2020, because they didn't have remote access to their IT systems.

Microsoft industry clouds are designed to continually evolve with the change around them, increasing the digital maturity of your organization. By migrating to the industry cloud, organizations can rethink operational resilience, enabling them to build a responsive and sustainable business able to diversify revenue streams across ecosystems securely.

The power of Microsoft industry cloud, personalized by Avanade

Our clients can accelerate the value from innovation, create differentiating experiences and grow a resilient and sustainable business through a highly differentiated set of services relevant to their industry.



Gord Mawhinney

Gord Mawhinney is an Executive at Avanade. He has extensive experience in strategy development and execution, achieving operational and financial results, scaling high growth companies and creating high performance cultures.

You can read on the following pages what the Microsoft industry cloud means for your industry and business. Enjoy reading!

- Gord Mawhinney

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Rethink Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services



Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services: Time to rethink

By [Peter Barrett](#)

Originally published October 8, 2021

Cloud adoption is accelerating as businesses renew and grow through faster innovation and tailored customer and employee experiences built specifically for their industry. Financial services institutions (FSIs) are applying cloud in three areas:

- Generate **greater customer trust**
- Increase **employee collaboration and productivity** in a hybrid environment
- Develop **greater operational resilience** to handle continual market and regulatory change.

Significantly, Microsoft has just announced that it will be launching its Cloud for Financial Services in November (building on its initial announcement in [February](#)).

It's time to rethink what cloud can do for your industry.

What industry cloud means for the financial services sector

Because of our unique relationship with Microsoft, we know that they have been developing their strategy and technology to provide FSIs with a platform which reduces the complexities of integration while protecting security and flexibility. By integrating existing and new capabilities across Microsoft 365, Microsoft Azure, Dynamics 365, and Microsoft Power Platform, Microsoft is focused on simplifying and accelerating digital change.

Microsoft has developed a common data model to help simplify integration between its products, services and partners.

Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services has been designed to make integration easier, so banks can focus on higher value, customer-centric applications that differentiate them in the market (rather than operational processes that don't). By delivering an integrated platform that can utilize a flexible data model, Microsoft is enabling FSIs to accelerate innovation and realize value faster, scale quickly and focus on building differentiated customer and employee experiences without worrying about the integration complexities typically associated with a diverse platform landscape.

The announcement of the Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services demonstrates this strategy coming to maturity. Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services will offer a highly differentiated and tailored approach relevant to FSIs, with the unique opportunity to bring the power of their platform to drive value to both customers and employees.

Business outcomes, personalized by Avanade

Our privileged access to Microsoft means we are working really closely together to solve our client's problems and develop industry scenarios that we can convert into deployable POC-ready assets for specific client use cases. One example of how Avanade further extends the value of Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services includes our [Banking Accelerator](#). We can deliver solutions for customer engagement (delivered around Dynamics 365), remote digital appointments (using Virtual Visits platforms built on Teams) and new customer conversations (with new AI-driven platforms). [Microsoft's industry cloud](#) has been designed to be heavily configurable so it can meet the growing and distinctive needs of the financial services sector.



The power of the Microsoft industry cloud, personalized by Avanade, provides FSIs with an unparalleled opportunity to continue to accelerate their digital transformation on their terms, ensuring they are positioned for success.

We see three major business outcomes from this joint approach:

- **Accelerate value from innovation:** Create compelling products and services through the power of an Open Banking ecosystem, including faster market entry and value realization.
- **Create distinctive CX and EX:** Connect with customers authentically across branch, mobile and online and improve employee collaboration and productivity in a hybrid working era.

- **Grow a resilient and sustainable business:** Respond better to market disruption, avoid the constraints of legacy systems and become more resilient to continual regulatory change.

We see this as a potential game changer in terms of accelerating digital transformation for a specific industry, supporting FSIs in their drive to become more agile, resilient and customer- and employee-centric. The vision and direction demonstrated here will form the basis of next generation banking.

That's why it's time to rethink your approach to cloud.

[For more information on how banks can renew and grow, download our guide: 'Where do you want to grow next?'](#)



Peter Barrett

Peter is the global Financial Services lead in the Marketing team. Prior to joining Avanade, he worked at Finastra, a global banking software business, where he helped set up their Partner Marketing function. He spent 10 years at Fujitsu where he was the global Marketing lead for the Financial Services sector.

Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services, personalized by Avanade



Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services: The implications for FSIs

By [Peter Barrett](#)

Originally published November 4, 2021

On November 1st, [Microsoft launched its industry cloud for the Financial Services \(FS\) sector](#). This blog unpacks why this is a potential gamechanger and how Avanade can personalize and unlock the value of the Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services (MC4FS) for financial services institutions (FSIs).

Putting people first

Having worked with banks on their digital journeys - whether optimizing the mobile or contact center experience - we noticed that front office employees are often taken for granted. Banking customers have more information than ever before, in real time, on their phones and laptops. As a result, when they have a financial event or need to reach out, this has created frustration as customers actually know more than the bank does. MC4FS helps optimize the employee view of the customer. This means that staff can engage with customers holistically, and with genuine empathy, to give them a much more positive experience with money.

This will transform employees' ability to serve customers better through the new tools and services at their disposal. It will drive a much more distinctive customer experience that combines the benefits of digital - automation, efficiency, cost reduction - with the richness and nuance of human engagement. Avanade is taking our experience of modernizing workplaces and humanizing digital experiences and translating that for FSI employees. This, in turn, will create greater customer trust through each interaction, leading to increased customer retention,

profitability and advocacy. It will also help fight off serious competition. To be digitally mature, FSIs must transition from doing digital to being digital.

Two key components: customer insight and employee collaboration

One critical component is Unified Customer Profile - a 360-degree customer view. Using pre-built AI models, FSIs can combine customer data from inside and outside the bank, such as financial strength, household profile and key life moments, with behavioral data to anticipate customer churn, improve cross- and up-sell and drive lifetime value. These insights allow FSIs to interact with customers through their preferred channel, with personalized suggestions that result in faster decision-making and better business outcomes. That's why MC4FS has become so significant in this context.





MC4FS has new capabilities that complement existing public cloud services and together help innovate for responsible and sustainable growth.

Another component of MC4FS is the Collaboration Manager, which is focused on the lending process. FSIs can drive end-to-end process automation, including sales, onboarding and service, foster internal collaboration and facilitate cross-channel communications with customers throughout their loan origination and servicing journey. MC4FS includes Microsoft Teams to create richer, authentic interaction and allows you to pull all the documents you need into the conversation. This has led to very powerful use cases, such as an end-to-end house-buying journey (including mortgage approval, insurance coverage, etc.), and all happening inside of Teams in a seamless combination with your mobile.

MC4FS has new capabilities that complement existing public cloud services and together help innovate for responsible and sustainable growth. The industry cloud has its foundation in privacy, security and regulatory compliance, drawing on the expertise of Microsoft and its partner ecosystem, and is built on an industry data model that enables interoperability and innovation.

Avanade, Microsoft and Accenture: a unique relationship that drives significant client outcomes

Avanade and Microsoft have been collaborating deeply on the cloud for FS and, with Accenture, we have the depth and breadth to deliver at scale, as required in both large and smaller financial institutions. Avanade and Accenture have the world's largest community of experts on Microsoft-based solutions – over 75,000 people. For these reasons we have been chosen by Microsoft as a strategic partner for the FS industry cloud.

[Through the power of the Microsoft Cloud for Financial Services, personalized by Avanade](#), FSIs can accelerate innovation, realize value faster and create highly differentiated CX and EX, ensuring they are perfectly positioned for success.

For more details, [view the recent discussion at Microsoft Ignite 2021 with Michelle Baxter](#), Avanade's FS Global Lead, Edwin Van der Ouderaa, Accenture's Global Lead for Customers, Sales and Service and Satish Thomas, Microsoft VP.

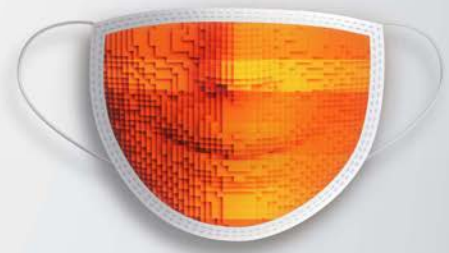
[For more customer scenarios, visit our Banking Accelerator.](#)



Peter Barrett

Peter is the global Financial Services lead in the Marketing team. Prior to joining Avanade, he worked at Finastra, a global banking software business, where he helped set up their Partner Marketing function. He spent 10 years at Fujitsu where he was the global Marketing lead for the Financial Services sector.

Renew and grow with Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare



Accelerating digital transformation with Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare

By [Rob Hazelton](#)

Originally published October 28, 2021

The one-year anniversary of [Microsoft® Cloud for Healthcare](#) is here and as the Cloud for Healthcare evolves and becomes available worldwide, Avanade is uniquely positioned to help clients leverage all the Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare offers and beyond.

