Microsoft

A blueprint for Microsoft UK partner competitiveness

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Calculating competitiveness

In 2020, Microsoft UK partnered with an independent team of economists and researchers, led by Dr Chris Brauer, Director of Innovation at Goldsmiths, University of London, for a detailed study of what it takes for UK organisations to compete in a post-COVID, post-Brexit world.

Conducted in winter 2020/21, this new study, led by Dr Brauer and the same research team, now examines that question – and the scale of the opportunity – in specific relation to the UK Microsoft Partner Network.

F or UK businesses, it is an undeniably challenging picture. Many, including those in the UK Microsoft Partner Network, find themselves caught between the rock of today's disruption and the hard place of tomorrow's uncertainty around the UK's COVID-19 recovery and future trading relationship with the EU.

Yet amidst the darkness, there is also light. At the end of last year, Microsoft's ground-breaking report *Creating a Blueprint for UK Competitiveness* revealed a potentially prosperous road ahead.

The report found that by embracing a new model of competitiveness based around talent, technology and future readiness, all underpinned by their relationship to the ecosystem in which they operate, UK businesses could significantly enhance their ability to lead and succeed domestically and on the global stage.

Crucially, the impact on the UK economy could be significant: an overall economic boost of £48.2 billion along with the chance to build a better workplace and a fairer, more inclusive society. As we will explore in detail during the pages that follow, this opportunity is just the beginning for companies in the UK Microsoft Partner Network.

"Microsoft UK partners have proved they are very resilient and constantly evolve. They now have an opportunity to build on those inherent strengths to lead the UK's economic recovery."

CLARE BARCLAY,
CEO,
MICROSOFT UK.
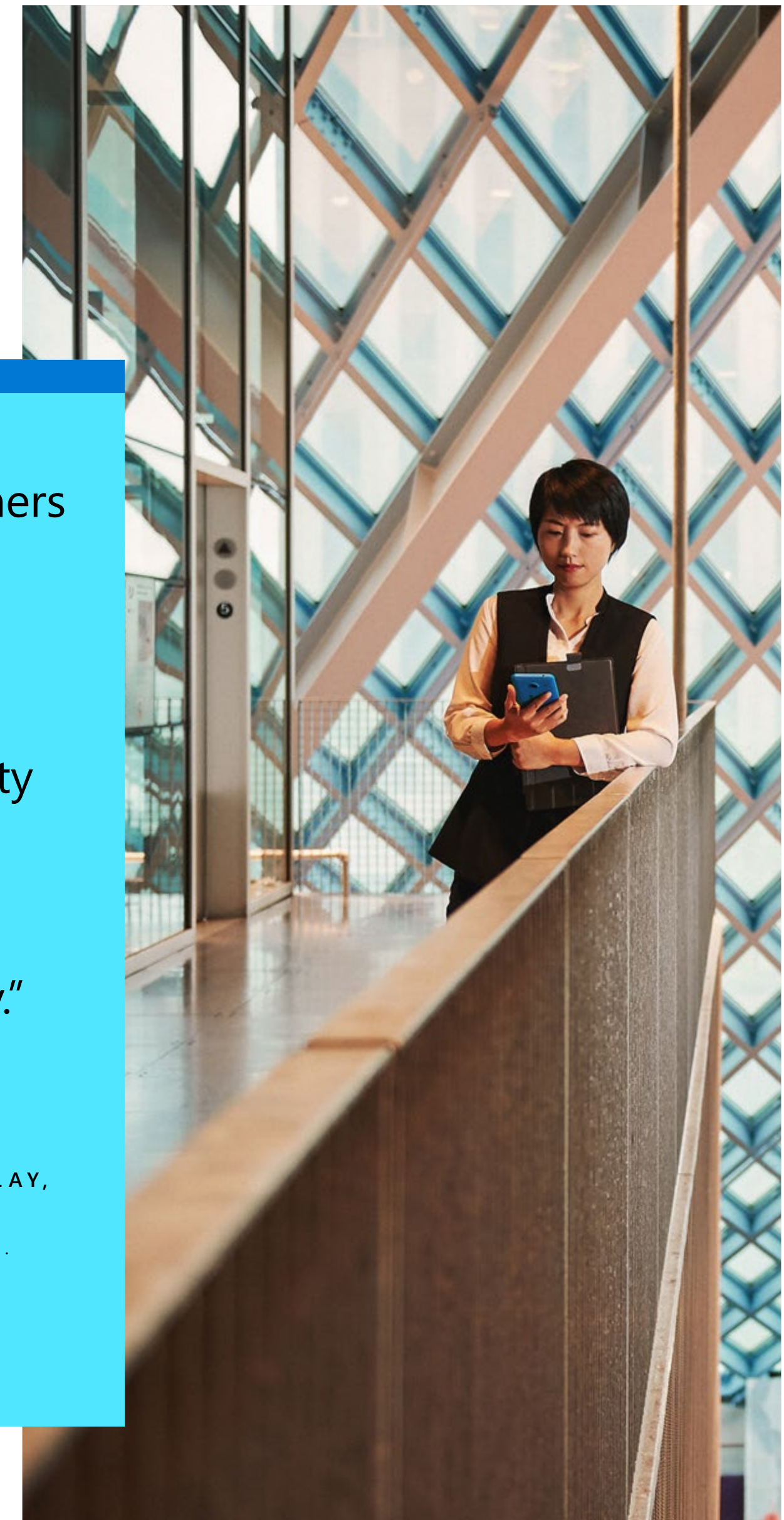
Cautious confidence

The financial and operational strength of Microsoft's Partner Network has delivered a long history of mutual success. Yet, now more than ever, our research suggests that, collectively, Microsoft UK partners tend to be better positioned than many UK organisations to grow out of this period of uncertainty. More than half (58%) of those we surveyed expect to experience an increase in revenue this year, compared to 14% that anticipate no change and 28% that fear a decrease. In contrast, our research last year found that 46% of UK organisations overall report a reduction in turnover of 5% or more during COVID-19.

External industry figures appear to bear out this cautious confidence. Despite institutions such as the IMF predicting a significant economic downturn in the UK, venture capital investment in Britain's technology firms grew by £11bn in 2020, an increase on 2019's pre-coronavirus levels and higher than the rest of Europe combined.

Of course, there is trepidation too. According to our survey, Microsoft UK partners are well aware of the barriers to growth. Top of the list is the current economic climate, with 55% of survey respondents citing this as their biggest concern. That's followed by COVID-19 (40%), the skills and talent shortage (32%) and Brexit (31%). Most also recognise that the nature of these challenges is constantly shifting, forcing organisations to adjust their operating practices with agility, regularity and speed.

58% of Microsoft partners expect to experience a revenue increase in 2021

"The rate of change is incredibly fast, so transformation must become absolutely engrained in your organisation as a constant process."

ZAK VIRDI,
MANAGING DIRECTOR UK,
IRELAND AND AFRICA,
SOFTWAREONE.

The perfect fit

As for why companies in the UK Microsoft Partner Network appear to be better equipped than most to succeed in a post-COVID, post-Brexit Britain, it comes down to a 'perfect fit 'of technology expertise, digital skills and the willingness to adapt to an ever-changing landscape.

As we see in **Figure 1. Falling Into Line**, their current strategic priorities match closely with the four key elements of the new model for competitiveness the research team identified in the 2020 study. **See 4D Thinking**. This contrasts sharply with UK organisations overall, just 15% of which were classified as frontrunners, i.e. businesses demonstrating the necessary competitive capabilities to achieve 5% growth or more in the current climate.

This alignment is both striking and encouraging. But equally, now is no time to be complacent, much less inert. As James Chadwick, General Manager - Commercial Partner at Microsoft UK, puts it: "Many of our partners are already ahead of the game when it comes to fitting the blueprint we have identified for future UK competitiveness. The task now is to accelerate – and stay there."

