Claiming for Security Usage Incentive Office Hours [Americas_EMEA]-20250522_110058-Meeting Recording

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1h 6m 13s

Amy Jarosky (AG Consulting Partners Inc) started transcription

James Daley 0:12

Hi everyone.

Thanks for joining.

We'll get started in a few minutes here.

Amy Jarosky (AG Consulting Partners Inc) 0:21

Welcome everyone.

Thank you very much for joining us today for the claiming for security usage incentive office hours.

We are very happy to have you here.

We have lots of information to provide to you today.

As always, we are recording this call and the recording as well as the deck will be available on our FPC portal within the next day or so. So if you'd like to rewatch the session, you may head on over to.

The Portal blog and check it out over there.

If you have any questions along the way, feel free to post them in the chat and then we will also enable the mics towards the end of the presentation so that you can ask your question by unmuting yourself as well. If you'd like to turn on live Capt.

Feel free to do so by the more button in your teams.

And if you have any questions, definitely pop them into the chat.

We're here to support you and I will now turn it over to our presenter, James Daly.

James Daley 1:23

Thanks Amy.

Hi, everyone. Good morning.

Good afternoon. Good evening. Depending on where you are in the world.

My name is James Daly.

I am the go to market lead for Microsoft partner investments for security and today

we will be talking about claiming for the security usage incentive. I'll talk about some changes from last program year into this program year.
I will demystify.
A couple of key points that are really important to the intent of the incentive and then I will make sure that we address some pain points that I know you and other partners have been having.
As it relates to Poe.
After we go through all of that content, we will open the floor for question and answer.
We'll ask that you use the raise your hand feature or drop any questions or comments that you have in the chat, and this is your time. We want to make it as valuable as possible, and so we can discuss the security usage incentive specifically.
That is what we.
Have in the deck here.
I'm also happy to talk to any other investments that we have.
In our security portfolio.
As well O with that, if we could move to the next slide.
Great. So what we see here is an overview of the security usage incentive. This has been in market since October 1st and it will run through September 30th.
In FY25, we made a couple of key changes and the first of those was we retired our outstanding incentives for modern work usage for teams phone and teams frontline workers.
So if those of you for those of you have been around for a while, you probably remember the old name of this incentive.
Online services uses your OSU.
That acronym is very sticky.
And you'll know that over the course of time, we have slowly.
Been evolving towards the incentive that we have today that is focused predominantly on advanced security workloads.
And we know that the nature of a deployment for an advanced security workload is different than that of legacy M365 workloads.
And we need to ground ourselves in the intense of the incentive, because it's really important to entice to some of the key changes that we've made.
For activities that we deem valid and what we look for in the Poe and the intent of this incentive is to make sure that customers are successfully deploying and adopting

security workloads.
Now that that is clear.
We will move into what activities we have invalid and invalid and and before we jump there, the last thing that I'll mention just so that you have a little bit of additional rationale into why we made this change because we looked at the data last year during during.
Planning in in in the spring as we were approaching the beginning of Microsoft's new fiscal year in July, and we saw that there are a lot of customers that had purchased E3.
Or E5 and they had deloyed the workloads right. And that was causing a really big. Renewal risk and we had a lot of customers that had C poor associations, but when we talked to them, when we looked at the the usage data again, we saw that they either hadn't deployed or they simply weren't using. And so with that, we honed the activities that.
We wanted to reward to ensure.
That the great work that you're doing is driving those valuable outcomes for customers that are ultimately sticky and and lead not only to renewals but to upsell opportunities. And Amy, if you could move to slide 11, that would be great.
So I want to spend some time talking about what activities we reward in FY25 for security usage. This has been in the guide since October, not something that we we've snuck in.
I've had a lot of conversations with partners across the globe about this and we we made some key changes, the first of which is we said we are only going to only only going to reward deployment and implementation.
And that would be hands on provisioning configuration policy customization.
Et cetera.
We also reward adoption change management, but it has to be really substantial and it's typically focused on the admin because unlike say, teams or SharePoint online, you are focused on influencing an action than admin takes on behalf of an organization to protect them, just like labeling documents or.
Doing a custom policy for for confidential information versus showing an end user or a super user how to?
Use teams features.
And I want to start by demystifying something right off the bat, we have defined deployment with an example of hands on provisioning.

This does not mean that the activity or the engagement needs to take place in person.
It can be remote work that is done with the client.
We understand that there are many.
Partners and customers that are working remotely together and there is no requirement whatsoever that the work be done on site.
I know that there has been some misinterpretations from our poet team and that from time to time the consistency of the reviews can vary as they bring on new team members.
We acknowledge that there has been the need for some reeducation of some of the folks on that team to make sure that they understand these requirements and that if they see keywords like remote that they cannot wholesale reject claims that you submit.
This has been a major pain point for many of you on the call, I'm sure.
And I I can guarantee you that that behavior will stop now that we have done those trainings.
That said, the way that we determine whether or not we can approve a claim is by assessing the level of impact, because we need to know, Simply put, that the activity is leading to that deployment outcome, right?
And so in addition to deployment implementation adoption, change management, we made the following change, which was to say that some activities that we used to reward were no longer going to be applicable for this year because it wasn't leading to that customer outcome.
And so that would be like general guidance. If you are doing just a generic phone call, if it's a 30 minute outreach to the customer where you describe features of a product, but you're not actually.
Doing the deployment with them or or truly guiding their own deployment.
That wouldn't be sufficient.
That would be what we call lightweight support, right?
What we really need this year is for partners to go deep with the the customer to develop that.
That trust with them so that they they take these workloads and and they not only deploy them like in APOC setting but also in prod into their organization right?
Because we know once they have deployed across all of their their employees then there's a much higher likelihood that.

