

A Softchoice solution brief

# Building a bridge with Softchoice and Azure VMware Solution

Consistent | Flexible | Secure





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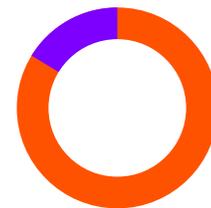


In the early stages of cloud adoption, organizations often reap quick rewards. This includes leveraging the cloud for test/development or backup or migrating simple workloads that require a straightforward 'lift and shift' approach.

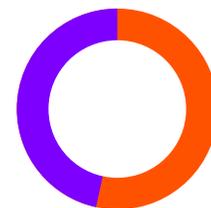
These early wins have encouraged many IT leaders to pursue the promise of greater agility and cost savings by embracing a 'cloud-first' philosophy. According to IDC, **85%** of enterprise IT organizations have already committed to a multicloud strategy. However, not every application or workload can be moved to the cloud. Many workloads are not easily separated from the on-premise infrastructure they depend on. They rely on software or operating system (OS) versions that require upgrades and patches to run in native cloud environments. Some require refactoring due to differences in the virtualization layer. This involves the much more labor-intensive process of re-architecting and recoding a given application to take advantage of native cloud functionality.

Organizations continue to look to public cloud options to bring higher agility to their IT operations and improve time to market with new applications and services. Many of them start with the "low hanging fruit," such as test and development environments, but face greater challenges when it comes to moving more complex applications into the cloud. Often, this requires refactoring applications, a process that has the potential to disrupt business and stall cloud migration.

According to the Softchoice 2020 Research Brief, Cloud: The engine for innovation, **54%** of IT leaders report that their teams struggle to form a cloud strategy and we know that often applications require at least some form of modification, from minor upgrades to complete rewrites or even swapping for SaaS alternatives. Many organizations have invested years into the development of private clouds with providers like VMware, which until recently, have been incapable of operating seamlessly in the public cloud. While there are options for transforming virtual machines (VMs) to run in cloud environments like Microsoft Azure, most often this means introducing all-new tools, scripting and operating procedures. In turn, to put this into practice requires research and new competencies, which itself creates barriers to change – a big challenge for lean IT teams.

**85%**

of enterprise IT organizations have already committed to a multicloud strategy – IDC

**54%**

of IT leaders report that their teams struggle to form a cloud strategy

## The pressure on organizations and IT mounts

The demands to move to the cloud faster are increasing as IT leaders face new financial pressure to address mounting operational and business challenges. Faced with this situation, they tend to view public cloud migration as a means to address immediate concerns, including:



Data center contract expirations



Software end of support (EOS)



Urgent capacity needs



Hardware and software refreshes



Disaster recovery demands

However, traditional “lift and shift” approaches to cloud migration will not allow organizations to move as fast they expect and tend to create more disruption than benefit. This is because skills developed in the traditional data center or private cloud environment don’t translate easily to public cloud infrastructure, further stalling an organization’s attempts to adapt to changing market dynamics and financial pressures.

Recent advancements in hybrid cloud technology, including Azure VMware Solution (AVS), allow IT teams to embrace public cloud while minimizing the need to refactor applications or introduce a new operating framework. Azure VMware Solution support a comprehensive VMware environment in the Azure cloud, meaning IT teams can run native VMware workloads while reaping the public cloud benefits in Azure.

The result is IT teams that can address infrastructure challenges by running, managing and securing applications across VMware environments and Microsoft Azure through a common operating framework. By taking this approach, organizations will be able to continue getting value from existing VMware investments, skills, and tools, including VMware vSphere, vSAN, and vCenter while leveraging the possibilities allowed by Azure’s scale, performance and advanced services.



## Address immediate needs and set the stage for innovation

Once organizations have addressed their immediate needs, Azure VMware Solution create opportunities to modernize applications and use advanced cloud-native services such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. For example, VMware workloads running on Azure can integrate with Azure services like Azure Active Directory, Azure AI and Analytics to enable intelligent experiences.

## A path forward

Based on our experience helping 1,400+ organizations transition to the cloud, we recommend taking a step back from the technology to begin with a plan based on an in-depth assessment of your applications. Then, develop a sound business case based on their unique demands and requirements. By understanding your applications and workloads along with their underlying architecture in detail, you can determine the right approach to optimizing their performance, identifying risks and containing costs in Azure.