Figure 1.   **Falling Into Line**

Proportion of £48B attributed to each aspect of the model for UK competitiveness

- 46.38% Technology
- 23.42% Future Readiness
- 18.46% Talent
- 11.74% Ecosystem
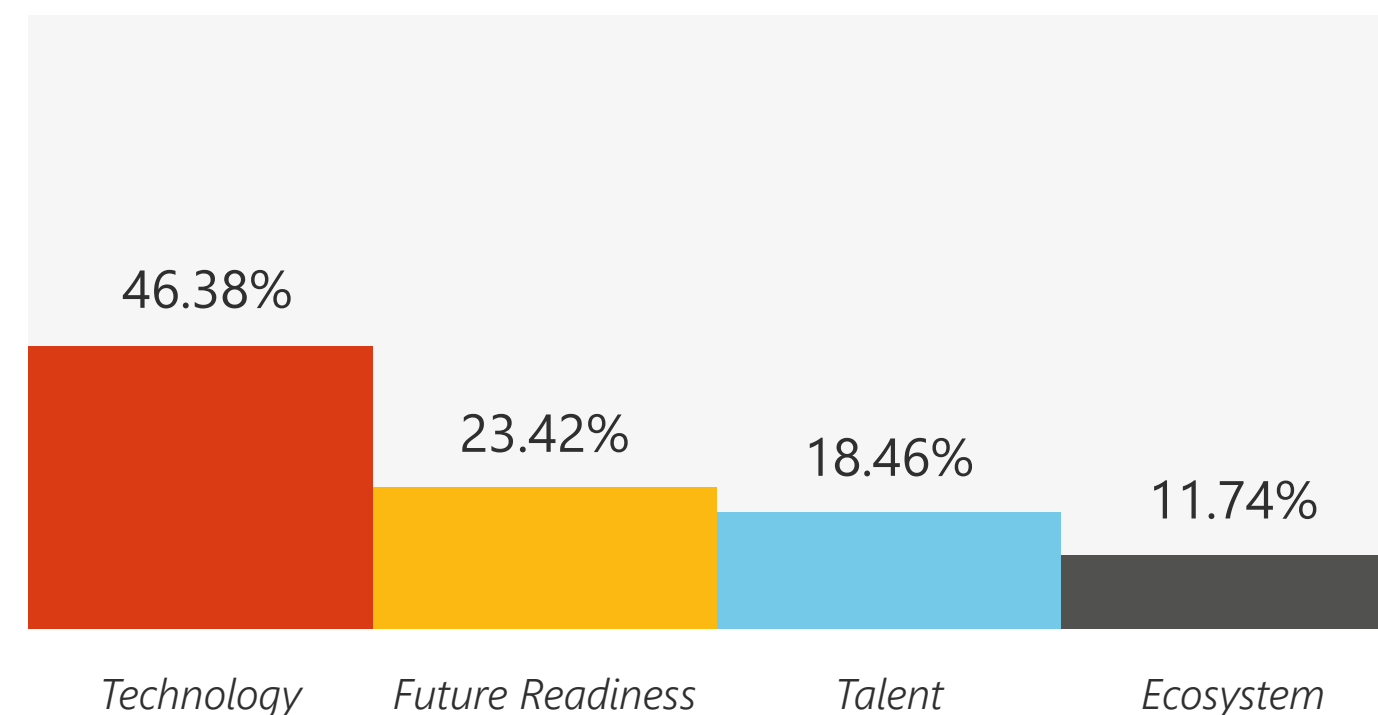
Current areas of strategic focus for the UK Microsoft Partner Network related to the competitiveness model

- 39.79% Technology
- 33.41% Future Readiness
- 11.69% Talent
- 15.11% Ecosystem
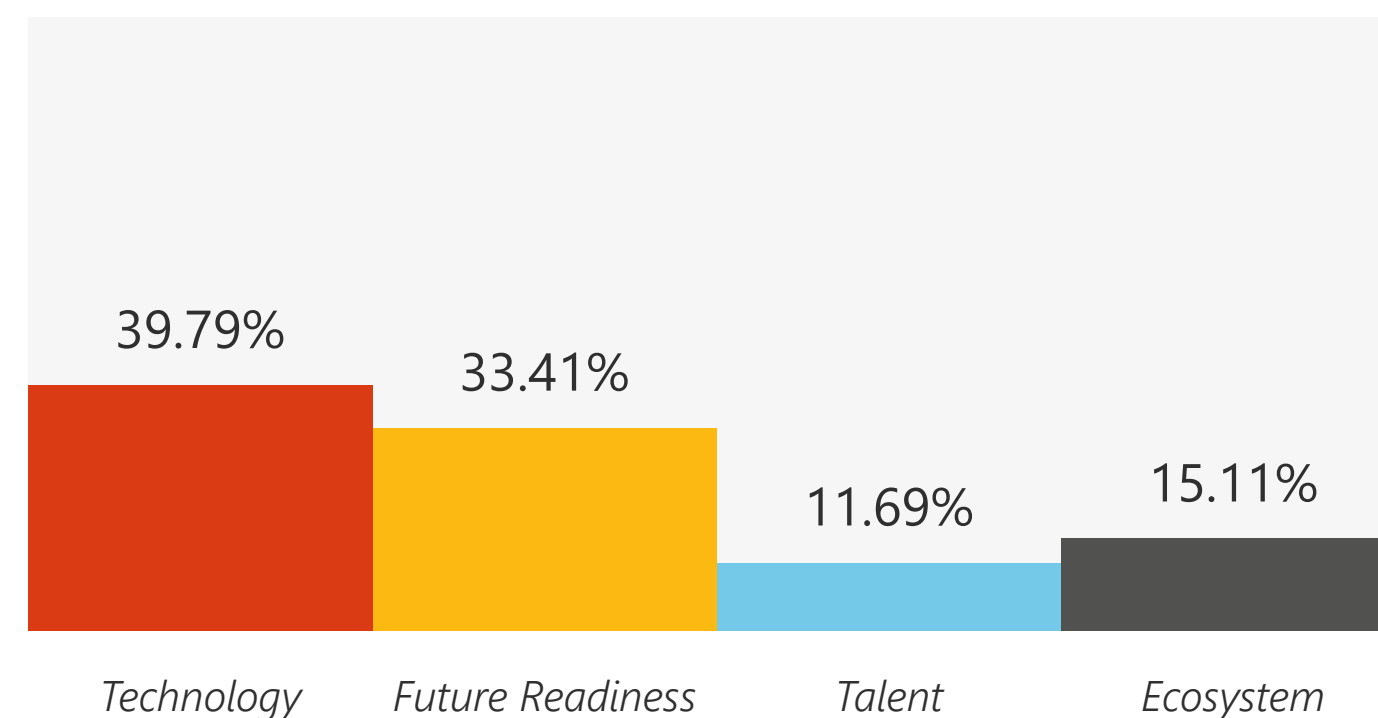
4D Thinking

In *Creating a Blueprint for UK Competitiveness*, the research team identified four key dimensions of a new model of competitiveness:

- **Talent** – the need for responsive leadership, a diverse and inclusive workforce, increased digital skills and close collaboration between leaders and employees.

- **Technology** – investment in new, pervasive digital solutions that boost productivity through greater efficiency, collaboration and speed to impact.

- **Future readiness** – the need to plan and innovate more effectively to navigate disruption, pivot towards fresh growth opportunities and adapt to market changes.

- **Ecosystem** – an organisation's relationship with the external environment driven by continual creative destruction that revolutionises the economic structure.