They will renew.
We also said that customer support such as end user, Technical Support or managed services were not eligible this year. So that is a change.
And this has been in the guide since October 1st and we talked about it quite a few times at our MCI office hours.
And so this isn't meant to be a a gotcha.
Hopefully this does not come as a surprise to you, given that we're more than six months into the program here, but.
Do know that there are opportunities for you to learn about this information verbally and make sure that you're attending those calls because.
In July and August, we do make key changes.
Like this and so that can be a great way to help digest all of the information that we have on those incentives.
If we could go to the next slide.
We went a step further and we wanted to give clarity into what elements we look for in approvable Poe because as we refined the.
The activities that we deemed valid that we wanted to reward, we said, hey, like, how can partners demonstrate this to us, right?
Like, let's let's make this really tactical so that you know what you need to submit.
And we have some examples here, but I would just summarize it by saying that we need to see more detail in the description of scope and it needs to be specific to the customer.
And the way that you can do that is to provide user accounts is to provide descriptions of the customer need for the customer benefit. The types of details that show us the level of impact that the engagement is having, another way to do that is also to include.
Engagement timelines, right?
We made the conscious decision to step away from rewarding what we're really lightweight engagements and pivoted towards rewarding partners that are doing those deep, longer engagements with customers.
So if you have start and end dates for the engagement, if you have the number of a of meetings that you have with the client, if you go into detail describing how you kind of help them build that trust, how you.
Understood their environment, their needs. If they're moving from from another provider to Microsoft, those are the type of details that we look for.

And so let's Simply put, we're looking for a higher level of detail in proof of execution.
In FY25 and this has also been in the guide since October.
Now I'd like to talk a little bit about Poe guidelines in general.
Because there's another major pain point that we have been hearing from you about over the past couple of months.
And there's gonna be some changes that will that will make it easier to do business with Microsoft in the next few weeks here. Amy, if you wouldn't mind going to the next slide.
And we'll skip through the FAQ and go to the Poe guidelines.
Awesome. Thank you so much.
So what?
We're looking at now is a slide from the Seaport Guide, which is another asset that we provide to you that we've refreshed in October.
It's effectively a how to guide to submit a claim, and then it's also got some really important core requirements for Poe and so these vary slightly from what we were looking at before because they're not program specific, right?
These are effectively the pillars for any Poe submission for C port that our teams are looking for.
And so the 1st and this is where the pain point lies is regarding the customer acknowledgement or the customer signature.
I will, in the spirit of transparency, say that we are aware that the Poe team has also been a little bit inconsistent in terms of what customer acknowledgment formats they're accepting and they've been a little bit too rigid and in some cases over interpreted. Some of these written.
Requirements and we know that you are doing business in your organization.
Are doing business across the globe and the business processes and practices are different and we have to be flexible in order.
To facilitate the claiming process, and so we have been working really closely with our internal teams to make sure that we can accept documents in multiple formats that we lead with a trust verify approach, particularly when it comes to E signatures.
And that said, we do need to maintain a certain level of of of compliance rigor.
Because we simply cannot accept.
A napkin with a customer signature per SE, right?
We need to be able to know in certain cases that a customer acknowledgment is

secure and verifiable in the future.
We're going to step away from asking for that up front and only do it in rare circumstances in which it's needed, and so you should see some changes before.
At the beginning of our next fiscal year.
That make it a lot smoother.
In terms of getting this requirement checked when the Poe team is going through and looking for it.
And the final thing I'll say before I move on to the next requirement is thank you for bearing with us and having patience.
There were quite a few examples that I saw where I was.
I was quite surprised by the Poe teams interpretation and the rejection and and so I apologize for the inconvenience and we will make it right here.
Now I'm going to touch on the other core requirements.
These will not be changing, but it's good to be aware of so that you know what you need to submit in order to get a claim approved.
So we talked about the customer signature or what we refer to as customer acknowledgement.
The second really important piece for a PU submission is a connection between the workloads mentioned and what is being claimed.
Then thirdly, you'll need to include the scope, right?
And the more detail you can provide, the more elements of approvable Poe, the more customer specific descriptions, engagement, timelines, Rd. maps, architectural maps, the the higher the likelihood that your claim will will get approved.
Then of course, there needs to be a match between the name of the claiming partner and the customer. You know you can't submit a claim for one customer using their their tenant ID and and then selecting the workload and then upload for a different customer that one's.
Pretty obvious.
Then finally, the last thing here are the dates and we know that the signatures or customer acknowledgement needs to be within the past 12 months. That way we know the engagement isn't stale.
And that you've been doing that great work in the recent past within the program term to to drive that usage?
The final requirement here is only specific to public sector customers in a few countries, and we've called that out here.

So for those of you that aren't operating in Puerto Rico, the United States, Hong Kong or India, these requirements don't apply when you're when you're working with public sector customers. But if you are working and claiming for public sector customers in those areas, you do need to have.
A little disclosure.
To the customer that says that you could earn monetary fees, we have.
More information on that in the policy guide.
So that's it. In terms of core requirements. Now before we move into the question and answer section and I take some feedback, there's one other thing that I would like to demystify as well.
We talked.
In summary, we talked about the fact that the there's no requirement that the work be done in person or on site, right?
We need to to have enough detail to validate that the engagement was impactful and then it led to the deployment outcome. But.
You can do that work anywhere in the world.
We need to reflect.
The realities of modern day businesses, that's the first thing that we demystified.
The second thing is regarding customer acknowledgement and acceptable formats, and we're gonna make it easier for you, and we're gonna lead with a trust.
But verify approach. The third thing that I want to call out as well is that the work does not need to be complete at the time that you claim.
I know that we call it proof of execution.
That's standard across all of our partner investment programs.
But the work.
Can be planned as long as we have those dates and it's clear and it can have started and been ongoing.
So again, it doesn't have to be executed in order for the claim to get approved.
We just have to know that the engagement took place within the past 12 months or is taking place at that time.
So hopefully those three things help clarify some some pain points and some steps that we're taking to make it easier for you to submit claims and get them approved.
But I'd love to hear from you as the voice of the partner.
Take any questions or comments.
There was a couple of slides that we skipped over here.