Taking an integrated approach using Azure Virtual Solution, IT teams can realize the benefits of the cloud while using the same management tools and governance policies already operating in the data center. This makes it easier to overcome the barriers of cultural change and the complexity than can put a drag on transformation. It also allows your hybrid or multicloud strategy to have a measurable business impact sooner by adding the capacity to modernize applications to meet rising expectations of a modern digital business.

[Learn more on how to get started](#)

## About Azure VMware Solution

Move or extend on-premises VMware environments to Azure. Azure VMware Solution is a Microsoft service, verified by VMware, that runs on Azure infrastructure.

The solution allows IT teams to migrate VMware-based workloads from the on-premise data center into Azure. From here, you can integrate and continue managing VMware operating environments with the same VMware tools your teams are already familiar with while modernizing applications using Azure native services.



Scale automation and faster provisioning for VMware workloads on global Azure infrastructure.



VMware workload modernization through native Azure management, security and services.



Continued use of existing VMware investments, avoid retraining by applying existing skills, and tools, including VMware vSphere, vSAN, vCenter.



Benefits of Azure's optimization for Microsoft Windows and SQL Server workloads.

### Integrate your existing VMware environment

Migrating VMware workloads to Azure has the potential to increase productivity with elasticity, scale and faster provisioning cycles. This includes viewing and creating vSphere VMs in the Azure portal, automate deployments, and enable single sign-on. It also allows enhancement of workloads with the full range of Azure compute, monitor, backup, database, IoT and AI services.

## Use of existing VMware investments with Azure

Another advantage of Azure VMware Solution is on-demand access to additional capacity when it comes time to consolidate, retire, or expand existing datacenters. By moving to Azure using VMware's HCX technology, IT teams can continue to manage the environment using the same VMware tools they already know, such as vSphere Client, NSX-T, Power CLI, or any popular DevOps toolchain. This has the added value of ensuring operational continuity when redeploying vSphere-based applications to Azure and removing the need for application refactoring.

## Deployment on dedicated cloud infrastructure in Azure

Azure VMware Solution relies on the operating platform and backend infrastructure of Azure to run VMware vSphere, vSAN, and NSX-T platforms natively and at scale. This mitigates the hassles of procuring, deploying, and managing hardware infrastructure by running workloads on fully managed, single tenant, bare-metal Azure infrastructure. The solutions include a variety of connectivity options, including Azure ExpressRoute, and the ability to encrypt your data at rest and in transit with protected, high-speed, low-latency connectivity.

## Microsoft workloads are best on Azure

As the Microsoft cloud, Azure is optimized for Windows Server and SQL Server. In fact, a recent Microsoft study found that enterprise customers considering cloud migration for Windows Server were 30 percent more likely to choose Azure. Workloads running on Windows Server and SQL can therefore take advantage of intelligent security, seamless hybrid capabilities and unique cost savings options on Azure.

## General solution features:

### VMware tools and technology:

- ✓ Native vSphere support
- ✓ Fully featured networking stack
- ✓ vSphere management, vSAN, and NSX-T
- ✓ HCX Enterprise now available to support migration

