



Transitioning from Microsoft Unified Support to Partner-Led Support

A Practical Roadmap



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Transitioning from Microsoft's Unified Support to a partner-led support model is a **multi-phase project** that requires careful planning, cross-team coordination, and proactive risk management. By following a structured roadmap, enterprises can **decouple their support services from Microsoft**, capitalize on upcoming licensing shifts (like the new **2,400-seat EA threshold** for CSP), and secure a more responsive, cost-effective support partnership. Below, we outline the key steps and best practices, incorporating guidance from industry analysts (Gartner, Forrester, ISG) and lessons learned from successful transitions.



Now, let's break down the step-by-step roadmap in detail:



Initiate Planning 6–12 Months Before Renewal

Start the transition planning early – ideally 6 to 12 months before your Microsoft support contract expires or your Enterprise Agreement (EA) renewal date. This lead time is crucial. Gartner and others warn that leaving a support decision until the last minute can result in rushed choices or unfavorable renewals. By starting early, you can¹:



Avoid automatic renewals or time-pressured deals

Microsoft often coordinates Unified Support renewals with EA cycles, and sales teams may push for a quick renewal. Initiating your plan a year out ensures you're not forced into a status-quo renewal due to time constraints.



Leverage the EA changes to your advantage

Microsoft is raising its EA seat minimum to ~2,400 users, with smaller customers being funneled into the Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) program. This shift effectively decouples licensing from support for many organizations – under CSP, your licenses are with a partner and support can be handled by that partner by default. Recognize if your company falls in this category. **If you have <2,400 seats**, Microsoft may not even offer an EA renewal, meaning you'll **need to choose a support provider** (which could be CSP or a third-party). Use this heads-up to explore alternatives instead of defaulting to Microsoft's choice^{2,3}.



Set a project timeline

Map out key milestones – e.g., internal decision by T-minus 3 months, contract negotiations finalized by T-minus 2 months, and new support go-live by the renewal date. Having a timeline aligned with your contract deadlines will keep everyone on track.



Engage leadership early

Brief senior IT and finance leaders on the plan to ensure they support the due diligence process. Early executive sponsorship will help overcome inertia or internal resistance later on.

In summary

Treat the support transition as a strategic initiative with a generous runway. As one licensing advisor put it, **If you're 6–12 months out from your EA renewal, start planning now. Waiting until the final 90 days could lock you into higher costs or limit your transition options.**

This proactive mindset sets a strong foundation for success.

02

Build a Cross-Functional Taskforce and Gather Requirements

Involve all relevant stakeholders from the beginning. Transitioning support providers touches various parts of the organization, so you'll want a **taskforce or steering committee** that includes, at minimum:



IT Operations and Support Leads

They understand the day-to-day pain points with the current support model and technical requirements for future support. Their input is vital in defining what the new provider must deliver (**e.g., 24x7 coverage, certain product expertise, integration with your ITSM tools, etc.**).



Procurement/Sourcing

They bring expertise in vendor evaluation and contracting. Procurement will ensure the RFP/RFI process is fair and thorough, and that any new contract includes favorable terms (SLAs, penalties, pricing structure, etc.). They will also keep an eye on compliance with internal vendor management policies.



Finance/Budget Owners

Since cost savings is often a key motivator, involve finance early to validate the financial models. They can help compare Microsoft's renewal quote with third-party proposals on an apples-to-apples basis and ensure budget is allocated for the transition period (which might have overlap costs).



Security/Compliance

A new vendor will need to meet your organization's security and data protection standards. Your security team should vet the partner's credentials (e.g., SOC II certifications, data handling processes) as part of the evaluation. They also need to plan how access and credentials will be securely managed when the new support team comes on board.



Application/Cloud Owners (as needed)

If you have specific critical systems (like a Dynamics 365 team or a cloud center of excellence for Azure), loop in those leaders. They can provide insight on specialized support needs and may have external partners to recommend or avoid.