I have everything from the guide for the security usage incentive and so if you have general questions about how we calculate the incentive about.
What counts towards usage for a given workload?
We can cover that information.
Today we have the content available, but if we move to the next slide.
We will start our question and answer.
So please use the.
Raise your hand feature.
And will happily take your questions and comments.
Tian.

TB **Tian Bester** 19:28
Hi, James.
Everyone else, thank you for being on some questions.
Ask some questions.
I just want to ask, would it be possible for you guys to share the guide with us?
I'm sure it's available somewhere.
Maybe you can tell me where to look for that guide.

James Daley 19:44
Yeah, absolutely.
We have an AKA dot Ms. Link partner incentives guide and so if you use that link, it'll trigger a download of the most recent version of the guide at any time.
I'll also point you to our external partner website where you can find all of the resources that we discussed today.
So like you have the the policy guide, you've got the Seaport claims guide for like the how to on the process.
And then we've also got useful tools like templates that you can use to to scale your Poe processes.
So we'll be sharing all of those links after this call.
Thank you.
Luke a.
Rose, excuse me.

RG **Rose, Garrison** 20:44

Hi, James.
Thanks for answering my question.
I have a specific instance from May 12th where they were asking about.
You know more details on hands on and deployment services or on site training?
How would you recommend I respond to the comment to help get that approved?

James Daley 21:04
Would you mind giving some details on the engagement if you don't have to go like too in depth, but if you could just give like a high level summary that might be helpful for for your colleagues on the call as well.

Rose, Garrison 21:18
Yeah, we're doing a defender.
Engagement. And we're gonna be performing a health check in their environment and and looking at the configuration of defenders creating, you know, defining policies for antivirus scanning in intervals, setting policies for web content filtering, URL monitoring, phishing protection, firewall policies.
Knowledge transfer. All that kind of stuff is in the sound document.
And then they then they have the question about the anti training.

James Daley 21:49
Great.

Rose, Garrison 21:52
That's one was curious how to respond.

James Daley 21:52
OK.
Yeah, no, it it sounds like it would be a a valid activity, especially if you upload a Sal, right?
Like, that's not a requirement that we have necessarily, but one of the ways that you can increase the odds of approval is to include an actual contract, right?
Because it typically has all of the core requirements that we're looking for. And then of course you have the defined scope of work that you're doing with the customer.
And so from time to time you might need to just elaborate on.

The information in this out because.
It's totally for game to redact anything that's that's confidential, right?
And so I would just reiterate in the comments that those are the activities that you were doing. And then if you can include a couple of details on like the number of users that the customer has.
Or the reason why they needed a health check for defender.
The reason why they're looking to customize those policies, that's really all that we're we're looking for to determine the level of impact there as well.

RG **Rose, Garrison** 22:49
OK.

James Daley 22:51
And an important point that you bring up, which I would like to call out here for everyone, is that.
We when the Poe team reviews a claim, we look at all of the documentation in its totality.
Right. So it it doesn't all have to be included in one document.
You can upload multiple documents.
You could upload a template.
To streamline the key points for the Poe team, and then a supplemental statement of work so that they have that additional level of detail in case.
They need it.
You can also use the comments that that is part of the claim and something that we look at and so if you get a request For more information from the team, one of the quickest ways to do it would be to would be to add comments, but again.
The the partners that have the most success are the ones that are uploading that are uploading the because.
Typically.
Has the level of detail required in order for us to approve a claim.

RG **Rose, Garrison** 23:55
Excellent. Yeah. This was a Sal that was uploaded.
I included a small little screen cap of just some of the details of what we were doing as well as I've made it a habit of copying and pasting.

Just some of the work we're performing in the comments as I submit for the claim as well. In addition to that.

James Daley 24:13

Great.

Luke.

LA **Luke Allinson** 24:24

Alright. Yeah, just a so echoing what some of the stuff that's been going on in chat.

Thank you for the session by the way.

So obviously there's a general kind of frustration, I think from a lot of people in the constant kind of more information required.

I know we're covering some of that at the moment.

I have a couple of specific questions.

So we're we're a fair few of the Microsoft funded MCI engagements at the moment.

So I'm assuming first of all that they're eligible for C poor claims.

Certainly we're not getting them rebuffed.

And we've been uploading statements of work for those and we're getting requests For more information from all of them.

My frustration on those ones, and again this is a personal thing I guess, but every time we do these MCI ones, we were constantly asked For more information on these and the the documentation is exhaustively provided by Microsoft for exactly what we're doing on those engagements and yet.

I'm constantly regurgitating that information from the document and then still being asked for more and more detail.

So I guess a comment really more than a question perhaps we seem to just be asked for more and more detail and particularly for those MCI funded ones, that detail is provided by Microsoft already. So it seems crazy.

Waste of my time and yours to regurgitate documentation that's already provided provided by Microsoft, which gives that level of detail.

To then regurgitate it into a seaport comment, you know, we're just backwards and forwards and just copy and paste it from the Microsoft document.

I can understand if it was a, you know, a custom one that we've done, which again to your point, we'd include in the statement of work. But if it's an MCI funded engagement and it is as I'm sure you know fairly extensively documented, it seems

crazy that we.
Got to regurgitate that to and kind of get that claim through. Does that make sense?