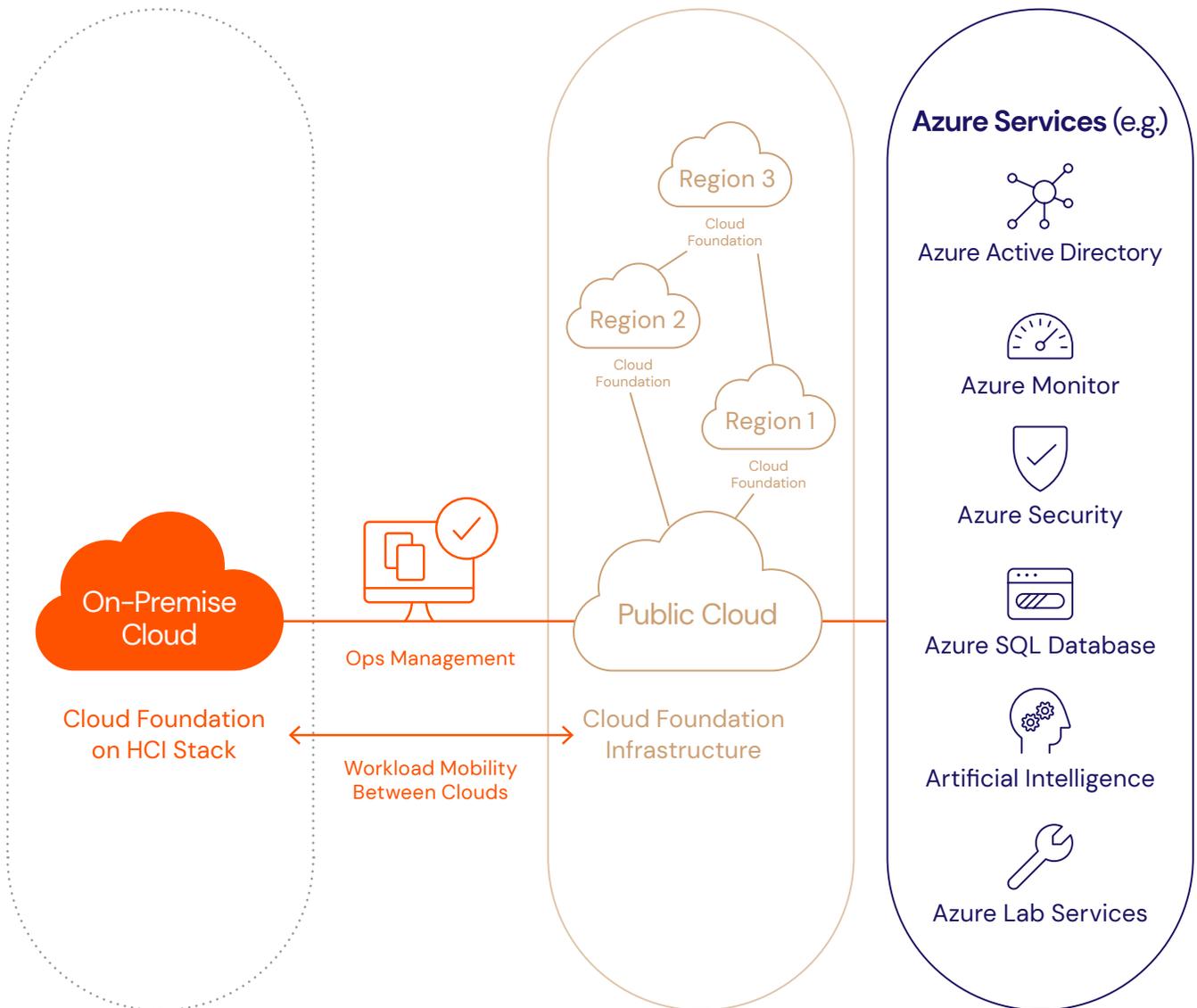
### Integration with Azure:

- ✓ Management and governance
- ✓ Security
- ✓ Low-latency connectivity to Azure
- ✓ Leverage Azure ecosystem
- ✓ Single point of support
- ✓ DevOps toolchain

### High performance cloud infrastructure

- ✓ Optimized elastic infrastructure
- ✓ Automated self-service provisioning
- ✓ Dedicated, isolated, bare metal infrastructure
- ✓ Redundancy and placement control
- ✓ Security and encryption

## How Azure VMware Solution works



Operational Consistency Across Hybrid Clouds

## Address business objectives and set the foundation for transformation

Often, IT leaders look to use cloud native services to retire technical debt quickly and find new opportunities to improve and modernize digital experiences. The next step is to define business objectives and use cases that will inform a solid business case. This business case is the starting point for a transformation journey that includes:

- 1 Disaster recovery at a fraction of the cost
- 2 Simplified data center consolidation
- 3 Cost savings through software support extension
- 4 Avoiding infrastructure refreshes through cloud migration

### Use Case #1: Disaster recovery at a fraction of the cost

Traditionally, an effective disaster recovery (DR) strategy called for secondary data center(s) either within an organization's owned infrastructure or within a co-location facility. However, this had the effect of doubling hardware and software costs while creating an operational model that was difficult to sustain under budget pressure. Today, IT leaders are rethinking DR approaches and these considerations are no more poignant than when a data center refresh or contract renewal rolls around.

With Azure VMware Solution, you'll be able to forego secondary data center(s) and tap into the DR potential of the public cloud. Using a VMware stack deployed in Azure as a primary or secondary on-demand disaster recovery site for on-premises data center infrastructure. AVS allows for all multi-directional disaster recovery and migration of all VMware environments either natively to VMware (AVS) or Azure Native. This allows organizations to protect and recover an entire VMware-based data center into Azure VMware Solution, with no modifications to the VMs or management tools without the added expense of establishing a secondary data center.