Executive Sponsor

If possible, have a C-level sponsor (CIO, CTO, or COO) or a business executive championing the effort. This lends weight to the project and can help expedite decisions or resource allocation.

Once your team is formed, conduct a thorough assessment of your current support usage and needs. This is essentially an internal feasibility study (as Forrester⁴ calls it) to document what you require from a support provider. Key activities and questions include:



Analyze support ticket history

Break down your support cases over the last 1-2 years. Note volumes, severities, and key problem areas. What percentage were Sev-1 urgent issues versus lower priority? Which product areas (Azure, Office 365, Dynamics, etc.) generate the most tickets? This analysis helps determine the scope and scale a new provider must handle. It will also highlight if you truly use “unlimited” support or if your usage is moderate (which could justify a different pricing model).



Identify pain points and gaps

Gather feedback from the IT teams about what’s not working with Microsoft’s Unified Support. Common issues might be slow response on critical issues, lack of consistent POCs, insufficient product knowledge, or poor proactive guidance. For example, maybe your team waited 6 hours for a callback on a Sev-1 — that’s a pain point to solve. Or perhaps your TAM (technical account manager) changed 3 times in a year, disrupting continuity. List these out. They will form the **requirements and success criteria** for the new model (“we need 24×7 rapid response within 15 minutes for Sev-1” or “we want a dedicated support engineer who knows our environment”).



Define must-haves vs nice-to-haves

As a group, pinpoint what capabilities are non-negotiable. For instance: onshore support or specific language support might be a must-have for some, or support for certain legacy products could be crucial. Nice-to-haves could be things like license advisory services or extra tooling the provider offers. Having this clarity will guide vendor selection.



Budget and ROI expectations

Work with finance to determine your target outcome in terms of cost. Are you primarily aiming to save money (e.g., at least 30% less than Microsoft's quote) or is the business case more around better service for a similar cost? Setting a goal (even if rough) will help later when comparing proposals. Keep in mind third-party support can often save 30–60%, but you may choose to reinvest some savings into enhanced service rather than pure cost cutting.



Assess internal preparedness

Evaluate if there are any internal process changes needed. For example, if you rely on Microsoft's portal today, can the new vendor integrate with your ticketing system? Will your helpdesk need training on a new escalation path? Log these considerations so they can be addressed with whichever vendor you pick.

During this phase, document everything. By the end, you should have a clear picture of: the deficiencies of staying with Microsoft, the desired improvements, the scope of support needed, and the business justification (cost or value). This will serve as the basis for evaluating alternative solutions and also is useful if you end up negotiating with Microsoft (you can explicitly state, "We need X, Y, Z changes or we will leave").



Industry Tip

Forrester's⁵ research on third-party support suggests starting with an internal feasibility study to decide if moving to a third-party is viable and beneficial. Many enterprises find that once they lay out their needs and compare them to what they get from Microsoft, the gap is significant – which justifies pursuing a new model.

03

Identify and Evaluate Potential Support Partners (RFP Process)

With your requirements in hand, the next step is to **explore the market for third-party support providers** and evaluate which one can meet your needs. Treat this like any critical vendor selection: perform due diligence through an RFP/RFI process or at least a structured comparison of top candidates. Leverage insights from analysts and peers to shortlist reputable firms:

Research the Landscape

Analyst reports are a great starting point. Gartner’s Market Guide for Microsoft Support Services (2024) lists several independent providers and their capabilities. Forrester’s⁶ report on third-party software support (2024) highlights the most popular vendors and key considerations. Look for providers with proven experience in Microsoft enterprise support. Typically, these include specialized third-party support firms and some large Microsoft partners (like global systems integrators) who offer support services. Compile an initial list of candidates.