James Daley 26:08
Yeah, you were referring to our presales engagements, are you not? Yes.

Luke Allinson 26:12
Correct. So we've got a couple that we're doing several of with lots of customers at the moment.
So specifically the data security ones, which is kind of the precursor for some of the copilot work, and also for the threat protection engagements.
So they're they're they're not huge amounts of effort, I would say, but there's, you know, there's several week engagements that pre sales, we're out there kind of you know, singing the Microsoft hymn in terms of you know adoption and and and demonstrating what it can do and pro.
Value.
So, you know, don't don't.
We're putting in those.
See Poor Kanes as well, which I believe are eligible, but again, you know, we seem to just constantly be uploading the sound and then going backwards and forwards with the with the guys in the in the chat in the comments.
Sorry, asking For more information and as I say that information is all in the Microsoft documentation so.
We're including some of that in the sour as well, but yeah, I'm just, as I say, it's a frustration.
I'm not not mean to sound like I'm whinging, but, but yeah, obviously it's it's frustrating to go backwards and forward several times on some of these.
Just regurgitating the information from the Microsoft documentation on that stuff.

James Daley 27:18
Yeah, I I hear you, Luke.
And I'm sorry that the review has been inconsistent and that they've been asking For more information, like outside of the the usage incentive program, particularly for those pre sales ones because we provide like a bomb, right?
And the engagement itself is a lot more prescriptive as they were required modules.

The optional modules, and so in theory it should be a lot easier for the Poe team to.
To approve those claims, Simply put, because we're giving you.
Uh, I got canned engagement and out-of-the-box engagement, whereas there's a little bit more.
Customization. Let's say for the engagements that you're doing for security usage.
And so I appreciate you sharing that with me.
I will make sure that our teams understand that.
The partners are experiencing inconsistency across engagements not only with the security usage and I I will say that for our pre sales engagements, we understand how important it is.
Is to streamline the P/E process.
That's why we provide the bombs in the first place.
We understand that it's very important to move quickly with the customers once they have that intent so that you can really generate that demand and get them to purchase. And so I can't share details yet.
Our presales engagements run on a a different calendar, right.
They refresh in July and they run through the end of June, so it's like quickly.

LA **Luke Allinson** 28:44
Mm hmm.


James Daley 28:47
Approaching and you'll start to get details on some great opportunities that we have for next year in, in about a month, a little bit longer than a month. There is a major effort in place to make the Poe submission a lot easier across the entire portfolio for Pres.
Because we know that our competition oftentimes doesn't even require a statement of work, right?
And we need to, we need to make sure that it's as easy for you and the customer to do business with us as it would be.
Particularly in the space like security, where there's there's really strong competition and so.
You'll get more details on what that means over the course the next month, but I can assure you that there are some big changes coming and it's gonna make the experience a lot better for everyone.

Luke Allinson 29:36

Fab, thank you.

James Daley 29:43

Liam.

Liam Byrne 29:46

Hey, James, can you hear me?

James Daley 29:47

Yeah.

Liam Byrne 29:48

Oh, perfect.

Thanks. Sorry, I'm just looking for just a bit of clarification on something really. I just want to make sure that I understand this correctly, that if we go ahead and do the claim here, like the seaport claim, am I right in saying then for our designations then they?

Will be part of some of the scoring requirements for some of our designations.

James Daley 30:14

Yes, that is a a great question. So seaport claims.

Our our CPO is an association mechanism, right?

That shows that that you or that another partner is working with a customer, right?

Liam Byrne 30:22

Yeah.

James Daley 30:27

And then we use Poe to to know what type of work is being done.

And you make the claim at the workload level.

Cpor is an association mechanism used for the incentive that we just talked about.

It is also used for points towards the Microsoft a cloud partner program designations and specialization.

So it's it's a really important process for for multiple reasons and you are correct in that the claims that you submit and the usage that you drive with the customers will count towards those scores. And I don't have the slides in here, they're in the seaport guide that.
I was referencing but we have like the scenarios in which you would use seaport to claim for what we call usage only or revenue association. If you're doing any work in business applications and.
We've list of all the workloads you know, take for example.
Copilot for M365.
That's something that we don't pay usage incentives on, but you can get, you can have that usage that you're driving count towards scores and specializations.
And so I would recommend like taking a look at that guide. But when you do submit a claim, yes, the usage counts towards achieving those.

LB **Liam Byrne** 31:37
And just to follow on then from that is So what basically what I'm trying to find is, is there a balance required?
So for example, if I load in five of DC port aims and that is then aligned to the some of the designation scores.
Then I'm presuming that only last with that designation for 12 months and then the following 12 months, I have to put in either new five or new 6:00 to be able to get my points.
Up rather than flat.
If you understand what I mean.
I said is there any way of getting some clarification around I said.
How does the scoring for those claims last 12 months or is that it?
We just constantly maintain getting points for this association.

James Daley 32:31
Yeah, that's a great question.

LB **Liam Byrne** 32:32
From the designation point of view.

James Daley 32:35

And and Liam, I wanna make sure that we get you as accurate a response as possible. My team within Microsoft is responsible for the incentives or sister team. Does the designations and specializations, so if you wouldn't mind sending me an e-mail, it's just my my name.

Liam Byrne 32:47
Oh, sorry. Thanks.

James Daley 32:52
Fullname@microsoft.com.
I will connect you with the right folks and if that type of of information.
Would be helpful.
Full like when we're doing our landing calls, we can start to bring them in as guests so that we can kind of connect the dots between like all of the kind of outputs that you get from these C4 claims.

Liam Byrne 33:16
Brilliant. Thank you.

James Daley 33:23
Michael.