Knowing the score

The good news is many partners are already focusing on the macroeconomic and societal aspects of their growth strategy too. This includes everything from actively supporting employees with their work-life balance, as seen at global IT distribution firm Tech Data, to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture at the likes of retail analytics company, Uncrowd, and managed service provider, Phoenix Software.

Opportunity knocks

The potential rewards for doing so are compelling. Of the £48.2 billion boost to the UK economy achievable if every organisation makes marginal gains in its competitiveness, UK Microsoft Partner Network organisations stand to benefit disproportionately.

Despite representing only 1.13% of VAT-registered business in the UK, our research suggests they could contribute 13.96% of that total figure. In other words, by taking small steps to enhance their competitiveness during 2021, Microsoft UK partners could generate combined additional revenues of at least £6.74 billion beyond what they already make. To put this into context, Mintel place the entire UK music and audio production income for 2020 at less than £1 billion (£984 million).

Moreover, this figure is just the beginning. As more and more UK businesses seek to sharpen their competitive edge through digitalisation, demand for services like cloud support, data analytics, remote work solutions, deployment and migration and business analysis and strategy, is increasingly outstripping supply. Consequently, by doubling down in these areas, the UK Microsoft Partner Network could go beyond the £48.2 billion competitiveness boost and unlock an additional market-making opportunity of **£2.34 billion**, largely in 2021. In total, that is a collective **£9 billion additional revenue opportunity**, for partners to support the UK's recovery in 2021.

"COVID-19 has accelerated the necessity, appetite and help customers need to embrace the cloud" explains Elona Mortimer-Zhika, CEO of IRIS Software Group.

CASE STUDY
IRIS Software Group

.IRIS

"As a business, we must invest in being able to answer those demands. There is a window to be disruptive that we cannot miss out on. We must be innovative to stay one step ahead of the game."

Yet while the bottom line impact of such a boost is obvious, to view the opportunity for Microsoft UK partners as a solely economic one would be short-sighted. The very essence of our new model for competitiveness is that it delivers not just financial prosperity for a selection of well-positioned businesses but that it also drives collective economic and social growth for the UK. While supporting their own success, partners can play a vital role in driving their customers' success, powering the UK's wider economic recovery and tackling pressing issues such as diversity, regional inequality and digital inclusion.

CASE STUDY
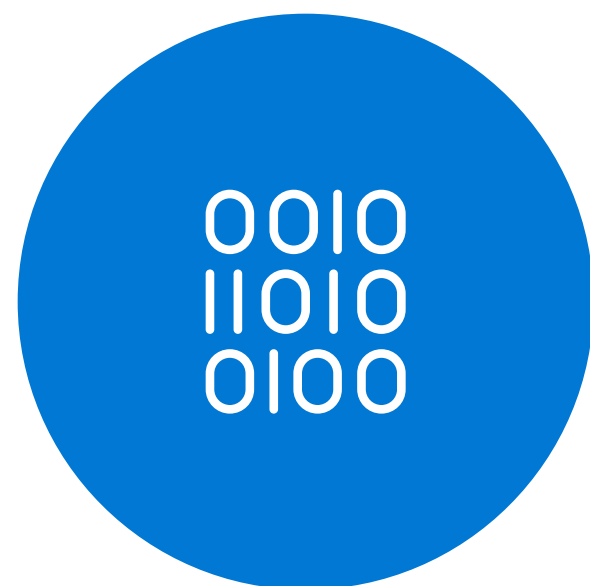### Phoenix Software

PHOENIX

But there is, unsurprisingly, much work to be done. Indeed, perhaps the best way to lay out the road to greater competitiveness in future is to first consider how partners are currently faring across those four key dimensions of technology, talent, future readiness and the ecosystem. What are their strengths in each area and where are the opportunities to do even better?

Here, we examine each of the four dimensions in turn.

SEE ALSO FIGURE 3
Competing Expertise

£6.74 billion – the minimum boost UK Microsoft Partner Network organisations could deliver for the UK economy through increased competitiveness in 2021

Microsoft

Technology

During our 2020 research, we found an organisation's ability to create a pervasive digital infrastructure and transition fully to new technologies within three to six months can significantly boost its productivity and growth.

This is good news for the UK Microsoft Partner Network where the use of cloud solutions and hybrid systems like machine learning and data analytics — all of which can enhance speed to impact — is far more common and embedded than in the majority

of UK businesses. As well as supporting their own digital transformation, this puts partners in a strong position to sell such solutions to customers.

Yet, equally, this is not simply a pace race. The job now is to focus on the potential costs of cloud adoption, including privacy and security. "Speed to impact doesn't mean deploying something at any cost for any timescale," points out James Chadwick. "It means delivering the required value or outcomes in a responsible manner."

ANDRE AZVEDO,
GLOBAL HEAD OF CLOUD
PARTNERSHIPS,
CLOUDREACH.

Cloudreach

"There is an incredibly competitive market for people with the right skills. Investing in developing your staff and helping them grow their career is therefore vital."

Talent

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, nearly three-quarters (71%) of the partners we surveyed plan to hire new staff within the next six to 12 months while three in five (61%) say workforce development and responsive leadership are important to their internal business.

Just over a third (37%) currently offer workforce development as a client service.

For the Network, there must thus be a continued focus on fostering a happy, diverse and inclusive culture in which workers at every level feel valued and confident enough to innovate. One where, in the words of Paul Shannon, CEO of cloud service provider, ANS, "making a mistake is not only OK, but encouraged; otherwise, you are probably not pushing the boundaries enough."

Put another way, organisations' willingness to meet employees' needs in areas like training and development, remote working, communication and empathetic leadership is directly linked to their ability to offer high quality products, services and experiences.

Pleasingly given the current times, supporting mental health is also a key focus among partners, with 31% listing it as one of their top priorities. This places it behind only digital inclusion and environmental sustainability (39% and 36% respectively) – two similarly important issues that UK organisations across sectors can help address as the country rebuilds after COVID-19. It also further underscores the intrinsic link between the economic and social benefits of a sustainable growth strategy for competitiveness.

CASE STUDY
Kainos

kainos

CASE STUDY
Tech Data

Tech Data

Future Readiness

Ecosystem

The best performing organisations are the ones investing strongly in change management programmes and R&D. Many partners say building future readiness has become a key part of their internal business during COVID-19, while plenty also cite it as something they are planning to offer more to clients, a potentially exciting new market opportunity. Taking steps to bolster resilience and agility within their own four walls and beyond them will be become ever more important to businesses' operational and commercial success.