Issue an RFP or RFI

Prepare a questionnaire or RFP document based on the requirements you gathered. Include sections on: provider background (years in business, number of clients on Microsoft support), expertise (certifications, areas of specialization), service offerings (does their standard package include proactive services, TAM, etc.), SLAs (response and resolution targets), support process (how to open tickets, escalation chain, continuity methods), pricing model (how they price and any flexibility), contract terms (**termination clauses, liability, data protection**), and **experience with transitions (ask how they transition clients from Microsoft – a mature provider will have a well-defined onboarding plan).**

Evaluate Critical Factors:

As responses come in, or in your own research, pay special attention to:

→ Technical Expertise & Coverage

Do they cover **all the Microsoft products** you use? Ensure the provider can handle Azure, M365, Dynamics, Power Platform, etc., and even on-prem products if you have them. Check if their support engineers are Microsoft-certified and on what levels. Depth of expertise is a top differentiator – you want the new support to at least match Microsoft’s knowledge, ideally exceed it by offering cross-product insight.

→ Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

Compare SLA promises. Common metrics: initial response times (e.g., 15 minutes for critical issues), time to start remediation, and escalation timeframes. Do they offer **financial penalties** for missing SLAs? Many third-party vendors will put a portion of fees at risk if they fail to meet targets, which indicates confidence in their service. Microsoft’s Unified Support, by contrast, typically had no financial recourse for slow responses. Strong SLA commitments are a good sign⁷.

→ Support Model & Team

Understand who will actually be supporting you. Will you have a **dedicated team or named engineers**? Some providers assign a pod of engineers to each client, which improves familiarity. Also, inquire about their escalation path to Microsoft—do they have a Premier support arrangement or contacts in Microsoft engineering if a product bug fix is needed? Good third-parties maintain that backchannel, so you’re not cut off from Microsoft, you’re just not front-line with them.

→ Proactive and Value-Add Services

One big promise of partner-led support is better proactive support. Check what each provider includes: e.g., quarterly architecture health checks, performance tuning, upgrade assistance, training, etc. **Targeted, environment-specific guidance** (rather than generic workshops) is what you’re looking for. If a provider includes a technical account manager or cloud advisor, that’s a plus. Compare how each provider’s proactive offerings line up with your needs (from Step 2’s wish list)⁸.

→ Pricing and Contract Flexibility

You will likely find different pricing models. Some may charge a flat annual fee, others per-user or per-ticket, and some may structure it similarly to Microsoft (e.g., tiers based on usage, but at lower percentages). Ensure you understand how they scale costs if your usage changes. Favor models⁹ that are **transparent and predictable** – e.g., a fixed fee or a clearly metered approach. Also consider contract length. Many third-party vendors offer **one-year or even rolling monthly contracts**, whereas Microsoft often pushed multi-year. A shorter commitment can be a safety net in case things don't work out – you want the ability to exit or adjust if needed. (One Gartner recommendation is to seek flexible terms so you're not locked in).

→ Security and Compliance

Have your security team examine the vendor's posture. If you have specific needs (e.g., data residency requirements, CJIS compliance for government, HIPAA for healthcare data), ensure the vendor can accommodate. See if they will sign a NDA/Data Protection Agreement and how they handle sensitive data (e.g., log files you share for troubleshooting). Most established providers have this covered, but it's a mandatory checkbox.

→ References and Reputation

Ask for customer references. A reputable provider should be able to point you to similar clients (same industry or scale) who transitioned. If possible, speak directly to one or two reference customers about their experience – how was the transition, how is ongoing support, any challenges? You can also check public case studies or testimonials. For instance, analyst Mary Jo Foley notes that more enterprises are now aware of credible alternatives and have switched successfully. Hearing from a peer who “made the switch and never looked back” can build confidence^{10,11}.



Score and Shortlist

Using a scorecard approach can help objectify the selection. Rate each vendor on the above factors (e.g., 1-5). This often reveals one or two front-runners. Bring the taskforce together to review the findings. It might become clear that, say, Vendor A has the best technical team and price, but Vendor B offers a stronger proactive package; your priorities will determine who comes out on top. Sometimes a combination (e.g., split by service) is considered, but generally consolidating with one provider is simpler for accountability.