Michael Weber 33:24
Hi, James.
Thank you so much for this. This clarity and the follow up on it.
Really appreciate it.
I wanted to add 1 item on what Luke was mentioning and then also ask a question as Luke was talking, it was providing more and more further information as the PO team asks for it and we've seen similar of course we've even gone to the level of here.

Asif Vasa 33:32
OK.

Michael Weber 33:45
The sow with the full services description call out of all the products endpoints.

And then further here is the.
We have our technical documentation where we record like here's everything we literally did for the customer and we pop that in there.
It even goes to like more in peace level detail, but even at that point just call out. The Poe team will also reach out and say, hey, could you bring it down to just like a few sentences so it can, it can go back and forth in each.
Direction just to call out is noticing that.
But one further on this beyond defender for endpoint.
Point in any of the endpoint items.
We also work in MSS as one of the call outs as part of Poe and well, we'll get our attribution for Defender, for endpoints say when we put in for MSS each time it gets kicked out to a separate Poe and rejected and.

AV **Asif Vasa** 34:42
OK.

MW **Michael Weber** 34:47
Just saying, it seems the Poe team does not understand managed security services and how that works.
I'm seeing them some thumbs up.
Come up and I did have a conversation a few months ago with the program manager for Mxdr and she's very keen on getting MSS attributions because it's feeding into her data.

AV **Asif Vasa** 34:58
Conversation.

MW **Michael Weber** 35:08
I'm getting a lot of thumbs up now.
So I even at that point I tossed through four that had been previously previously rejected trying back through all got kicked out for you know same and similar issues.
So my question is, are is there going to be a review with the Poe team?
Team on what the definitions and what fits within the box for MSS managed Security services because I know that's one item we're going to be monitored on.
It may not pay an incentive.

I don't care about the money. I want to get the numbers and make sure that Microsoft is getting what they need.
So will you be reviewing MSS with the Poe team?

James Daley 35:48

Yeah, Michael, that's a a great question.
And you know, first and foremost, the intent of this is not to make you write a Tolstoy novel every time that you're submitting a claim. And. And so again, like, we should see improvements to the to the inconsistency. And it's it's really great to have this call and.
I appreciate the candid feedback because it helps me recognize that it's not specific to the usage incentive necessarily, right?
We've heard some feedback.
On other engagements in different stages of the sales cycle and then like with the different uses of C4, we we clearly.
We need to clarify not only with the Poe team, but within the assets. You know what is applicable by scenario and just given the number of reactions that I saw to your question on.
On managed security services and and that being claimed via C portal like, it's clear that we need to to do a refresh. I think I know who you might have been speaking to and.
We'll bring in the experts from our product marketing teams that.
Requested that.
That workload, that that, you know that that service be claimable and and and retrain the Poe team so that it's clear frankly I.
Now that I understand the level of importance to you and the Community, we'll make sure that that those scenarios are crystal clear to them as well, because oftentimes we we we focus on the usage only and and the recognition because it counts towards the specializations, but that doesn?
Mean that?
There aren't other claimable options that will become important in the future, so we'll take that to heart and we will.
We will do a refresher.

MW **Michael Weber** 37:30

Thank you so much.
Heart emojis.
Heart emojis.

James Daley 37:38
Liam.

Liam Byrne 37:43
Sorry, that was my one Phillip.
No, I'm all good.

James Daley 37:46
OK, Annette.

Anete Fugale 37:51
Hello. Hi, James.
Thanks for going through that.
Sorry if this has already been answered, I just wanted to ask do the claims team have an awareness of the types of engagements that we're claiming for?
Because I think like someone mentioned earlier, we get a lot of comments back to say what are the on hands deployment or on site training that's been provided.
But obviously with delivering the fast track benefit, that's remote best practice guidance and I've we get that back on on most of our fast track claims even though.
So we've clearly stated we're delivering the fast track benefit and these are the activities we're going to do in each of these workloads. But we're still repeatedly being asked for the on hands of on hand deployment and on site training confirmation.
And how do we overcome that then?
Because obviously that's not what fast track benefit is. What's delivered through workshops in fast track?
So it's yeah, we haven't been able to overcome that hurdle yet.

James Daley 38:49
Yeah, it all comes down to the the level of detail that you provide and we haven't, you know, there is no policy that says that the fast track services in the workshops

that you do don't qualify. It really comes down to the depth of those engagements and and.

Be open as to why that is. Is 'cause we we had seen in the past.

Some behavior, some activities that we didn't want, incentivize where partners would take just generic lists of product features.

They would copy paste that as the scope for every single engagement that they were doing, and it wasn't actually leading the outcome with the customer. We had a couple of really high profile.

Instances where big customers had had that type of engagement and actually caused them to lose trust, right?

It was like it made them backtrack and go further from being, you know, to the point where they would feel comfortable to actually do a full scale deployment.

And so when you are submitting and if you are including information.

That.

Is included in the fast track benefit.

Just make sure that you're including engagement timelines that you're including those customer specific details, because then the Poe team is able to validate like, hey, this is the.

Type of impactful engagement, be it fast track or not, that that we want to reward.

AF **Anete Fugale** 40:15

OK.

James Daley 40:16

Like Simply put, like if you do the initial engagement or outreach to the customer and it's just a quick 30 minute call to like see if they have a pulse that might not be sufficient, right?

Like you, you need to submit your claim once you're you're actively working with the customer and you know have had.

Multi, Multi Day, Multi Week Multi month engagements with them so that like we're confident that it's gonna lead to the outcome.

Right at the end of the day, it all, it all comes down to the level of of detail that you provide.