"How our partners run their own business and drive their own digital transformation directly translates into the conversations they have with their customers," says Alex Smith, Director of Cloud Services Scale Partners for Microsoft UK. "So, if they're not transforming themselves, they do not transform their customers."
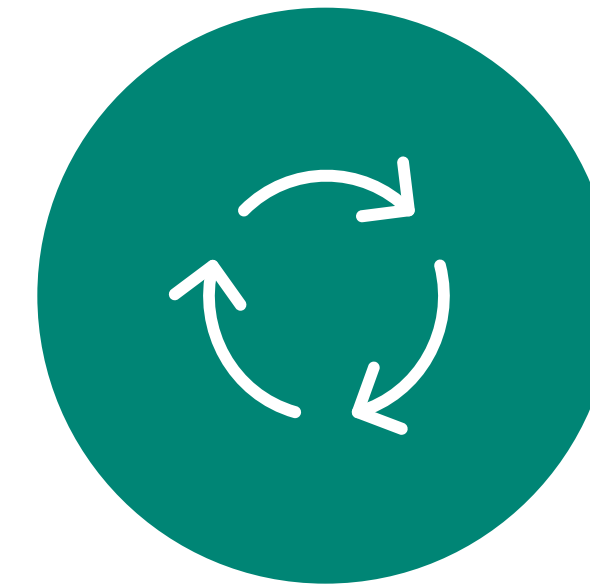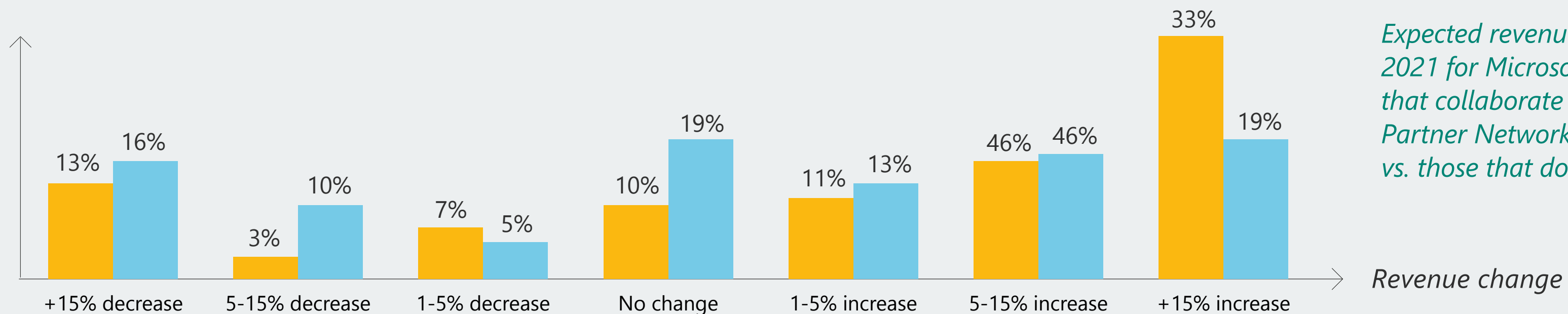
We found Microsoft UK partners that collaborate with other businesses in the Network tend to perform better. Indeed, a third (33%) of those that developed such partnerships expect to grow their revenue by more than 15% this year compared to 19% of those that did not. **See Figure 2. Collaborators Are Winners** and also **Shifting Gears, page 8**.

As well as allowing partners to benefit from complementary expertise and combined revenue streams, such collaborations offer a potentially

safer path to international expansion. Currently, just 12% of UK Microsoft Partner Network companies generate more than 30% of their income abroad. That compares to 33% that collect between 1% and 10% of their revenue internationally and 34% that do not conduct any business outside the UK at all. Similarly, only 17% of the partners we surveyed say they have a plan to adopt a more global mindset in their internal business (for example, hiring policies) during the next six to 12 months while 36% admit they are not exploring the possibility of foreign expansion at all.

Given the level of uncertainty right now, this hesitation is understandable. Yet as far as possible, it also needs to change. In our initial competitiveness report, we calculated that growing the proportion of international trade and increasing the number of non-UK employees can have a positive impact on organisations' overall revenue when backed up by the necessary remote working support. For Microsoft UK partners, collaborating with a fellow Network organisation overseas or that has a global presence could therefore be a valuable driver of growth moving forward.

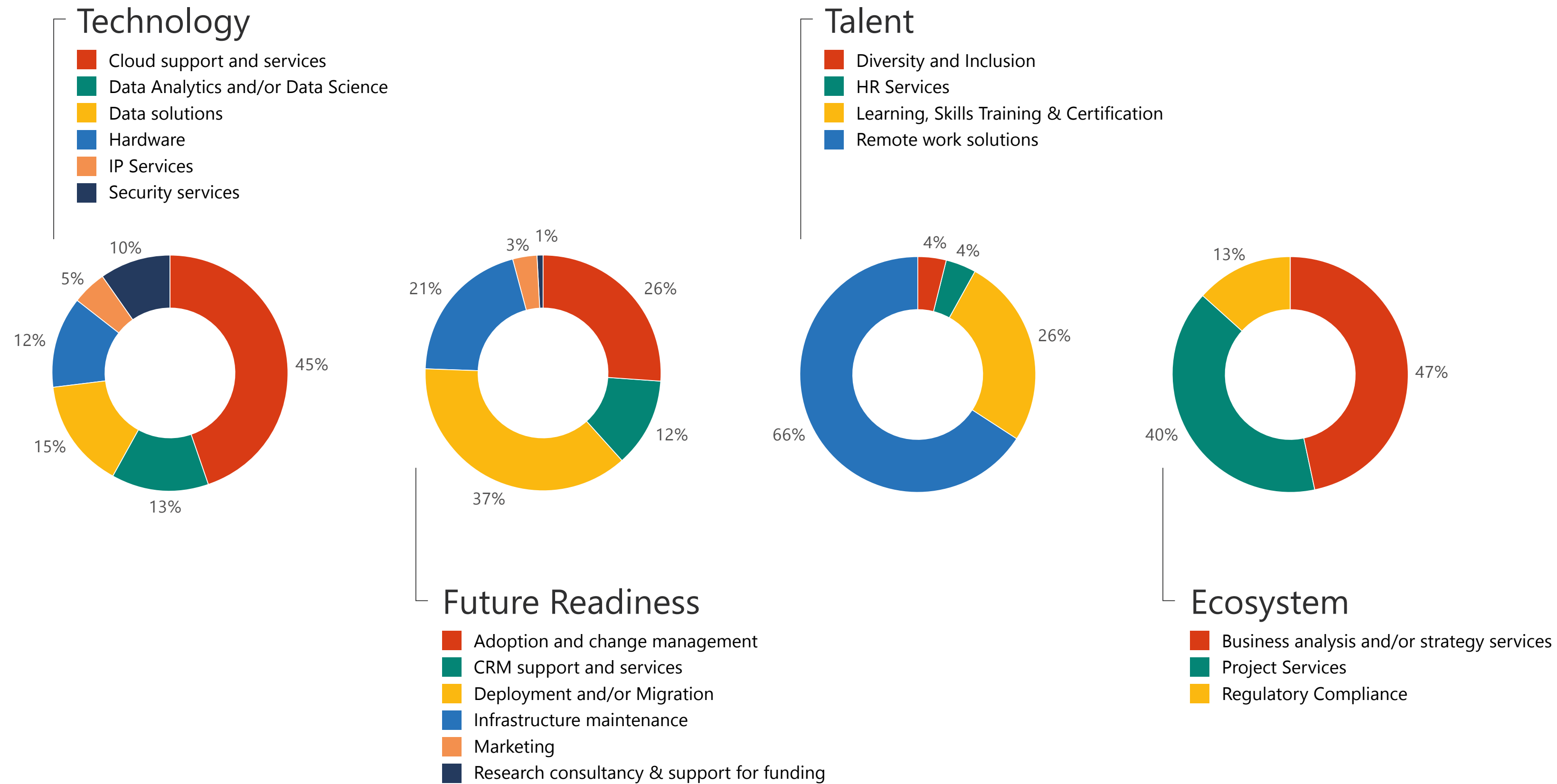Figure 2. **Collaborators are Winners** ■ Collaborating ■ Non-collaborating

Expected revenue increase in 2021 for Microsoft UK partners that collaborate with other Partner Network organisations vs. those that do not.

Revenue change

	+15% decrease	5-15% decrease	1-5% decrease	No change	1-5% increase	5-15% increase	+15% increase
Collaborating	13%	3%	7%	10%	11%	46%	33%
Non-collaborating	16%	10%	5%	19%	13%	46%	19%

Figure 3. Competing Expertise

How Microsoft partners rate their expertise across the four dimensions of competitiveness

Technology

- Cloud support and services
- Data Analytics and/or Data Science
- Data solutions
- Hardware
- IP Services
- Security services

10%
5%
12%
15%
13%
45%

Talent

- Diversity and Inclusion
- HR Services
- Learning, Skills Training & Certification
- Remote work solutions

4% 4%
26%
66%

3% 1%
21%
26%
12%
37%

Future Readiness

- Adoption and change management
- CRM support and services
- Deployment and/or Migration
- Infrastructure maintenance
- Marketing
- Research consultancy & support for funding

13%
40%
47%

Ecosystem

- Business analysis and/or strategy services
- Project Services
- Regulatory Compliance

Shifting gears

What, then, can the UK Microsoft Partner Network organisations do to unlock this £6.74 billion revenue boost for the UK economy and, better still, go beyond it to secure the additional market-making £2.34 billion potentially available in 2021?