Since its introduction, the [Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare](#) has been adopted by some of the nation's leading healthcare organizations. Avanade has helped clients reach new levels of patient engagement, care team collaboration and clinical and operational insights. We have delivered more customized health industry solutions that integrate with other key systems as needed.

[With the recent Microsoft announcement](#) about the cloud for healthcare, it will continue to be inspiring to accompany Microsoft on this journey.

Renew and grow digital capabilities for a better care experience

Avanade has been working with Microsoft well ahead of the initial launch. Working side-by-side with Microsoft, we have partnered with healthcare organizations to renew and grow their digital capabilities. Avanade's expert technologists and our position as a Microsoft development partner have made us uniquely positioned to help healthcare organizations make the most of their digital investment.

That's a partnership, I'm proud to say, continues to this day. Microsoft looks to Avanade to continually make the [Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare](#) even better and because we co-develop with Microsoft, we can develop one-of-a-kind personalized tools that allow us to customize the platform exactly as each client requires.

That's why I am particularly excited to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare. Avanade, as a global Microsoft-exclusive consultancy, stands ready and is uniquely positioned to help more clients leverage all that the Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare has to offer and beyond.



Cloud for Healthcare delivers secure end-to-end capabilities

Over the past 12 months since Microsoft first introduced the Cloud for Healthcare, we have helped clients rethink their digital innovation to accelerate and scale data-driven solutions that increase interoperability, heighten security and deliver the greatest value.

The Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare integrates healthcare applications and systems across Dynamics 365, Microsoft 365, Power Platform and Azure. This means clients gain end-to-end healthcare capabilities that help create more agile and resilient healthcare organizations.

As more healthcare organizations have access to top-level security built into the Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare, we provide the strictest levels of privacy required such as GDPR, European data and privacy regulations, and other governmental standards.

And because Avanade's global security practice specializes in cloud and digital security, we understand Microsoft's security framework inside out, as well as the security and data privacy requirements unique to each country.

The art of the possible begins with the first step

The Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare offers a robust and comprehensive set of cloud technologies. So, it isn't surprising that in my discussions with clients, one of the questions I receive most often is, "How do we get started? What are the first steps we need to take?"

The first step is our two-week virtual or in-person quick start program that helps clients understand the scope of what the platform can do and prioritize what they want to accomplish.

With on-the-ground experience helping organizations customize, implement and make the most of the Cloud for Healthcare, members of our healthcare advisory team and our technologists spend two weeks with a client. During this time, we identify priorities and create a roadmap for quick wins that organizations can build on.

We talk through how to integrate the platform with other current digital programs such as an electronic medical record. By the close of our time together, our clients have a high-level project plan that includes recommendations for the next steps in their organization's digital transformation.

The right partner for the greatest value

[Microsoft industry clouds](#) are designed to help rethink what's possible in a world of continual change. At Avanade, we help clients anticipate and manage change to enable better experiences, care and insights. That's why having a technology partner that understands the challenges, technology and regulations to drive the greatest value at scale is essential. Working with Microsoft, Avanade is committed to being that partner for those we serve. Wherever in the world that takes us.

Learn how your healthcare organization can benefit from the power of the Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare. Visit [Avanade Health](#) or contact the [Avanade Healthcare Team](#).



Rob Hazelton

Rob has 25+ years of experience in business and technology consulting, building and leading professional services organizations that leverage the latest technologies to innovate and deliver value for clients. Prior to joining Avanade, Rob spent several years in the health and life sciences industry. Today, Rob leads Avanade's Health & Life Sciences business globally.

Top topics Rob writes/speaks about:

- Digital Transformation in Health & Life Sciences
- Healthcare's Digital Journey and Journey to Cloud
- Life Sciences and Medical Device Supply Chain
- Technology's role in the Health and Wellness Experience
- The power of data interoperability for Health Organizations

Rethink Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing



Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing. Are You Excited?

By [Tom Nall](#)

Originally published October 18, 2020

Like waiting for my next fly-fishing excursion, or looking forward to an upcoming family vacation, my anticipation and excitement for the launch of the Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing is palpable!

If you are not aware, Microsoft announced the next phase of the [Microsoft Industry Cloud initiative](#), with a new Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing public preview in November and general availability planned for the spring.

Aside from the sustainability benefits of a standard cloud platform e.g., ["Migrations to the public cloud can reduce CO2 emissions by 59 million tons per year which equates to taking 22 million cars off the road"](#), the exciting news is that Microsoft Industry clouds are designed to go further, to be different and actually enhance the capabilities of a standard cloud platform, with industry unique features to enable industry innovation at scale.

