US CLOUD

Enterprise Buyer Gartner Research: A US Cloud Brief

Evaluating Alternatives to Microsoft Unified Support

What to ask about price, coverage, and case ownership before your next renewal.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Before You Renew Unified Support

Before Finance and Procurement approve a Microsoft Unified Support renewal, ask what it would cost to cover the same workloads through an independent provider. Then have IT walk that provider through a recent critical incident. Together, those two comparisons show what your organization could save and who would be responsible when service is disrupted.

1

Price the coverage you need

Gartner cites typical annual savings of 50% across the broader megavendor support market. To estimate your own savings, price the same workloads, service hours, and escalation requirements under both proposals.

2

Follow one incident through escalation

Gartner's US Cloud profile reports a 4.55-minute average initial response and describes US Cloud retaining case ownership when Microsoft intervenes. Ask who responds, who engages Microsoft, and who updates your team until service is restored.

3

Verify delivery before you switch

Speak with at least three customers whose environments resemble yours. Use a 60–90 day pilot to test coverage, handoffs, and communication against criteria your team agrees on in advance.

"IT procurement leaders can harvest significant software budget cost savings within their risk tolerance from independent third-party support providers."

Gartner, November *2026 Market Guide*

Source: Gartner, November 2026 Market Guide. Buyer guidance adapted by US Cloud.

GARTNER MARKET OVERVIEW

What the Market Data Tells Buyers

Gartner describes an established market for independent software support. Two findings can help Microsoft buyers decide what to investigate before renewal.

50%

Typical annual savings

Gartner cites this figure across the broader megavendor support market. Your Microsoft savings will depend on the scope and price of your proposal.

24/7

Help desk and remote support

Gartner identifies round-the-clock availability as a mandatory provider capability. Ask who answers after hours and when an engineer joins a critical case.

HOW TO USE THESE FINDINGS AT RENEWAL

Give each provider the same workload list, incident history, and required response times. Ask for an annual price with exclusions identified so Procurement can compare equivalent coverage.

WHAT TO REQUEST IN WRITING

Proposal item	Evidence to request from each provider
After-hours coverage	Who answers first, and when does an engineer join?
Escalation fees	Which specialist services or handoffs carry an extra charge?
Annual cost	What would our last year of cases cost under these terms?

BUYER TAKEAWAY: Before you count the savings, ask both providers to price the same after-hours incident. Which engineering services are included in the annual fee, and which would cost extra?

GARTNER PROVIDER PROFILE

Inside US Cloud's Delivery Profile

Gartner's profile describes US Cloud's reach and incident handling across cloud, hybrid, and on-premises Microsoft environments.

452

Full Unified replacements

53

Fortune 500 customers

of the 452 Unified replacements

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORTED IN THE PROFILE

16,659

Support cases handled

506

Severity 1 incidents

4.55 min.

Average initial response time

98.8%

15-minute response SLA compliance

WHO OWNS THE CASE WHEN MICROSOFT NEEDS TO INTERVENE?

Gartner describes US Cloud retaining case ownership and managing escalation through applicable customer entitlements or its authorized partner channel.

BUYER TAKEAWAY: Ask to see the timeline of a critical case that required Microsoft. When did the first engineer respond, who coordinated the escalation, and who confirmed that service was restored?

Gartner US Cloud profile reporting period for the 12 months ended September 22, 2026.

APPLY GARTNER RESEARCH: BUYER WORKSHEET

Put a Support Provider To the Test

Use these five requests in a provider review. Record an owner or follow-up beside each item.

EVIDENCE TO REQUEST	OWNER / FOLLOW-UP
Map the fit A workload list showing coverage, exclusions, and planned changes.	
Compare proposals An itemized annual price for the same workloads, response commitments, and escalation needs.	
Test the risk A walkthrough of a case from your last 12–24 months, including access controls and Microsoft entitlements.	
Check references At least three customers with a comparable environment. Ask who owned their last critical incident.	
Run a pilot Request a no-charge, 60- to 90-day pilot covering three to five key products. Agree on case owners, success criteria, and who will sign off.	

Bring your Unified agreement and a recent critical case. Walk through coverage and escalation with US Cloud.

Compare My Support Coverage

Worksheet adapted by US Cloud from Gartner's evaluation recommendations. Source for this brief: Gartner, Market Guide for Independent Third-Party Software Support of Megavendors, November 2026.