Interactive Demos or Workshops

Before finalizing, consider having the top vendor(s) conduct a short demo or Q&A session with your team. For example, they could walk through how a support ticket flows through their system, or how they'd handle a hypothetical Sev-1 scenario in your environment. This can give you a feel for their processes and people. It's also an opportunity to meet the actual support leads who would be assigned to your account and gauge their expertise first-hand.

Throughout this evaluation phase, keep Microsoft in the loop only as needed. You don't necessarily need to announce to Microsoft that you're shopping around (especially if you're also negotiating license renewals), but you also shouldn't let their sales team dissuade you with FUD (fear, uncertainty, doubt). Remember Mary Jo Foley's myth-busting: "Good third-party support vendors employ Microsoft-certified specialists and can escalate issues to Microsoft if needed... often leading to faster, better, more customized support". In other words, don't be intimidated by the idea of leaving Microsoft – focus on facts gathered in your RFP process¹².

By the end of Step 3, you should have a preferred partner selected and a proposal in hand that details the services and costs. Now, it's time to firm up the contract and plan the switchover.

04

Negotiate the Contract and Decouple Support from Your EA

With a provider chosen, work closely with procurement and legal to **negotiate a favorable contract**. This is a critical step to ensure the partnership starts on the right terms and that you've truly decoupled support from Microsoft. Key considerations during contracting:



Coordinate (Don't Bundle) with Microsoft EA Timing

If your Microsoft EA is still active and you're above the 2,400-seat threshold (i.e., you will stay on an EA), make sure you **do not simply co-terminate and renew Unified Support alongside the EA out of habit**. As discussed, Microsoft often encourages bundling the two renewals. Instead, sign your new support contract to either replace Unified exactly when it ends or even slightly before, independent of the EA. For example, if your EA renews on July 1 but Unified runs out December 31, don't extend Unified to July just for alignment. Let it end in December and start the new provider January 1 (or earlier with overlap as needed). This way, you retain an "out-of-cycle" point to renegotiate support apart from licensing. **Microsoft has no contractual hold on you to buy their support** – it's a separate deal. By decoupling, you keep leverage on both fronts. (If you're moving to CSP licensing due to being under 2,400 seats, this decoupling is happening by default; your new CSP partner will handle licenses and you can have them or another partner handle support as a separate line item.)¹³



Review SLA and KPI Clauses

Ensure that the SLA commitments discussed are written into the contract, including any **penalties or service credits** for misses. For instance, if the provider promises a 15-minute response on Sev-1, what credit do you receive if it's 2 hours? Clarity here sets performance expectations. Also consider adding specific KPIs or review mechanisms: e.g., a quarterly service review where they report on metrics like average response times, resolution rates, customer satisfaction scores, etc.



Include Transition Services

Given this contract is about transitioning support, explicitly include provisions about the **onboarding phase** (which we'll cover in Step 5). For example, the contract might state that the provider will do knowledge transfer sessions, or that the first 30 days are a "hypercare" period. Also define the official **start date** when they take over full responsibility.



Exit Clauses

While you expect success, wise contracts plan for exit. Try to negotiate a **termination clause** that allows you to leave the contract with reasonable notice (e.g., 60 or 90 days) if the provider consistently fails to meet obligations. Sometimes an easy out is not given in annual contracts, but you can at least ensure you're not locked beyond a year. Also clarify data ownership – e.g., if you log tickets in their system, you should have the right to export your ticket history if leaving.



Pricing Protections

Nail down any multi-year pricing caps or renewals in the contract. If you sign a 1-year contract, what increase (if any) applies in year 2? If it's a 3-year deal for better rate, ensure it's fixed or with very minimal indexation. The whole point is to avoid "**year-over-year increases**" that were common with Unified Support.