The key is to recognise that the opportunity must be seized not awaited. To drive their own growth while also playing a key role in the UK's collective economic and social progress, companies should seek to make immediate, incremental changes – both internally and in their work with customers. Crucially, these changes do not require significant capital investment but, when allied together, can dramatically enhance their competitiveness in a post-pandemic, post-Brexit world.

"The beauty of the IT industry is the degree of evolution. Having a flexible partner ecosystem is an important part of understanding future opportunities in terms of where they can lead us."

JAMES BAKER,
ALLIANCES & MARKETING
DIRECTOR, SOFTCAT.

Softcat

Microsoft

Within their own business model

Here are six strategic steps Microsoft UK partners can take in 2021 to improve their own operations and unlock new revenue opportunities with clients.

1. Collaborate with other members of the Microsoft Partner Network

Companies that collaborate with other members of the Network tend to perform better. A third (33%) of those that developed such partnerships expect to grow their revenue by more than 15% this year compared to 19% of those that did not. Collaboration can promote knowledge sharing, tap new markets and lead to complementary services that create fresh revenue streams. In challenging economic conditions, it also represents a less risky solution for new product development and market expansion.

"No one partner can solve every problem alone. Sometimes we need to spot patterns and proactively get together."

MARK TURNER,
DIRECTOR,
CLARANET.

claranet

2. Invest in agility and change management

Focusing on agile solutions for remote working can boost workforce productivity and satisfaction while also offering a profitable service externally. Partners should look to boost speed to impact by adjusting their strategy for rolling out new technologies, using MVPs to support customers in new ways then continually refining them as their needs and the market evolve. Similarly, those aiming to generate new customer value or transform their operating models should seek to respond to fast-changing customer requirements around technology adoption and change management. This means focusing on: using data analytics to inform decision-making, strategy and planning; assessing the global competitiveness of products; and improving data security to ensure existing services remain robust and that migration and deployment are not compromised as they speed up.

CASE STUDY
SoftwareONE

softwareONE

3. Focus on D&I

Developing remote working solutions is a strong focus for the UK Microsoft Partner Network, building diversity and inclusion into these solutions and as standalone offerings remains much less of a priority (listed by just 4% of partners as an area of industry expertise). Additionally, less than a third (27%) of partners surveyed told us they are prioritising diversity and inclusion to support their community. Partners must therefore turn good intentions into lasting action, transparently discussing and encouraging diverse hiring practices and workforce inclusion programmes while also building on the renewed focus on care and social impact during COVID-19 to address broader equality issues in future. Meanwhile, the intelligent use of data can ensure companies do not grow to become echo chambers, which risks limiting creativity and potential in the long-run. There is also an external opportunity to be grasped here. Given the UK's position as a talent magnet in Europe and the convenience of de-facto remote working as a result of COVID-19, partners can take the lead in developing services that help customers become more diverse and inclusive too.

"Without a commitment to equality of opportunity, you are not picking from the largest pool of talent. And that means you are not going to get the best."

KEN CHARMAN,
CEO,
UFLEXREWARD.

uFlexReward

9

With customers

4. Build RPA and automation services

Currently, just one in five (20%) of the UK partners we surveyed is developing new RPA products/services for customers while only slightly more (23%) are doing so for automation solutions. While this is likely due to their clients' intense focus on cloud migration during COVID-19, now is the time to refocus that strategy. With growing positivity among workers about how RPA and automation can take away repetitive tasks to provide space for more interesting work as well as greater communication between leaders and staff in a new normal of remote working, both these areas of business have high growth potential. Investing in them now may allow partners to capture a large, early segment of the market while those that do not risk falling behind the curve.

5. Develop data analytics capabilities

In the last 12 months, we have seen how the intelligent use of data can be the difference between survival and failure, providing organisations with much-needed clarity through COVID-19. Yet right now, only 28% of the Microsoft UK partners we surveyed offer data solutions and data analytics as a combined service while just 13% plan to grow this area of business in the next six to 12 months. With many customers having accelerated their migration to the cloud in 2020, we can now expect them to start exploring the advanced data analytics capabilities and real-time business intelligence solutions available. Partners should thus be prepared to respond to that demand, increasing their data analytics products and services — ideally as part of a wholesale adoption and change management offering. Of course, doing so requires having the right skills within the workforce. Targeted recruitment programmes, training for existing staff and even collaborations with other businesses in the UK Microsoft Partner Network are all great places to start.

6. Shore up your security offering

Fewer than one in 10 (9%) of our survey respondents currently provide security solutions to clients as a main line of business. Given the lasting shift towards employee flexibility and remote working in light of COVID-19, this is a potential area of growth. First by opening up new lines of revenue — including security reviews and product implementation across multiple remote devices — and by enabling Microsoft UK partners to create more long-term relationships with customers based on assessing and managing their security posture on an ongoing basis. "Ideally, we want to continually evolve their Security Services and be able to constantly manage and remediate their customers' security posture," says David Leigh, MSP Lead, Commercial Partner at Microsoft UK.

> Only 9% of Microsoft UK partners currently offer security services as a main line of business

2021 Vision

Microsoft offers a range of resources to support the Microsoft Partner Network as they adapt to the challenges of today and seek to deliver the innovative solutions and services to lead in 2021 – and beyond. These include:

A step-by-step guide to help partners accelerate cloud business growth and expand revenue opportunities.

A way for partners to become more data-driven through a unified view of data across their Microsoft Partner Network organisational hierarchy.

You can also find more information and advice, in this *article* by Gavriella Schuster Microsoft Corporate Vice President, One Commercial Partner.