So that's it then, a no brainer, why wouldn't you move?

Well as a 25-year veteran of helping manufacturers embrace technology to improve business results, I know that the world of manufacturing is amazingly complex, and never more so than in today's digitally disrupted world. I am regularly asked by clients how moving to the cloud and, more importantly, how moving to a Microsoft "industry (manufacturing)" cloud could positively impact their businesses.

I believe there are 3 questions to consider when contemplating moving to the Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing:

- 1. How can I improve my operational and supply chain resilience to manage and evolve my business?** Magnified by the pandemic, manufacturers recognize that the flexibility and scalability of cloud computing will allow them to rapidly respond and adapt to changing market conditions and deliver the resilience needed to adapt and thrive in an environment of continual change e.g. [94% of Fortune 1,000 companies](#) experienced supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19. There's no question that future disruptions will occur and there is no question that manufacturers need to be better prepared to deal with the next challenge. The Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing should help position manufacturers to absorb those disruptions.
- 2. How can I continually change to attract and retain the best skilled resources?** It is clear [cloud adoption is becoming a priority for manufacturers](#). It is also clear that Manufacturers require unified, scalable and secure working models to attract and retain the best workers across their IT and OT organizations.



“Avanade helped us choose the right technologies, define how we should use those technologies in combination, and get the concepts right. They helped develop our functional design and have been valuable partners and trusted advisers in so many ways. Together, we’re bringing big ideas to life.”

Sebastian Smerat
Head of Center of Excellence Data Analytics & BI,
thyssenkrupp Materials Services



One finding from a recent survey conducted by Accenture and Avanade determined that companies that invest in digital technologies, such as Cloud computing, not only improve financial performance, but also become more attractive to potential employees. Gartner predicts that by 2024, 50% of factory work will be done remotely and that [connected workers](#) are 66% more engaged and more than 4x as likely to be retained.

3. How will I be able to enhance my organizational agility to renew and grow my business? In today's ultra-competitive, rapidly changing marketplace, agility may be the most important characteristic for determining success. [Manufacturing business leaders](#) are beginning to understand that cloud platforms speed up both innovation and agility in order to deliver differentiated products and services e.g. [90% of executives](#) agree that to be agile and resilient, their organizations need to fast forward their digital transformation with cloud at its core. Legacy, on-premise solutions are heavy with technical debt and not agile. Cloud computing is.

With a focus on solutions to transform workforces, build more agile factories, engage customers in new ways, create more resilient supply chains and unlock innovation, Microsoft has committed to working with its partner network to directly address the 3 areas raised above. One of the reasons I am so excited is I work for Avanade, and we have a unique partnership with Microsoft. Avanade was founded by Microsoft and Accenture in 2000 and we have a privileged position to be working closely with Microsoft to help shape new industry relevant solutions on the new Industry Clouds.

The last few turbulent years have shown us how manufacturers rise to unprecedented challenges and adapt with new solutions, as exemplified in the [UK Ventilator challenge](#). I fully appreciate transforming and adopting new technologies is often difficult, however, the case for moving to the Microsoft Industry Cloud is growing more compelling day by day. Microsoft with its partners, aims to help businesses accelerate change further, as [industry clouds](#) package together common data models, cross-cloud connectors, workflows, application programming interfaces and industry-specific components and standards.

The Microsoft Industry Clouds are designed for use with Azure, Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, Power Platform tools and other Microsoft services and are meant to connect front-end productivity tasks to backend data management.

In my role as Global Manufacturing Industry Director for Avanade, I lead a team of Microsoft certified professionals dedicated to helping clients [Rethink](#) their manufacturing business. As we get closer to the launch of the new Microsoft Cloud for Manufacturing, I look forward to sharing more information on how we will be investing in joint (Avanade and Microsoft) industry ready solutions, to help you renew and grow, become more resilient and enhance agility to embrace not fear the next challenge.

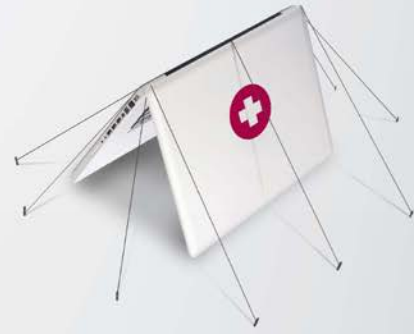
[Contact us today](#) if you would like to connect with me and my team or visit our new [Microsoft Industry Cloud pages](#) to learn more.