Microsoft Escalation Support

This might not be explicit in contract, but ask the provider to document how they will engage Microsoft if needed (e.g., through Microsoft Premier tickets on your behalf, or through partner channels). It reassures everyone that if a critical bug in Microsoft code is encountered, there is a path to resolution (it might say something like "Provider will engage Microsoft's engineering support (at Provider's cost) for issues requiring product changes"). Some clients even keep a minimal "Microsoft-only" support plan for this scenario (e.g., a pay-per-incident arrangement), but most often it's not necessary if the partner has it covered.



Align on Success Criteria

Optionally, you could append a schedule that reiterates what success looks like (basically reflecting the objectives you set in Step 2: e.g., reduce Sev-1 resolution times by X%, improve user satisfaction, etc.). While not binding, it serves as a shared vision and can be reviewed in quarterly governance meetings.

During negotiations, Microsoft might come back with a counter-offer if they catch wind of your plan to leave. In fact, some sourcing advisors note that having a third-party option in hand often compels Microsoft to offer concessions or discounts to keep your support contract. Weigh these carefully. If Microsoft suddenly offers 50% off, is that enough to overcome the service issues you've had? Sometimes it might be (if cost was the only issue), but remember all the qualitative gaps like slow response, lack of continuity, etc., that a mere discount won't fix. Keep the focus not just on cost, but on value and fit. Analyst firms like ISG advise that "Enterprises cannot stand by and wait for Microsoft to redesign Unified Support. They need to plan for these scenarios and determine how to manage the risk....", often implying that sticking with the status quo could be risky if it hasn't delivered¹⁴.

By the end of Step 4, you should have signed an agreement with your new support partner, with a clear start date and well-defined terms. You've now effectively broken the automatic link to Microsoft's support – a big milestone. Next, it's all about making the actual handover smooth.



Prepare for a Smooth **Transition and Mitigate Risks**

Transitioning critical support services is a bit like changing the engines on an airplane in flight – you must do it carefully to avoid any disruption in service. This step focuses on **detailed transition planning, knowledge transfer**, and risk mitigation strategies to ensure continuity:

Develop a Transition Project Plan

Issue an RFP or RFI

Work with your new provider to create a shared transition plan. This should include tasks, owners, and dates for everything needed to go live. Key components often are:

→ **Kickoff and Orientation**

A kickoff meeting between your team and the provider's onboarding team to align on the process and timelines.

→ **Knowledge Transfer Sessions**

Arrange technical deep-dives so the new support engineers can learn your environment. You might do sessions on your architecture, custom applications, integration points, known quirks, and recent major incidents. Provide network diagrams, system inventories, runbooks – any documentation that helps them ramp up. (If you had a Microsoft TAM or DSE who produced documentation, share that too.)

→ Tooling Integration

If you'll be using a different ticketing system or communication channel, set that up and test it. For instance, the provider may give you portal access or set up an API integration with ServiceNow/Jira, etc. Ensure your IT staff knows how to engage the new support (phone numbers, portal logins, etc.).

→ Parallel Support Period (if feasible)

Some enterprises opt for an overlap period where both Microsoft and the new provider are available, just in case. This can be tricky (to avoid confusion, usually one is primary and the other is backup). Alternatively, you might start the new provider with a subset of less critical issues to test the waters while Microsoft still handles critical ones for a month. If budget allows, a 1-2 month parallel run can reduce risk. Many, however, do a cutover without overlap – with good planning, this is fine.

→ Escalation Run-through

Establish the escalation path on both sides. Internally, decide how your team will escalate issues to the new provider (likely similar to how you did with Microsoft). Externally, get an escalation list from the provider – names and contacts for management in case an issue isn't getting resolved in a timely manner. Having this documented is reassuring.

→ Communicate to End-Users/IT Staff

If the support model change will be visible to end-users or internal teams, inform them of the new process. For example, if employees could previously open tickets with Microsoft, now you might route everything through your helpdesk or the new partner's portal. Clarity avoids confusion when someone needs help urgently.