While the true impact of COVID-19 and Brexit remains uncertain, this latest research shows there is a promising path ahead for Microsoft UK partners that are willing and able to make the changes needed to boost their competitiveness in 2021 and beyond. A path that leads not only to a sizeable economic opportunity for themselves but to a better, fairer and more prosperous nation as a whole. It may not always be easy or predictable. But the time to tread it is now.
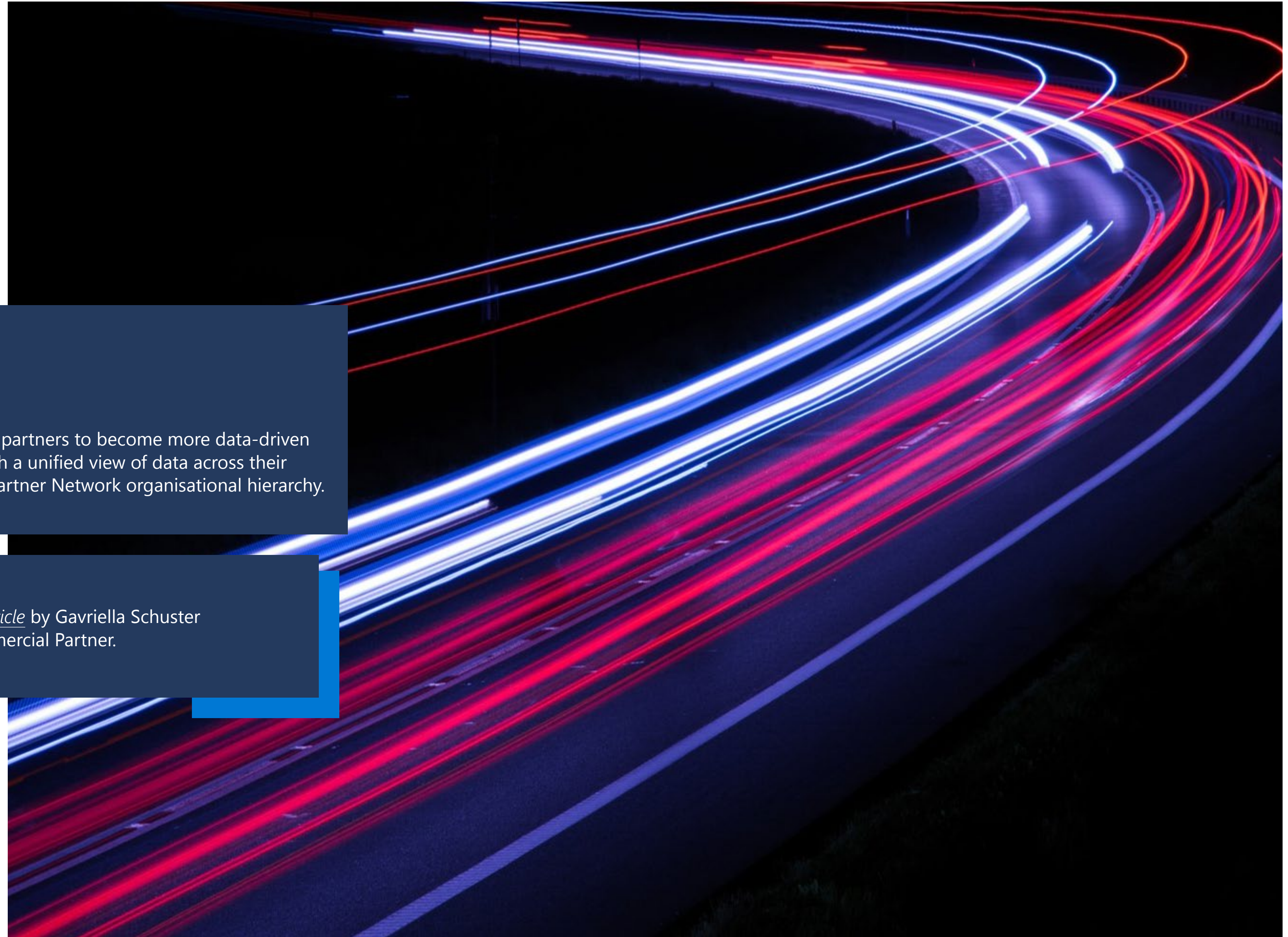
CASE STUDY
IRIS Software Group

.IRIS

IRIS Software Group employs over 2,000 staff to deliver integrated business critical software to help more than 120,000 customers to be more productive, better engaged with stakeholders and compliant with regulations. CEO, Elona Mortimer-Zhika, explains why the company chose to focus on technological transformation and increasing product and people investment, rather than cost-cutting during COVID-19.

ELONA MORTIMER-ZHIKA,
CEO,
IRIS SOFTWARE GROUP.

"When COVID-19 hit, our priority was to serve customers better and help them digitally transform. Rather than focus on cutting costs, we identified ways of doing business differently to meet customer demand while ensuring we continued to be scalable and future-proof.

We armed our staff with the tools and skills to sell, support and deploy our products virtually rather than having to be onsite. We acquired three cloud businesess and doubled the level of ongoing development resource to deliver cloud products to customers even faster. Our technology investment is bringing our people and customers onto one CRM, one ERP, one professional services business and one support ticketing system. This allows IRIS to be more agile and divert resources quickly to where there is growth and opportunity.

Throughout this time, support for customers has been paramount. One in five UK employees are paid using IRIS payroll solutions and with constant changes in government support schemes such as furlough, we deployed over 60 payroll releases to ensure everyone was paid accurately and on time.

In addition to our advice, guides and information, we also developed a new product, IRIS Engage and offered it to HR customers free of charge so they could quickly deliver effective communications and engage with employees.

COVID-19 has accelerated the necessity, appetite and help customers need to embrace the cloud. As a business, we must invest in being able to answer those demands. There is a window to be disruptive that we cannot miss out on. We must be innovative and stay one step ahead of the game."

Microsoft
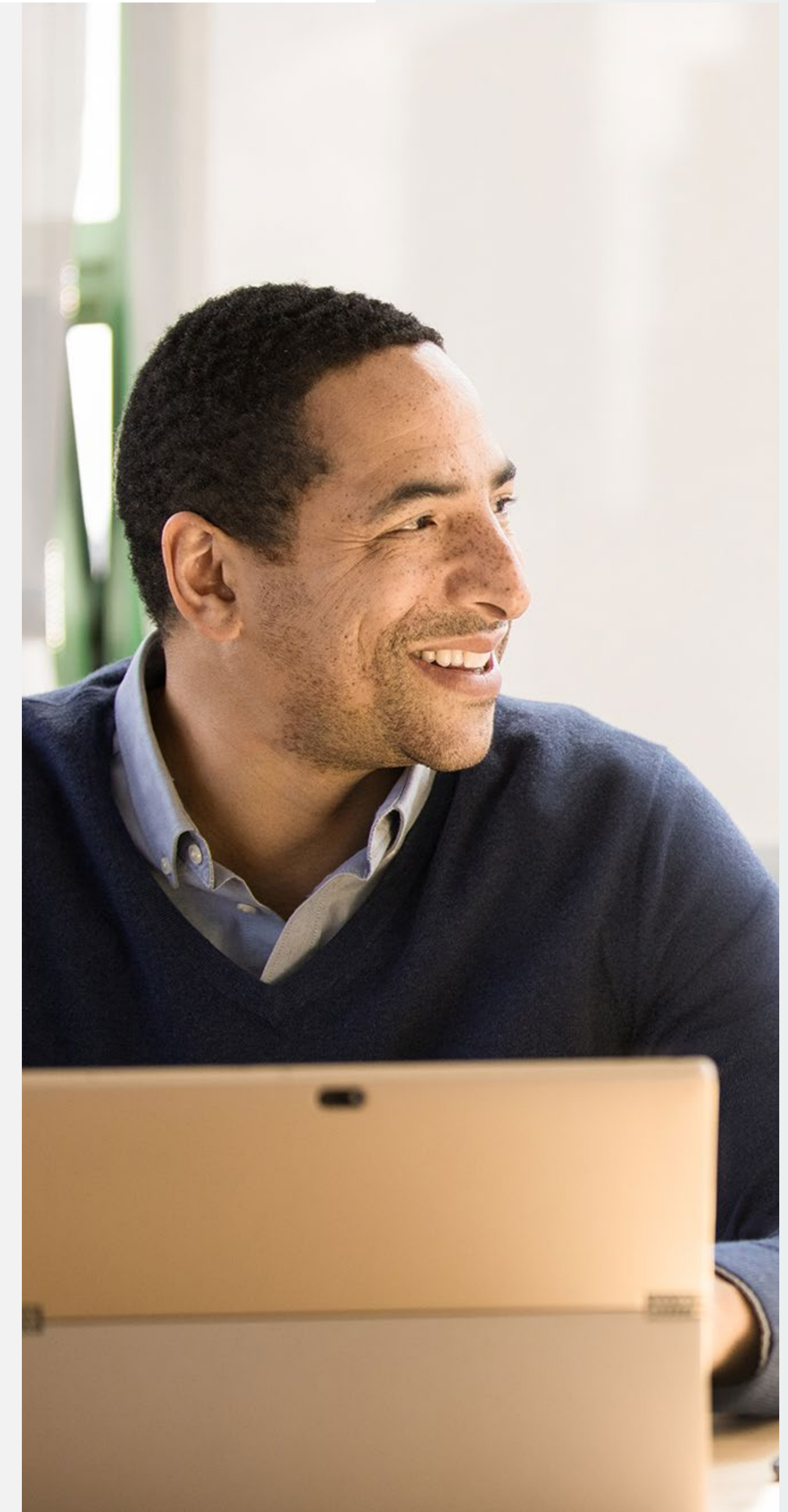
Phoenix Software

PHOENIX

Phoenix Software uses technology to empower customers and employees, optimise operations and reinvent products and business models. Managing Director, Samantha Mudd, discusses how the company's renowned commitment to diversity and inclusion is helping it retain and attract top talent.