[Tom Nail](#)

Tom has over 20 years of experience in helping manufacturers embrace digital transformation and the Microsoft Cloud to drive improved business performance. Tom has specialized in leveraging technology to create value for manufacturers and is passionate about helping manufacturers understand and harness the rapidly changing world of technology to become more innovative, efficient and productive.

Renew and grow with Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit



Nonprofits find unique value in the new Microsoft industry cloud

By [Almin Surani](#) and [David Hisler](#)

Originally published November 2, 2021

When it comes to doing more with less, few sectors of the economy are more adept than nonprofits. They are well-versed in stretching highly scrutinized budgets and retrofitting solutions built for other industries to their unique needs. It's time to support nonprofits with robust, tailored technology solutions so they can focus on confronting the increasing urgency and demand for services in many pressing areas of human need – climate change, refugee crises, racial injustice, and economic and food insecurity. Especially during the time of COVID, when demands for many services have spiked, competition for volunteers and funds have intensified, and nonprofits have seen business as usual disrupted for their staff.

After living so long with scarcity of relevant technology, nonprofits can look to the [Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit \(MC4N\)](#) for more. More solutions tailored to the specific needs of the nonprofit world. More relevant data and a greater ability to make sense of it quickly to drive better decisions. More opportunities to build on the innovation and successes of other nonprofits.

Microsoft has invested in building end-to-end workflow designs for most common nonprofit processes. It signals a commitment to the industry and to working with these organizations to get the most from digital innovation.

Recognizing the need and hunger for collaboration, Microsoft began a collaborative effort three plus years ago to create a common data platform for nonprofits – a standard way to collect, organize and analyze the information most nonprofits need to run their organizations. The platform addresses key scenarios common across

the sector – knowing donors and supporters, delivering effective programming, accelerating mission outcomes, and securing data for donors and participants. Avanade has been one of the key partners building on the platform with complementary assets, accelerators, and tools to add efficiency and insights across the various facets of the nonprofit operating model.

Because nonprofits are mission- rather than profit-driven, they are usually eager to share knowledge, assets, and solutions across the sector. For example, Avanade implemented the Fundraising and Constituent Insights solution for one client and we were able to harvest and “share” the solution with another nonprofit at lower cost. We have also created solutions for nonprofit retail point of sale and grant making. And we are in the process of developing tools and solutions to manage child sponsorships that connect donors with individual children in need; a solution that is seen as a reusable asset for the entire industry.

MC4N coalesces the data and the accelerators into solutions that nonprofits can quickly adopt and use. It puts Microsoft's industry leading technology into the hands of nonprofit organizations in an integrated suite of products. This is just one industry cloud that Microsoft is launching, building on the idea that it can develop and package solutions, tools, and assets that address the common technology opportunities and challenges faced by organizations in the same industry. Innovation and customization can happen more quickly and can be done with modular components, unlike the wholesale enterprise transformations of the past.



The ability of MC4N to address common needs gives us an opportunity to focus our contributions on working with Microsoft TSI to address areas of the nonprofit solution value map without end-to-end solutions. Something Avanade is uniquely positioned to do.

To borrow a concept from the medical world, nonprofits are shifting from 'extra-label use' to having a product made specifically for what ails them. As a Microsoft partner, we shift our focus from making something work in a way other than it was intended to innovating on a platform that's fit for purpose. It's pretty exciting to have this foundation to build on.

Three years in, Avanade's Tech for Social Good business has established another foundation for innovation, as nonprofits like UNICEF Netherlands, SOS Children's Villages, Answer ALS, and Evergreen Goodwill look to us for digital solutions that help them fulfill their missions. We continue to build our nonprofit expertise while tapping into unmatched Microsoft knowledge and experience to scale this part of our business.

These solutions give us the opportunity to help transform our nonprofit clients on a global scale. It opens the door for us to personalize the capabilities of MC4N to organizations of different sizes.

The ability of MC4N to address common needs gives us an opportunity to focus our contributions on working with Microsoft TSI to address areas of the nonprofit solution value map without end-to-end solutions. Something Avanade is uniquely positioned to do.

Avanade's commitment to operating as a responsible business leader with a purpose of making a genuine human impact will motivate continued innovation in the nonprofit sector. Our goal is to give nonprofits technology solutions they can use to deliver their services more efficiently and effectively and ensure the greatest impact on the organization's mission.