## Use Case #2: Data center extension

Today, compute and data storage needs are growing across the board. As a result, IT leaders face new challenges in providing the heightened level of service people expect without taking on the cost of ongoing provisioning for peak periods. Meanwhile, the need to support remote workforces as organizations also evolve their business models, is straining on-premise infrastructure. Azure VMware Solution addresses the 4 most common scenarios that require organizations to adapt to the new world of work, including:

Common scenarios	How Azure VMware Solution helps
Seasonal spikes in demand	AVS allows organizations to tap into hybrid cloud capacity to provision for baseline demand rather than paying for infrastructure to accommodate peak demand. With AVS, organizations can access compute and take advantage of other Azure services to further enhance digital experiences.
Data growth outruns capacity	AVS allows organizations to expand storage into the cloud, minimizing the need to introduce limitless data storage. Once in the cloud, a wide range of Azure services allow organizations to utilize new capabilities such as analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning to advance application functionality and unlock value within existing data stores.
Virtual desktop deployment needs	With remote work becoming the norm, organizations need to address rising compute needs for large groups of distributed users. AVS supports rapid expansion of virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to the public to address these demands.
Increasing pressure on test and development environments	As organizations push to improve and iterate on their core business models faster, application development increases the load on existing test/dev environments. Using AVS, organizations can augment or fully replace their on-premises test and development environments and introduce DevOps through native toolchains and web services for further speed and agility.

### Use Case #3: Cost savings through software support extension

For most organizations, Windows 2008 and SQL 2008 end of support is not news. Now many organizations are facing the fact that support will not be extended into 2021. Sticking with this approach will require re-negotiating software support fees or taking on costly extended support contracts. Without the time or resources to complete a mass upgrade and taking into account legacy applications that may not be suited to modern operating systems, IT teams face a difficult choice to divest from crucial investment in other strategic priorities.

Microsoft recently announced that it will offer free extended security updates, continuing to offer the Azure Hybrid Benefit and further cost relief for customers who wish to take advantage of reserved instances for further cost savings. With Azure VMware Solutions, organizations reap the benefits of support extensions for Windows and SQL server leading to immense cost savings in contrast to traditional support. IT leaders now have a new option to evaluate to avoid an increasing software budget and reassign investments into areas of digital transformation. Below is a summary of the details and the projected savings associated with each area.

### Use Case #4: Avoiding infrastructure refreshes through cloud migration

Major infrastructure refresh cycles often come hand-in-hand with substantial capital expenditures (CAPEX). At the same time, IT teams often face pressure to contain technology spending and direct resources toward initiatives that will continue to grow or expand revenue streams. Rather than a cost burden, however, the infrastructure refresh offers an opportunity for IT leaders to do both. With AVS, organizations can quickly stage cloud migrations in line with the infrastructure refresh by porting existing VMware workloads to the cloud, offsetting the need to invest in further physical hardware.



#### Free Extended Security Updates:

- ✓ 3 years free security updates for Windows Server 2008 R2 and SQL Server 2008 R2
- ✓ 75% of the license cost to purchase standalone



#### Azure Hybrid Benefit:

- ✓ Bring Windows Server and SQL Server on-premises licenses with Software Assurance to Azure
- ✓ Save up to 40% on IaaS, and up to 55% on Azure SQL Database



#### Azure Reserved Instances:

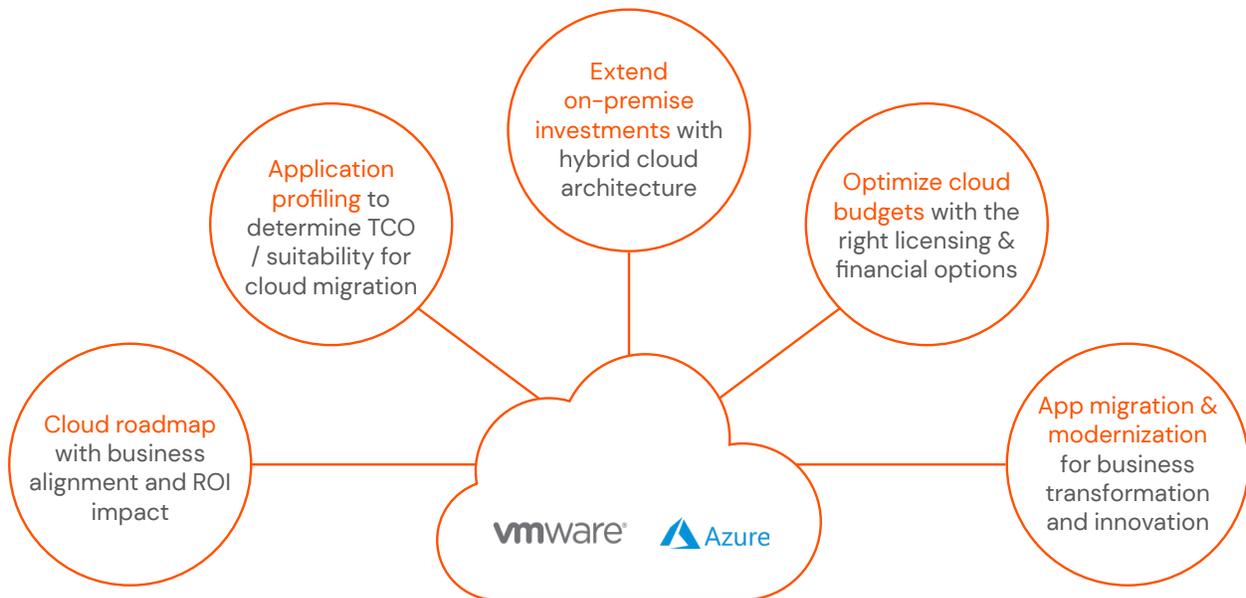
- ✓ 1 year or 3 years Reserved Instance discounts for Azure VMware Solution.
- ✓ Save 30-50% on the cost of dedicated nodes with reserved instances

