

Preparing to Switch to MSFT Unified

Beginning July 1, 2024, Microsoft will no longer offer Premier Support agreements for renewing Federal, State, Local Government and Education customers. IT sourcing and procurement teams, it's time to get ready for your Microsoft Unified Support agreement.

Understanding the complexity of Unified Support is paramount to protecting your enterprise's technical capabilities and precious IT budget. For some enterprises, a shift from Premier to Unified's unlimited support hours is worthwhile. For others, massive formula-driven price increases and deteriorating service quality have become a growing liability. Either way, the change will have an impact on you.

Microsoft Premier vs. Unified Support Agreement

There are several key differences between Microsoft Premier Support and MS Unified agreements.

- Premier Support agreements for all Commercial enterprises were retired July 1, 2022. Premier for all Federal, State, Local Government, State-owned enterprises and Education customers will be retired July 1, 2024.
- Premier offered SAB incident credits but these were retired in February, 2023, contributing to Unified's 2-3x cost increase.
- Premier Support response time SLA's were replaced with slower "targets" or soft goals that are rarely met and have no consequences if missed.
- Unlike Premier, which was calculated based on reactive and proactive services you were using, Unified agreement costs are calculated as a percentage of an enterprise's total Microsoft annual spend, including Microsoft 365, Azure, license-only, and Software Assurance purchases.
- MS Unified Support agreements do away with buying only the reactive support hours you need, instead offering an "all you can eat" approach to break-fix support.
- Unified's resolution times are increasing under the "as needed" ticket model. Premier support quality is falling as Unified's service is delivered largely by offshored, outsourced Microsoft partners causing enterprise compliance/security concerns.
- Unified has Customer Success Account Managers (CSAM) instead of Premier's Technical Account Managers (TAM). Unified's less capable CSAM's KPI is enterprise Cloud spend while Premier's TAM's KPI was customer satisfaction.

Support Land Mines to Avoid

Industry Aligned Pricing – a) The AWS Enterprise support plan pricing is 3% of monthly AWS charges over \$1M or about half the cost of Microsoft. You can add Incident Detection and Response for a 2% uplift. This service is similar to Microsoft's Incident Response Retainer which is not included with Unified. b) Google Cloud premium support falls in between Microsoft and AWS with 4% of total spend and additional costs for mission critical, technical account manager, and government.

Cost Cutting / Cost Optimization – a) Risk assessment tools and training materials are readily available for Microsoft technologies at minimal cost to enterprises, giving you tools to avoid any land mines on your own. b) Right-sizing and reducing Cloud waste is important but best managed outside the vendor platform. Unified's typical 200% to 300% increase in cost over 5 years far outweighs risk assessments and right-sizing benefits.

Downtime Reduction / Productivity Boost – a) Other than cost, the biggest issue with Unified Enterprise Support is quality. US Cloud's response time SLA of 15 minutes for all technologies and all severities means we get to work faster on every ticket. Enterprise IT employees aren't frustrated with language barriers or wasting time restating issues when talking to US Cloud engineers. b) In addition, US Cloud is at least 25% faster at resolution across all domains which means less critical downtime and even more productivity from Enterprise IT with US Cloud Microsoft Enterprise Support.