



# Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Membership Announcement Kit

## Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Software Products

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Congratulations on your membership in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program! Microsoft is pleased to count you among its valued Microsoft Gold Certified Partners.

As part of the group of partners that have met Microsoft Corp.'s requirements for receiving Gold Member benefits, you have an opportunity to utilize public relations materials to tell your customers, prospects and community about your affiliation with Microsoft. Created especially for Microsoft Gold Certified Partners for Software Products, this announcement kit provides you with a press release template and guidelines for announcing your Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program membership.

The benefits of announcing your relationship with Microsoft include the following:

- Increased credibility with your customers and prospects
- The opportunity to distinguish your company image from that of other technology providers in your area
- Recognition for your business through your Microsoft affiliation

The template provided is in press release format, a clear and concise way to communicate with various audiences. Microsoft encourages you to submit your announcement as a press release to local newspapers and magazines, publish it on your Web site, and provide it to customers and prospects through your marketing and sales activities.

As part of your overall strategy for affiliating your company with the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program for Software Products, Microsoft encourages you to take advantage of other benefits such as the logo program and customizable Microsoft advertising templates. These benefits are detailed on the Microsoft Partner Program Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/certpartner/>.

## Steps for Creating Your Announcement

1. Review this document. It includes suggestions for creating a powerful announcement that not only describes your affiliation with Microsoft, but also defines how your customers can benefit from that affiliation.
2. Use the template, which includes a quote from Microsoft and placeholders for key statements about your business.
3. Customize the template with statements that accurately reflect your business.
4. Obtain internal approval from the appropriate resources at your company.
5. Direct any questions to Whitney Whiton, public relations manager at Microsoft, (425) 703-9962 or whitneyw@microsoft.com.

## General Guidelines

When creating your announcement, please adhere to the following guidelines. The attached template is for your use; however, you may not reword the Microsoft quote or change any text that describes the program. If you have any questions, please contact Whitney Whiton.

## Defining Your Relationship With Microsoft

- You may not refer to your company as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner in areas for which you have not received the designation. For example, because your Gold Certified track is for Software Products, you may not use your Gold Certified Partner designation when referring to your network installation services.
- Please do not refer to your company as having a “partnership” or an “alliance” with Microsoft.
- Please do not refer to your company as being “authorized by” or “certified by” Microsoft through its membership in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program.
- Please do not include the Microsoft boilerplate, Microsoft trademarks or Microsoft press contacts in your press release.

## Tips on Style

- Present your information in a clean, factual, journalistic style.
- Keep the length of your announcement to two pages or less. It should be news, not a product brochure or marketing piece.
- Do not use superlatives, hyperbole or terms such as “the leading company” unless they are substantiated by a quote or data from a reputable source such as an analyst or research firm (e.g., Gartner or Forrester).

## Corporate Boilerplates

In keeping with the style of a press release, you will need to include a corporate boilerplate. This is a brief description of your company that may include its mission, details about its products or services, its target customers, or its office locations.

## Announcement Components

The announcement template has been designed so you can customize your press release with statements and a quote about your company. Sample statements are provided below that can be inserted into placeholders in the template. You may use the sample or create one that more specifically fits your business.

### **Statement No. 1 — What basic services does your company provide and what increased benefits will your customers experience because of your participation in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program?**

**Sample statement:** [Your Company], which provides services such as [X, Y and Z], has been named as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Software Products, due to its commitment to the Microsoft platform and its proven track record of developing robust and reliable software products. Membership in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program will provide [Your Company] with resources it needs to develop innovative software built on the Microsoft platform.

Other customer benefits might include these:

- Greater confidence in your software products as a result of independent software testing.
- More robust software products that utilize the latest Microsoft technologies.
- Knowledgeable sales representatives who are familiar with current and upcoming Microsoft technologies and products and who can recommend the appropriate Microsoft software and hardware solutions to fit specific business needs
- Technical-support personnel who have evaluated, tested and/or currently use the latest Microsoft solutions

### **Quote No. 1 (by your company's chief spokesperson) — What increased benefits will your customers experience because of your participation in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program?**

**Sample quote:** “[Your Company] is extremely pleased with our new status as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Software Products,” said [XXX, Title, Your Company]. “Being a Gold Member of the program allows us to clearly promote ourselves to customers as having proven expertise in providing high-quality software products. The incremental benefits provided through our Gold membership will allow us to continue to enhance the offerings that we provide for customers.”

Other ways customers might benefit from your membership include these:

- Earliest available access to technical-readiness materials and Microsoft technologies to prepare your company to deliver solutions based on the new Microsoft .NET server line
- Access to technology deployment blueprints developed through Microsoft Enterprise Services
- Premier branding: the Gold Certified logo
- Increased product license benefit
- Exclusive Web site for Gold Partners providing earlier access to information
- Prioritized referrals
- Additional training and marketing opportunities

**Statement No. 2 (if applicable)** — Provide details on any additional news about your company, or provide information about any special offers or supplementary company information not included in your boilerplate that may be useful to the members of the press.

**Sample statement:** In addition to **[X, Y and Z]** services, **[Your Company]** began offering **[X, Y and Z]** services on **[Date]**, resulting in **[XX]** percent growth in revenue for the year.

## Announcement Template

Use this template to create your customized announcement.

For Release [XX] a.m. PST  
[XX XX], 2001

### **[Your Company] Announces Its Membership in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program**

**[CITY, State/Province, Country — XX XX, 2001 — Your Company, Tag Line],**

today announced it is a new member in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program.

**[Insert first statement (see “Statement No. 1” above).]**

**[Insert first quote (see “Quote No. 1” above).]**

The Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program provides a way for customers to identify companies that have proven their commitment and expertise in one or more specialized areas when delivering Microsoft technologies. Microsoft Certified Partners need to meet a higher set of criteria for each category, including enhanced certification and a portfolio of real-world customer references, and are thus identified as the most skilled partners in specific solution areas.

“Given the number of choices in software products in the market today, customers need to quickly learn who is committed to integration and testing,” said Rosa Garcia, general manager of the Partner Programs Group at Microsoft. “They need to be assured that a software provider has a policy of platform testing and integration. With commitments to the Microsoft Windows and .NET platforms, **[Your Company]** has clearly demonstrated that its software products are robust and credible. Microsoft is pleased to have **[Your Company]** as a Gold Certified Partner for Software Products.”

**[Insert second statement (if applicable; see “Statement No. 2” above).]**

**[Insert your corporate boilerplate.]**

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**For more information, press only:**

**[Insert your public relations contact, company name, phone number and e-mail address.]**