AF **Anete Fugale** 40:48

Yeah.
Yeah, I think obviously we can only provide what's within scope.
We're limited to the scope of fast track anyway, so we we try and provide as much detail of what we're going to cover for the customer.
That's part of the scope, but what I think it's difficult when you're getting comments back to ask for on site training or hands on deployment for fast track benefit workshops because that's completely separate as to what what we're doing. And it's instantly like, OK, but we're not doing.
Hands on work.
Or on site training.
We're doing remote best practice guidance.

James Daley 41:25
Yeah, it doesn't have to be on site. Like I said it, it does have to be hands on and and it has to.
It has to lead to that outcome, and so it really just depends on the level of depth 'cause I know that a lot of times partners, fast track partners will it can complement the benefit right and and customize it. And and I really unlocks the opportunity for you.
To make the most revenue from the services that you provide.
Right on top of it.
And that's like the type of of engagement that.
That we want to incentivize.

Anete Fugale 42:01
OK. Thanks.

James Daley 42:06
Tar.

Tara Ragan 42:10
I think you've touched on most of the other things as of the other partners, but adding to that list of engagements kind of like to make sure the approver team's all on, I mean like aware of that.
Are those CSI engagements?

Like the CSI data security checks, we do a lot of and those unblock and, you know, push sales and deployment and consumption. And part of that CSI is you know if you get paid on milestone too.
That's Microsoft showing that you've had the Poe attached to it and that you have actually.
You know, push the needle and like you know driven the customer to buy, buy and consume and up until December when we submitted you know all of that Poe that comes with that engagement and and added a little bit of extra context to it. Those have been appro.
And then since December, I don't know what changed, but those keep getting rejected and it's like you haven't proven, you know you're not providing enough detail that how you've helped unblock. And I'm like you guys have literally paid us on this with the proof of execution.
To show that we did do it like. What else do you want?
I mean, there's an escalation with a couple of these that have been going on.
Like literally since December, we've been going back and forth and they're like, and I I finally was like, tell me what exactly it is you're looking for so that I can give that to you.
And then it's no response and it's just showing that. Well, you haven't proven it.
And I'm like Microsoft has already paid us and I have the documentation.
I submitted the documentation to show that we were paid on that milestone too.
Which that's the qualifier is that you've helped deploy and you know for the customer to buy and deploy. And that still wasn't enough.
And so I don't know, like right now do I go back and resubmit?
I mean, are are we at the point right now where if we, you know, totally resubmit fresh that those things have been addressed kind of like I know that you said that you know started off saying that these are being worked on like when is the time when?
We can go back, you know, to like, reapply with these things.
Where some of these things problem pain points have been put into effect, I guess.
And then also again just to level up that when we're reviewing because I know Mci's have been mentioned in the fast tracks have been engagements have been mentioned, but the CSI is also on that list as well.

James Daley 44:28

Thank you for bringing that to my attention.
The specific changes that I discussed that are incoming are for seaport.
So like, that's a different process obviously for submitting the claim, but now that I am aware that the pain point is across the entire portfolio, I'll make sure to to address that with the the Poe team.

Tara Ragan 44:49
Yeah. So I'm not saying the CSI, you know that that the csipoe is not the problem.
What I was saying is claiming using that documentation and that proof of execution to submit for cpor as proof of execute.

James Daley 45:04
Got it.

Tara Ragan 45:05
So yeah, we have no problem.
The C.
The CSI program runs fantastic, but part of that part of the Poe that we, I mean part of the you know.
Documentation from when we do the CSI engagement.
Is, you know, is a milestone that if we get paid on it is proof from Microsoft that we have that we have you know 'cause the customer to buy and deploy these workloads.
And so my.

James Daley 45:33
Not necessarily deploy. I think this might be a a question of of, you know, clarity on the stage cycle, right, 'cause, CSI.
Rewards for presales activities, right?
And then the there is a a sweetener when it leads to a revenue outcome, right?

Tara Ragan 45:50
Right.

James Daley 45:51
You're not necessarily the transacting partners, so it's not like.

Tara Ragan 45:55

Right, correct.

James Daley 45:55

A.

A rebate effectively, but it functions in the same way, somewhat like an advisory fee, but.

Tara Ragan 45:58

No. Correct. But we're we're dry. I mean, you know, like we're we're driving you doing the activities to drive if you know to where C poor is claimed.

James Daley 46:08

But the but the fee is for.

The fee is for the revenue outcome. It's not for the deployment, right?

Tara Ragan 46:10

And.

James Daley 46:14

Like unless you're doing post sales work with the same customer, it wouldn't.

Tara Ragan 46:19

Yes.

James Daley 46:20

It wouldn't count for the usage incentive 'cause it's a different it's a different stage that we're that we're incentivizing.

Tara Ragan 46:25

Yeah, I I I guess I'm. I'm what I'm. Yes. Is all of those things. And I'm not talking.

I mean, again, I could care less. I mean, the incentives payments are not what I'm worried.

I mean worried about that.

It's that package of documentation for sipor that's showing the work that we did and and the deployment that you know that you know the hands on deployment.
I mean some of those pain points that you've said you know about.
Because we I went round and round starting in December was getting rejected and it said you haven't been hands on.
And I'm like this is hands on.
And they were like, well, it's not showing.
I mean, I literally had one that says was not showing that you were on site.
And I'm like, we don't do it on site.

James Daley 47:05
Yeah, that that is that is an error by the review team and and that has been clarified and if you see that continuing, like if they're leaving comments that says you did this remote, you did, you haven't shown that you're on site escalate that to your your fast.

Tara Ragan 47:06
But.
Yeah.
Yeah.