Mitigation Strategy for Open Cases

Plan how to handle any **ongoing Microsoft support tickets** during the transition. Ideally, wind down or close as many Microsoft cases as possible before the cutover date. For any that remain open with Microsoft, decide: will Microsoft continue to resolve those to completion (likely yes, if you still have access until end date), or will you hand them over to the new provider to follow up? Often, if a critical case is mid-stream, you might keep it with Microsoft until resolved, even after you stop opening new ones there. Coordinate with the provider so they are aware of such cases (they might shadow the progress).



Pilot Test the New Support (optional)

As a low-risk trial, you could intentionally open a few non-critical support issues with the new provider before fully cutting over, to experience their process in real time. This can be done during a contract overlap or a "soft launch" period. For example, have them troubleshoot a minor recurring issue or do a mock incident. This helps flush out any kinks in communication and sets expectations. Forrester recommends considering a **trial period and checking references as a step in the decision process** – if you haven't done a formal trial before signing, you can simulate one as part of onboarding¹⁵.



Ensure Back-Out Paths

Part of risk mitigation is knowing what you'll do if something isn't working. Though unlikely, plan for worst-case: If a severe incident happens right during the transition and the new provider is struggling, do you have the ability to reach out to Microsoft Premier on a pay-per-incident basis? (Yes, Microsoft does offer per-incident support for a fee, even if you have no contract – last resort option). Just having that contingency in mind (and budgeted, say, for one incident) can reduce anxiety. Similarly, if after a few months the provider isn't meeting SLAs, your contract's exit clause (from Step 4) is your ultimate fallback. These scenarios are rare if you chose a reputable partner, but it's prudent to have a Plan B.



Stakeholder Updates

Keep your stakeholders (especially those outside IT like finance or business sponsors) informed of the transition status. A successful transition might not be visibly dramatic (in fact, if done well, some end users won't notice a difference except perhaps faster resolutions), so it's good to summarize to leadership that "we switched providers on X date with zero downtime in support coverage." It reinforces confidence in the change.



Data and Access Security

As the new team comes aboard, they might need access to your systems (VPN accounts, admin portals) to support effectively. Ensure proper IAM practices: create dedicated support accounts, enforce MFA, and only give least-privilege access. Also, revoke any Microsoft support IDs or Azure AD guest accounts that were used by former MS support reps, once the switch is done, to maintain security hygiene.

A well-run transition will typically go live with the new provider taking full responsibility on a planned date and Microsoft's contract lapsing right after. On that go-live day, you essentially "flip the switch." Many companies schedule this at an off-peak time (like a weekend) just to be safe, but since it's not a system cutover but a support change, normal business hours can work too – choose what's least disruptive for coordinating people on both sides.

Real-World Example – Risk Mitigation in Action

In the Redmondmag panel discussion, enterprise IT leaders described how they managed risk during their support switch. For instance, they ensured they had executive buy-in for extra resources during the transition, and one had a plan to fall back to Microsoft for a critical workload if the new provider hadn't proven themselves in time. In practice, those fallbacks weren't needed – but having them defined made their teams more comfortable proceeding¹⁶.

By the end of Step 5, you should have successfully cut over to the partner-led support model, with minimal to no disruption. At this point, Microsoft is officially “out” as your front-line support, and your new partner is handling all tickets and proactive services.



Post-Transition Review and Continuous Improvement

(While not a direct part of “transitioning,” this final step is important to ensure the new support model delivers ongoing value.)

After you've been on the partner-led support model for a few months, **conduct a post-transition review with all stakeholders.**



Measure Against Baseline

Look at key metrics from before vs. after. **Are issue response and resolution times improved?** (e.g., Sev-1 now 1 hour to resolve instead of 4 hours previously). Are you seeing fewer reopened tickets, better first-contact resolutions? Quantify any improvements or note if something slipped and needs adjustment.