SAMANTHA MUDD,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
PHOENIX SOFTWARE.

"I talk relentlessly about our staff being our company's biggest asset and part of that is ensuring we have a diversity and inclusion strategy that adds value to our organisation by contributing to employee wellbeing and engagement. For example, we have been training our leadership team over the last two years in areas like unconscious bias and making sure they interact with staff in an authentic way. We are also working on transforming how our people access applications and collaborate if they have a disability.

We focus a lot on recruitment too. From the first moment they arrive, we make it clear to new joiners that we are a company that obsesses about them being able to give their best each day and

feel motivated, safe and happy at work. Talking openly about our commitment to D&I has also helped us attract more diverse talent, especially women, who feel strongly aligned to our values.

It is even having an impact outside our business, with D&I becoming a part of our customer conversations too. For example, we heard from a client about how features in the Microsoft technology stack can help people with dyslexia or who are hard of hearing or sight. That then inspired our own staff to learn more about those functionalities so they could sell it to other companies and improve technology access for their employees with similar needs. The loop just carries on."
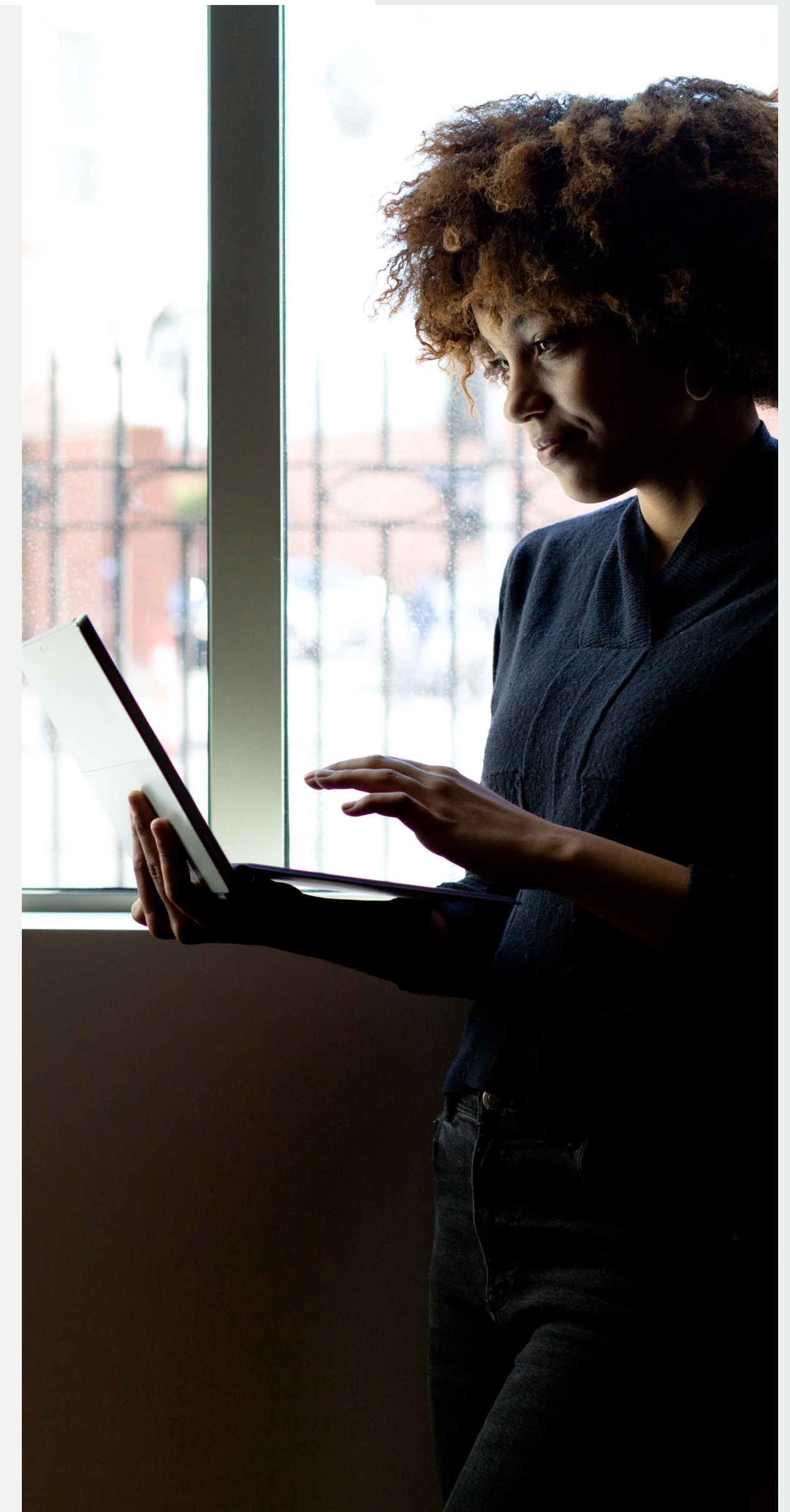
CASE STUDY
Tech Data

Tech Data is an end-to-end technology distributor with more than 100 offices around the world and over 15,000 employees. Here, Business Unit Director, Simon Bennett, reveals how the firm is equipping its workforce for a digital future.

"When I joined, we had lots of excellent salespeople but their skills were focused mainly on relationships rather than product or technical knowledge. We have therefore spent the last three years investing heavily in making sure our people either have the right skills or, if they do not, potentially changing their role. We are probably about 70% of the way through that process.

We have also worked hard to ensure we can recruit and retain talented people *rather than lose them. For example, we created our Channel Academy, a portal where salespeople and resellers can sign up for training courses for their vendor exams. But it has to reach beyond just tools and into culture too. Most of our people want to develop but the big challenge is making sure we support them in balancing their workload, personal life and the time required to learn a new skill or gain a particular vendor accreditation."*

SIMON BENNETT,
BUSINESS UNIT DIRECTOR,
TECH DATA.

Microsoft

SoftwareONE

softwar**1**ONE®

Managing Director, Zak Virdi, explains how IT service management company, SoftwareONE, has become 'future forward' during COVID-19 by offering customers adoption and change management services alongside its cloud solutions.

"For us, being 'future forward' means being agile, adaptive to changes and resilient. Not just through our internal processes and workforce but in the way we deliver for our customers. Previously, we provided adoption and change management as part of our professional services stream. But since COVID-19 struck and more companies shifted to cloud-based technologies, we have incorporated this as a core component of our managed services, enabling our clients to really leverage the advantage of the cloud-based investment they are making.

To make the most of this market opportunity, there is also a huge amount of enablement and change management to do within our own business. We have to educate our workforce about the capabilities we have and that is coming from a vastly different space to where we were two years ago. It will be vastly different in the next six months too. The rate of change is incredibly fast, so transformation has to become absolutely engrained in your organisation as a constant process. Nowadays, you are changing all the time and you have to make sure you educate as you go forward."