James Daley 47:21
Track program managers.
They're plugged in with me on a a weekly basis at this point because we should see improvements there now.
Like just just to be crystal clear though, like.
If you're working with a customer and you do one of our.
MCI pre sales engagements that that Poe even though like it's it's a bomb that comes from Microsoft doesn't necessarily count.
For for the usage incentive, because the difference cycle if you do the deployment with that customer like that, that's what we want is like you're engaged with them in the pre sales you influence that sale and then you're you're in there, you're the trusted partner doing the DEP.

Tara Ragan 47:47

Yeah, no.
Yes.

James Daley 47:58
And then adding managed services, right?
Like we just need to see that the post sales work took place.

Tara Ragan 48:01
Yeah. And that's and engagement is always part that CSI for us is always part of the deployment because then that's how we show that like, OK here we did this, we did this assessment, we gave the you know we provided the recommendation and and deployment plan then we.
Went on and did you know to help the customer deploy? And like I said, all of that has been getting kicked back and I guess the root root of this is.
You know a little bit beating a dead horse at this point, but it's like.
You know, provide, you know more. They need more descriptions or more details.
And I'm like, I don't.
I like.
I do not like we've done like, you know, like the all of the, like, the other partners have said before that it's just been so frustrating that it's like, OK.
What's the magic sauce now?
And and to give a shout out to my fast track managers on both the you know in the UK and in the US you know had been trying to like escalate this.
And it's been pain points across the board.
So I I mean stop there.
Because it sounds like some of that stuff is being addressed and I appreciate it.
But just wondering, you know, is it?
Are we a go to go ahead and start reapplying for these ones that have been rejected or is there, like should we wait?

James Daley 49:16
Yeah, I would say start claiming like we have.

Tara Ragan 49:18
OK.

James Daley 49:20

We've addressed the issue of remote versus onsite. That should not be a problem if it is like we will intervene and and make sure that those claim that that is not the only reason that a claim would be rejected or approved.

It's it's not like it's not a requirement.

Simply put, the customer acknowledgment changes that we talked about, like if you're having problems with the the format that will take a couple of weeks where we got through.

You know, approval by by our legal team.

Teams and it's just a question of translating that into work instructions that the Poe team will understand clearly, right?

And so it depends on which issue you know you're experiencing, like with a specific claim, but between now and the beginning of of June, you should start to resubmit and there will be improvements to the experience.

TR **Tara Ragan** 50:11

Thank you. And and thanks again like overall to leave on a positive note, I think I mean addressing these pain points.

So appreciative that that you know you, you and the team are doing that.

James Daley 50:20

Yeah, of course.

And and thank you for sharing the feedback.

Some of this is frustrating to me as well, and we will make sure that that we get better.

That's the spirit of partnership.

Jamie.

JW **Jamie Wheeldon** 50:34

Yeah. Hi. I just wanted to get some guidance on a specific type of engagement that we've had a lot of problems with submitting claims.

We we do a fair number of deep dive health checks for defender XDR customers, and we look across all of the defender workloads we do. We'll go in.

We'll assess their configuration.

We'll do a full health check.
We'll then provide a whole bunch of recommendations.
Play back to the customer specific advice on.
How they can increase their adoption drive better usage?
Through those tools will then support them in in implementing some of those changes.
We tend to submit those claims at the point of the customer signing off the sow.
When we use the sow as the Poe, but we get a lot of pushback from the claims team saying you need to provide more specific examples of exactly what you've configured and obvious.
We don't know that until we're further down the track.
With the customer, do we need to be a? Would you think that this is a claimable engagement and and B do I?
Is it OK for me to now continue submitting those claims at the point where we win the work, or do I have to wait until we get to the end of the engagement when I'll have some recommendations that I can also upload?
About what?
The specific configuration changes that we've highlighted to the customer.

James Daley 52:05
If I may ask, what is the typical duration of of one of those engagements?

Jamie Wheeldon 52:14
Starts finish the the IT can be 10 to 15 days.

James Daley 52:19
Yeah, it sounds to me like it would fall under the umbrella of adoption, right?
And that you're working very closely with admins at on the customer side.
To to drive that intent to deploy right, there's a there's a little bit of.
There's a little bit of flexibility there, right?
We didn't say that it it's deployment is the only activity and it sounds like it sounds like a high effort engagement that would lead to an impactful.
Outcome and so while it's more likely that you would have a streamlined approval like once you give those recommendations.
OK, think just calling out some of those you know customer specific details and

highlighting the duration of the engagement should make it approvable, right?
To me it sounds like the the type of activity that we do want to be rewarding from an adoption perspective.

JW **Jamie Wheeldon** 53:17
Fantastic. Thanks very much.

James Daley 53:21
David.

Speaker 1 53:25
Oh yes.
Hello, James. Thanks for taking the time today.
We really appreciate it. I I think it helped me just to hear that I'm not the only one hearing these rejections.
I literally thought I've been doing something just incorrectly and I will parrot them that everyone else, we just don't understand the responses that I'm getting.
Are the exact same ones that everybody else is talking about, and we don't understand what we're missing.
So if that has been addressed with the Poe Poe team.
And we can just resubmit the ones that have been rejected to have that go through then that's fantastic.
On a a separate note, we're still not seeing in our earnings reports any of the GCC clients or our education clients incentives and we don't.
I've tried many times trying to go through different back channels but I can't get to a person that can actually sit down and say, OK David, let's hop on a teams meeting.
Let's look through your report.
Ards.
And help me understand why these are not showing up in our reporting.

James Daley 54:34
Yeah. First, David, thank you for sharing the feedback and the reason why we have these calls is is to is to see like the level of.
Of of pain that the partners are feeling across the board and so.
It's been good for me to hear it as well and and we always welcome that feedback

and and so I appreciate you, you you raising that with us. I want to talk a little about exclusions. Amy, if you could jump to slide 10.