Cost Analysis

Confirm the financial outcomes. By now, you will have paid a quarter or so of the new contract – compare that to what you would have paid Microsoft in the same period. Most likely, you'll see the savings materialize. Also consider soft savings: e.g., did freeing your IT staff from chasing Microsoft for updates save labor effort? Are critical incidents resolved faster, preventing downtime costs? These add to the ROI story, which you should capture for leadership.



Gather Feedback

Solicit input from IT engineers and end-users who have interacted with the new support. Are they satisfied with the experience? Any recurring complaints or notably positive changes? Direct feedback can reveal things metrics might not (like “the new team really understands our infrastructure, huge help!” or “communication on tickets could be better”).



Review Proactive Engagements

By a few months in, your provider might have conducted some proactive sessions (architecture review, optimization report, etc.). Evaluate those: did they identify useful improvements or prevent issues? Plan how to act on their recommendations to fully realize value.



Regular Governance Meetings

Establish a cadence (monthly or quarterly) with the provider's service manager to review performance. In these meetings, discuss any misses, outstanding problems, and upcoming changes (e.g., new projects or deployments in your org that they should be aware of). Use this forum to continuously refine the collaboration. Good providers will be open to adjusting processes to better fit your team.



Communicate Wins

Share successes with stakeholders – for example, if you can say “Mean time to resolve P1 incidents has gone from 8 hours to 3 hours since we switched”, that’s a powerful validation of the decision. Or if you saved \$200k compared to the Unified Support renewal, highlight that. This will reinforce support for the new model internally and ease future budget approvals¹⁷.



Stay Updated on Microsoft Changes

Just because you left Microsoft support doesn't mean you should ignore Microsoft's ecosystem. Keep an eye on any changes Microsoft makes to their support offerings or licensing (for instance, if they later lower prices or offer new hybrid support options). Not that you'd necessarily return, but knowing the landscape ensures you're getting the best deal from the market. Also maintain a light relationship with your Microsoft technical contacts via your account team or CSP, since you still run on their technology.

Finally, remember that **the transition is a strategic shift, not just a swap of vendor names**. You've moved to a model that ideally provides deeper engineering engagement, better accountability, and potentially significant cost savings. Continually hold the new provider to those promises. If they are a true partner, they will actively help your IT environment get better over time, not just wait for things to break. Many enterprises find that after switching to a partner-led model, their overall support burden decreases (fewer incidents, more self-service knowledge gained, etc.), essentially "breaking the cycle" of reactive firefighting.

In conclusion

Transitioning from Microsoft Unified Support to a partner-led model involves advance planning, thorough evaluation, careful execution, and ongoing management. By starting early, engaging stakeholders, leveraging industry best practices (e.g., Gartner's and Forrester's frameworks for evaluating third-party support), and learning from peers who have successfully switched, you can execute a smooth changeover. A well-chosen support partner will not only meet your immediate needs but also help you unlock more value from your Microsoft investments — through faster issue resolution, tailored guidance, and a support experience aligned to your organization's pace and priorities. The result is a more agile and cost-effective support model that keeps your digital estate running smoothly, without being tied to the constraints of Microsoft's one-size-fits-all approach^{18,19}.

Before you change your support model, understand how much of your current one you actually use.

Find Out Your Support Spend

About Dynamic Consultants Group (DCG)

DCG is a global, full-stack Microsoft Solutions Partner helping organizations transform with clarity, control, and measurable impact. Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, DCG delivers end-to-end Microsoft solutions across Dynamics 365, ERP, and CRM, Azure cloud modernization, M365, Power Platform, project recovery, change management, and advanced support.

Anchored in our proprietary **SPEAR Framework**, we align strategy, process, and technology to reduce risk, accelerate ROI, and ensure sustainable growth. With over **700 successful implementations**, an average **43% client ROI** in year one, global delivery across seven offices, and **1M+ users** empowered worldwide, DCG turns ERP challenges into industry-defining opportunities.

Through **DCG Enterprise Support**, our high-touch alternative to Microsoft Unified Support, we resolve complex challenges at the source, ensuring performance, resilience, and long-term value.



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