## Getting started with Azure VMware Solution

Seeking out a partner with deep understanding in VMware Cloud and Azure technology helps ensure your Azure VMware Solution deployment is set up for success. In addition, setting up the Azure VMware Solution requires advanced NSX, vSAN and vRealize skill sets as well as knowledge of Azure. At the same time, working with an experienced partner helps to simplify procurement, implementation and operation of any solution when two or more technology providers are involved.

### The Softchoice journey for Azure VMware Solution

Working with us, you'll deploy the Azure VMware Solution based on best practices we've developed over hundreds of cloud migrations. We'll help you with the precise planning needed to ensure your journey is successful by applying a unique, proprietary cloud journey approach focused on your application and business needs. We take you through the development of a cloud roadmap and business case that demonstrates the business impact and sets the foundation for a modern hybrid cloud environment ready to support your evolving digital approach.





What is it?		What you gain
Data Center Technology Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Discovery and data collection, analysis and workload placement insights leading to an in-depth report based on your environment using proprietary total cost of ownership calculations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cloud roadmap with business alignment and ROI impact suitable to support complex technical and financial board-level decisions</li> </ul>
Hybrid IT Accelerator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides end-to-end planning, in-depth assessment and migration of target workloads based on identified applications resulting in a production-ready VMware Cloud Solution led by VMware and cloud experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Migrate applications quickly and reduce risk setting the foundation for mass migration activities and access to innovation opportunities</li> </ul>
Workload Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A technical scan &amp; analysis of workloads and their servers to understand optimized application resource requirements</li> <li>✓ Determine the proper outcome of each application, based on business priorities and technical requirements</li> <li>✓ Create a migration plan with expected actions, timing and costs</li> <li>✓ Present a reliable budget for cloud migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Application profiling to determine TCO / suitability for cloud migration</li> <li>✓ Achieve business &amp; IT Alignment</li> <li>✓ In-depth cloud migration strategy</li> </ul>
Application Migration and Modernization Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Building on the foundation of the Hybrid IT Accelerator, Softchoice moves applications rapidly based on findings from the workload assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enable rapid application migration &amp; modernization for business transformation and innovation</li> <li>✓ Quickly reduce costs, business disruption risks and standardize on the VMC and public cloud platform</li> </ul>



## Why Softchoice for Azure VMware Solution?

Azure + VMware expertise to drive your cloud success

### Azure Experience

- ✓ 150+ Microsoft Technical Experts
- ✓ 24/7/365 support for your Microsoft Cloud environment
- ✓ #1 Azure Growth Partner
- ✓ #1 Microsoft Cloud Deployment Partner
- ✓ #3 Global Ranking of Managed Service Providers

### Microsoft Awards

- ✓ Microsoft Canada Partner of the Year (2020)
- ✓ Microsoft US West Partner of the Year (2017)
- ✓ Microsoft Operational Excellence Award (2003-07, 2009-17)

### VMware Experience

- ✓ 100+ Azure + VMware cross-trained engineers
- ✓ 2+ year delivering VMware Cloud projects
- ✓ 600 Azure + VMware customers
- ✓ VMware Master Services Competency (MSC): VMC on AWS, Network Virtualization, Data Center Virtualization, Microsoft Azure Expert Certification
- ✓ VMware Value Partner of the Year - 2020 Regional Winner

**Ready to get started?** Contact your Softchoice Account Manager.

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