[Find out more about the Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit and how Avanade can personalize it for your organization.](#)



[Almin Surani](#)

Almin Surani is the Global Nonprofit Digital Transformation Lead for Avanade. In this role, he works with Nonprofits around the world to ensure they have an effective and efficient digital transformation which will enable them to have a greater impact on their constituents. Almin brings over 15 years of experience in the Nonprofit sector including 10 years as CIO of the Canadian Red Cross. He also has over 20 years of experience in technology ranging from enterprise software to consumer software to consulting in both private and nonprofit organizations.



[David Hisler](#)

Dave Hisler is an experienced consulting services and solution management leader with 20+ years of business technology consulting experience in a diverse array of vertical markets including Non-Profit, Higher Education, Treasury & Wealth Management, Pharmaceutical, and Telecommunications. Dave is adept at managing complex technology projects including expertise in team leadership, people management, product management, project management, business development, business process modeling, training, and solution design. At Avanade, Dave is the functional and technical owner of our Tech for Social Good offering. Responsible for overseeing the end-to-end lifecycle by identifying key capabilities that should be built into solutions, on top of Dynamics 365 and the Common Data Model of Microsoft for NPOs. Not purely a development role, Dave works with Avanade sales and delivery teams, and NPO clients, helping to shape deals, to drive IP roadmap evolution, implement early client solutions, ensure solution improvement and client satisfaction.



Renew and grow with Microsoft Cloud for Retail



Microsoft Cloud for Retail: The wait is over, almost

By [Jim Hay](#)

Originally published June 15, 2020

Admittedly, announcements from Microsoft are important to us. Not quite seismic but pretty close. Avanade was founded by Microsoft and Accenture in 2000 and, as such, we work hard to know what our parents are saying and doing. So, when Shelley Bransten, Microsoft's Global Retail Lead, announced [the launch of the Microsoft Cloud for Retail](#) a few months back, we took it as a call to action. This was big

news! We needed to dig in and find out what this means for us and the retail industry!

The more we are learning about Microsoft Cloud for Retail, the more it seems to fulfill the promise of a whole new industry-specific approach to the challenges facing retailers. It brings together the power of Microsoft Azure, Microsoft



Power Platform, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Dynamics 365, and Microsoft Advertising on a common data model and built on a platform of security and compliance. That's a lot of Microsoft. It's everything your technology heart could desire, all in one place.

One of the areas Shelly points out in her announcement as having special resonance today is around data. In fact, Microsoft is using "connecting your customers, your people and your data" as the catchphrase for the announcement. On the inside of the retail operation the Cloud for Retail framework will mean improved integration between ERP and CRM systems and the ability to move from one area of the business to another with ease, allowing retailers to go to market faster and being able to reuse and repurpose their own and partner solutions. On the outside of the organization, this all translates into connecting the shopper journey seamlessly and safely.

We did some work around connecting the shopper journey for [Venca, the European retailer](#). Their own research showed that customers felt they were being presented with generic content that didn't necessarily target or enhance their shopping experience. Venca wanted to reconnect with consumers who had moved away from the brand and increase lead generation. Using a Dynamics 365-based platform, we centralized Venca's customer data, which allowed them to make quick, personalized contact with their customers and build a better customer lifecycle experience.

As we gear up to hear more about Microsoft Cloud for Retail and all it has to offer, we are proud to already be included as part of the [Microsoft partner ecosystem for retail](#).



[Jim Hay](#)

James Hay is the industry marketing lead for several industries at Avanade. He has a checkered past, which includes working in marketing across a number of service lines and industries for several organizations and a stint as an actor and singer. He feels lucky to have landed at Avanade, where his boldness and passion for all things digital are encouraged and respected.

Renew and grow with Microsoft Cloud for Retail



Microsoft Cloud for Retail: The wait is over, almost

By [Corine Vives](#)

Originally published January 12, 2022

Let's face it, I'm an unapologetic retail fanatic and nothing has excited me more than my anticipation about the general availability (GA) announcement for Microsoft Cloud for Retail. This is a truly exciting moment for retail and, especially, our own retail clients.

Just imagine how a fully integrated suite of solutions, including Azure, Azure IoT Edge, Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, Microsoft Teams and Power Platform could help to simplify all the myriad and complicated challenges facing your retail organizations.



As Shelley Bransten, Corporate Vice President, WW Retail & Consumer Goods Industries, Microsoft, adds, "We're excited to see the emergence of the cloud as the business platform for the digital economy. We see Microsoft Cloud for Retail as the vehicle to drive innovation for retailers looking to build their own digital capability today and tomorrow."