ZAK VIRDI,
MANAGING DIRECTOR UK, IRELAND AND AFRICA, SOFTWAREONE.
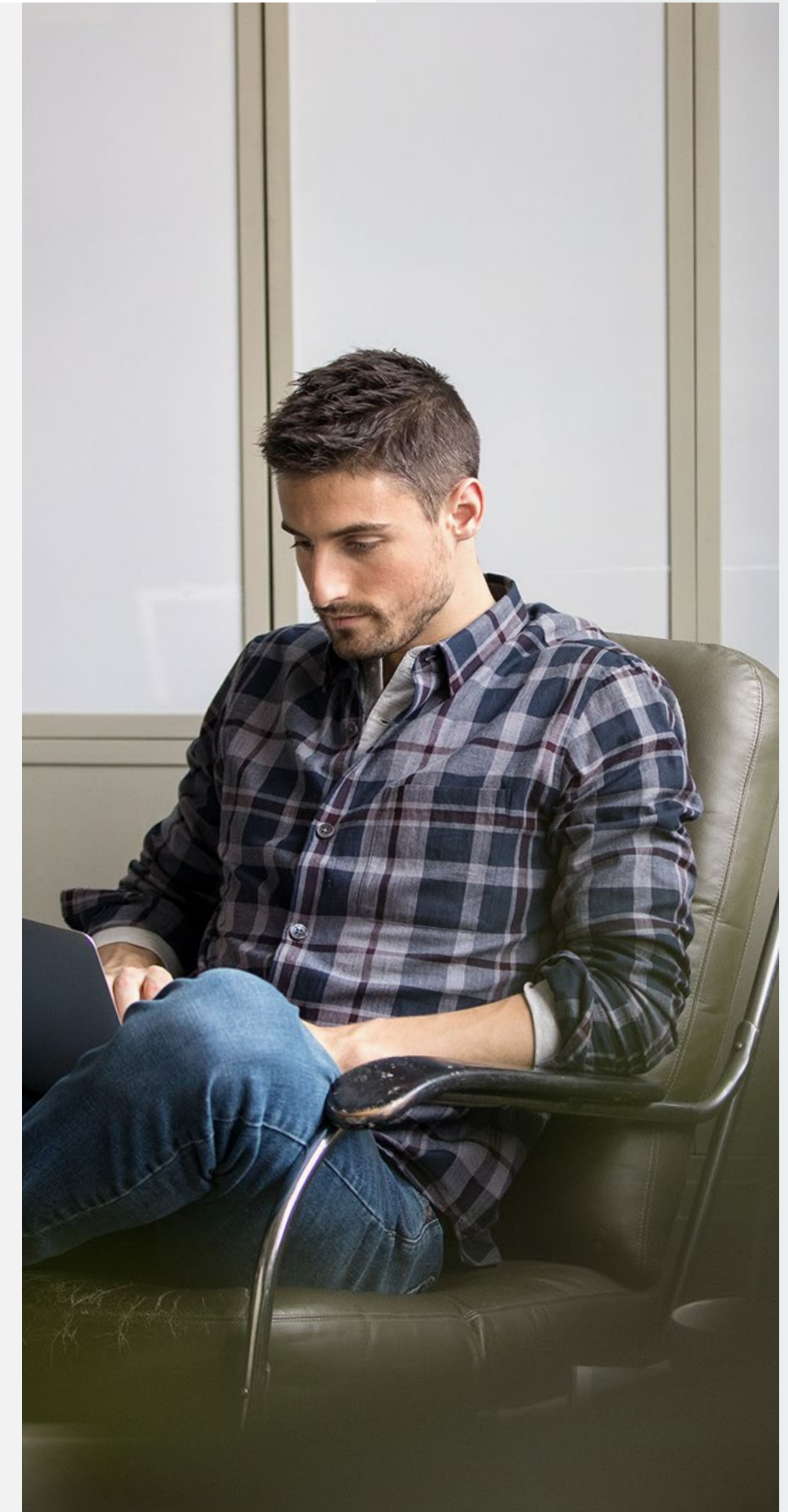
CASE STUDY
Kainos

kainos®

Kainos provides digital technology services for public, commercial and healthcare organisations and has been delivering award-winning digital transformation, data, artificial intelligence (AI), cloud and design solutions across the UK, Europe and North America for over 30 years. CEO, Brendan Mooney, and CPO, Colette Kidd, discuss how a laser focus on talent development has helped them continue to grow during COVID-19.

BRENDAN MOONEY,
CEO,
KAINOS.

COLETTE KIDD,
CPO,
KAINOS.

"We already had a mobile and agile workforce before COVID-19, so the network and infrastructure were already in place for remote working. For us, the challenge was about continuing to support and develop our people while they are working remotely 100% of the time. Our approach is to attract great people and help them develop the skills that they need to succeed – today and tomorrow. That has been one of the driving ambitions behind our Academy. We have Academy programmes that support colleagues to develop skills in a particular system, knowledge area or technical skill, as well as developing professional skills to equip our people to perform at their best. These programmes have increased significantly during COVID-19; in fact, we have extended our team and our e-learning offerings, and, in doing so increased the scope and scale of our programmes.

Focusing on our people is not something that has just happened over the last nine months — it is completely woven into the fabric of the company — but COVID-19 certainly has accelerated some of our plans around developing, supporting and managing our colleagues.

To keep up with customer demand, we are also planning to hire around 400 people across the business. As part of this, we will recruit extensively from schools, colleges and universities to ensure that we are attracting the very best new talent – we are committed to nurturing digital skills, attracting people to careers in technology and helping them develop into the future leaders of our organisation."

Appendix

Acknowledgements

The research was led by Dr Chris Brauer, Director of Innovation, Goldsmiths, University of London in partnership with Microsoft in winter 2020/21. The independent team of economists, psychologists, data scientists and social scientists included Research Director Dr Jennifer Barth, Dr Eurydice Fotopoulou and Areej Ahsan.

Methodology

The research team used a mixed method approach to build a model, scorecard and blueprint of competitiveness among UK Microsoft Partner Network organisations in the UK.

Literature review – an in-depth review of academic publications, industry literature and media knowledge to understand the context within which Microsoft UK partners operate.

Survey – a barometer survey of 264 members of the UK Microsoft Partner Network, a satisfactory number from which to extrapolate findings for the entire population of 26,000 partners. Respondents represented organisations ranging from 120 employees to approximately 15,000.

Case studies – 12 case studies of large, medium and small organisations within the UK Microsoft Partner Network. Though drawn from the UK Partner Network, the majority of the organisations featured in the case studies have a global presence.

Scorecard and opportunity calculation – using the study findings as a benchmark on revenue generation and a set of 13 conditional interventions recommended to improve productivity and accelerate competitiveness, the research team calculated the total and mean revenue, total potential contribution of higher productivity per category of intervention (technology, future readiness, ecosystem, talent) and potential additional revenue offered by the capture of new markets for the entire UK Microsoft Partner Network.

UK Microsoft Partner Network participants

- Andre Azvedo, Global Head of Cloud Partnerships, Cloudreach
- Brendan Mooney, CEO, Kainos
- Colette Kidd, CPO, Kainos
- Elona Mortimer-Zhika, CEO, IRIS Software Group
- James Baker, Alliances & Marketing Director, Softcat
- James Crowter, CEO, Tecman
- Ken Charman, CEO, UFlexReward
- Mark Turner, Director, Cloud Business Unit, Claranet
- Paul Shannon, CEO, ANS
- Richard Hammond, CEO, Uncrowd
- Rocky Howard, CTO, Uncrowd
- Samantha Mudd, MD, Phoenix Software Ltd
- Simon Bennett, Business Unit Director, Tech Data
- Zak Virdi, Managing Director UK, Ireland and Africa, SoftwareONE

Microsoft UK experts

- Clare Barclay, CEO
- James Chadwick, General Manager, Commercial Partner
- Richard Ellis, Head of SMC UK
- David Leigh, MSP Lead, Commercial Partner
- Alex Smith, Director, Cloud Services Scale Partner, Commercial Partner

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