This should be music to the ears of many in the retail industry. Microsoft Cloud for Retail allows retailers to do four important things:

- Maximize the value of their data, their most important asset
- Empower retail store associates (after all +80% of the workforce are on the front line)
- Elevate the shopping experience
- Build a real-time, sustainable supply chain

It's no accident that data is the first bullet in the list. We all think that now is the time for retailers to harness their data and break down their silos if they want to get true value and actionable insights out of their data. Microsoft Cloud for Retail brings together different data sources across the retail value chain and uniquely connects customers, employees, and data together through a set of capabilities that delivers more relevant personalized experiences and operational excellence for sustained profitability.

One of the ways Accenture and Avanade work to bring this to life with Microsoft is through the ai.RETAIL solution, which brings together a portfolio of data and analytics products designed to accelerate speed to value by solving real business problems.

We use ai.RETAIL to connect the dots between marketing, supply chain and merchandising.

Jill Standish, Global Retail Lead at Accenture, sums up our joint commitment this way, "Accenture, Avanade and Microsoft's combined retail industry experience, global scale and joint solution development help retailers reset responsibly to harness the power of change. Together, we empower enterprises to thrive in the era of digital disruption."

As the largest dedicated Microsoft partner, Avanade is uniquely positioned to unlock the power of industry cloud and personalize it to your organization. And by combining our resources with Accenture and Microsoft we can help you capitalize on the Cloud Continuum, from public to edge and everything in between, to support online growth, omnichannel experiences, supply chain flexibility and workforce empowerment.

We think there's so much to shout about with this rollout. It's been hard to contain our excitement, but the good news is we don't have to any longer! We're ready to talk and shout and sing about it...well, maybe not sing.

Better to read through blog posts from Microsoft's Shelley Bransten ([Microsoft Cloud for Retail is now generally available](#)) and Robbee Minicola ([Microsoft Cloud for Retail and the role of partners](#)) explaining the general availability rollout and what it means for retailers. Stay tuned for much more to come about Microsoft Cloud for Retail.

[Find out more about the Microsoft Cloud for Retail and how Avanade can personalize it for your organization.](#)



Corine Vives

Corine Vives joined Avanade in 2000, coinciding with the start of the company's activities in Spain. In recognition of her leadership and commitment, she was appointed General Manager of Avanade Spain in 2011. She continues to hold that position and more recently has added the role of Global Retail Lead for Avanade, promoting the relevance of the retail industry for the whole company. She is also the Executive Sponsor of Diversity and Inclusion, focusing on creating opportunities and ensuring equality for all Avanade employees.



Renew and grow with Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability



Accelerate ESG goals with the new Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability

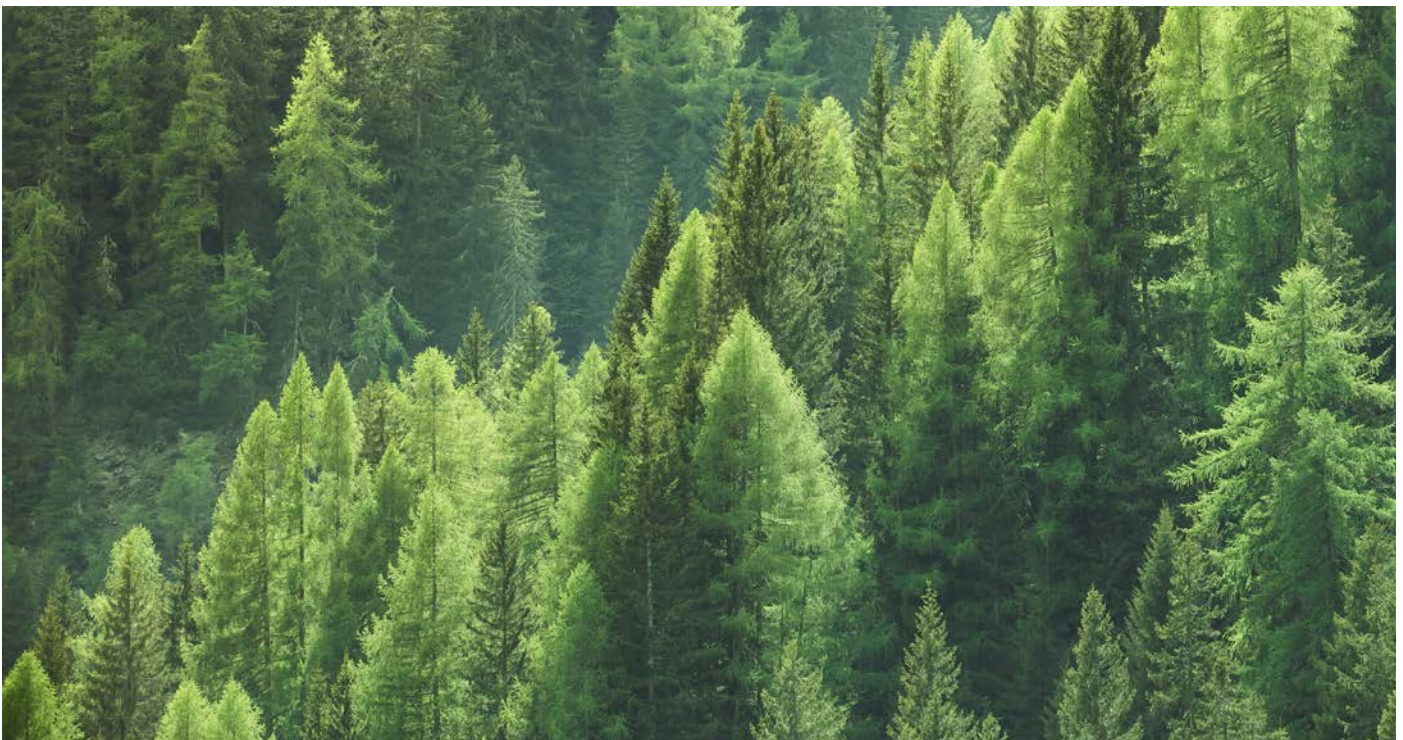
By [Naomi Jackson](#)

Originally published November 1, 2021

The business case for sustainability is clear. We're all experiencing unprecedented weather events in our daily lives and becoming more acutely aware of the need to better protect the planet and people through continual change. There's no doubt that organizations are increasingly recognizing their responsibility to take urgent climate positive action. Over the course of this year, we've seen a significant uptick in requests from clients to help them take advantage of digital technologies to accelerate towards net zero.

Transparency is trust

For most organizations, the initial priority is to use digital to set and meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals to become more sustainable faster. Transparency is critical, as customers, employees and partners will spurn organizations that don't consistently deliver on and demonstrate their ESG commitments. Not making enough progress – or [greenwashing](#) – is now a reputation risk.



The launch of the Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability will equip your organization to go beyond capturing data to generating impactful sustainability insights, so you can more quickly identify and take climate positive actions.

The launch of the [Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability](#) will equip your organization to go beyond capturing data to generating impactful sustainability insights, so you can more quickly identify and take climate positive actions. This new cloud offering is designed to help you [set responsible sustainability goals and effectively record, report and reduce carbon emissions](#), providing the transparency required to build and maintain stakeholder trust.

Rethink sustainability to repeatedly renew and grow

However, achieving ESG goals can't be the endpoint. If sustainability doesn't become core to how you do business, it won't endure. Beyond making a positive impact on the planet and people, you need to rethink sustainability to be a driver of profitability and growth. Digitally mature organizations know that becoming more inclusive, responsible and sustainable inspires innovation to keep business models resilient and diversify revenue streams across multiple ecosystems securely. For example, [SSE](#)

[Renewables](#) is using cloud, data and AI to generate insights to reimagine its operations so it can remain resilient through change and develop renewables services that positively contribute to the United Kingdom's net zero targets.

How Avanade can help

The Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability provides a platform for you to make sustainability core to how you do business, so your organization can repeatedly renew and grow through continual change. As [one of a select group of global Microsoft sustainability partners](#) and a member of the [Green Software Foundation](#), we bring insights and expertise to help you rethink sustainability and drive maximum business value from the [Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability](#).

[Learn more about Avanade's own ESG commitments and how we're partnering with clients to accelerate positive impacts for people, the planet and profitability with digital.](#)



[Naomi Jackson](#)

Naomi is the global marketing lead for Avanade's Advisory practice and research patronship with MIT Sloan Center for Information Systems Research. During her 10+ years of experience in digital, she has specialized in partnering with business consultants and academic partners to bring actionable thought leadership to organizations globally.



Let Avanade partner with you to **renew** and **grow** your business.

Contact us today to help your organization identify the strategic bets that will make your operations more resilient and your products and services more desirable to customers.

Read the latest Microsoft Industry Cloud articles and subscribe to get weekly updates from Avanade Insights.



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About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 55,000 professionals in 26 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com.

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