There are some customers that are excluded and not eligible and I did see a question about GCC high within the chat earlier.

4.

Speaker 1 55:13

And mine is specifically GCC, not GCC high or DoD.

James Daley 55:15

Us.

I know.

Speaker 1 55:19

We understand that now.

James Daley 55:19

I OK cool.

I wanted to make sure that that was crystal clear because sometimes this slide is missed, right?

Speaker 1 55:22

Yeah.

James Daley 55:24

But like for GCC High and DoD customers, simply we don't the telemetry.

They're in an isolated cloud given the the highly confidential nature of the work that they're doing in their data and so they're excluded because.

We don't have access to that usage data.

Speaker 1 55:45

Right.

James Daley 55:47

In education, customers are included, right?

And it sounds like it can be very difficult sometimes to pinpoint the root cause of one of these data discrepancies.

Speaker 1 55:51
Correct.

James Daley 55:59
And have you escalated with support? I'm sure you have, but that that's always the first step.

Speaker 1 56:03
I have.
I have.
I've been.
I mean, this is I'm more going on two years now.
I've escalated this.
I I I'm I'm at the point where if I get one more canned URL or canned e-mail address without a name of a person, I'm just gonna scream.
I mean, this is it's beyond, you know, kind of ridiculous.
I mean, this is very simply, most likely some sort of configuration on the reporting side of things that was just never changed over.
From when fast track actually paid out the incentives?
Which you guys were in charge. It worked great.
It was fantastic, never had any issues.
The reports were crystal clear as soon as it changed over to partner center or OSU or whatever they're calling it now.
They just haven't worked.
It just hasn't come through and they're not showing up on the reports.
So but again, like I said, I I cannot seem to get to a name of a person.
That can jump on a teams call 'cause. I'm a very visual person. I have read all of the documentation that you've shown here today numerous times because they reference it in every one of the rejections.
I'm like maybe I'm missing something.
I've read it and read it and read it.
There is not a crystal clear example of what it is they're looking for, and in no way,

shape or form does any of the documentation say.
Oh, here's why this isn't showing up in your reports.
And I need somebody that has that deep understanding to say, OK, David, here you go.
Here, let's walk through this kind of step by step, and I know that's a that's a time commitment.
That's gonna that's not something that's gonna get solved in a 5 minute call.
Like, well, maybe it is. If the person's really that good, but most likely. I mean, I don't know if there's a power BI issue on the back end for you guys or what the issue is 'cause. I can't see the back end.
I can only just see the telemetry and the data and see that none of our education clients.
Have been paid any incentives in almost two years now, like we talked to these clients every other week at, you know, and we're driving the usage.
I see the usage every day in the seat four or not in the seaport, but in Ftop, and it's obviously gone up. So and at what point do we need to, like, help the Poe team understand we have to clean early in order to gain.
Acknowledgement.
For driving that active usage, because if we wait until we've done everything with the client and spent three months with the client, gotten them to adopt everything, and then finally, OK, here's all of our paperwork, they're going to say, OK.
Yeah, you're approved. But guess what? Your high watermark is already 100%. That actually works against us.
Because now if you know, say, the economy turns and they start laying off people.
Their active usage goes down.
It works against us.
So we're actually not claiming for workloads because we're like copilot.
We're like, hey, we can't figure out how to claim for it.
We don't know what it is they're looking for.
We stay away from it, OK?
Same thing with MSS.
Nobody can explain it to us in terms just on the regular security workloads.
So we've started to kind of almost step back a little bit.
Hey is this program what's going on here?
So I know we're at time, so I better stop and give you a chance to talk.

James Daley 59:31

Yeah, David, I understand how that could be really frustrating.

There's a lot to unpack there because it sounds like you're experiencing multiple issues like the the first with the reporting.

It's very difficult for me to say.

Because I I'm not an engineer.

Speaker 1 59:44

Your yeah.

James Daley 59:44

I'm not sure if it's a data connectivity issue with a downstream source. If it's a segmentation issue because that will happen from time to time, right?

Like you have a a customer that is government and they get classified as GCC high.

We're just the downstream consumer of that.

That information.

The segmentation information that flows from upstream and then in order to get like a a times you need to get like an engineer on the call and to look into it. And oftentimes the the teams are not resourced to do that level of acute investigation if it's like.

Speaker 1 1:00:10

Yep.

Absolutely.

James Daley 1:00:18

An issue that we're we're we're seeing as proliferating like across the board, that's when we can typically get get the traction to actually have them.

Take time away from coding to to figure out what's going wrong, and so bring that up through your fast track manager.

Let's see if we can find the right person.

Speaker 1 1:00:34

Oh.

James Daley 1:00:35

I just don't wanna.

I don't want to set the expectation that we will be able to, because again, sometimes it can be a struggle for us.

Even get those engineers to sit down and say, hey, this is the root cause.

The one other thing that I do wanna say is because we are at time is that it can be a little bit tricky sometimes with the way that we calculate this incentive as applies to Edu customers because as you know, Edu customers often times have really high ma.

Speaker 1 1:00:45

That.

Yes.

James Daley 1:01:00

Because the students get free licenses and then the faculty is paid, right?

And so that sets the bar for the high watermark really high and it's.

Speaker 1 1:01:06

Correct.

James Daley 1:01:11

It can be.

Very difficult. If the high watermark is, you know, say you know for 30,000 students to drive that back to usage with the paid users and and then actually generate earnings because the whole point of this is for usage on paid users, right.

And you can see why we wouldn't want to to reward.

Speaker 1 1:01:31

Oh, absolutely.

James Daley 1:01:31

You know, 30,000 free, freer trial users.

Speaker 1 1:01:33

Absolutely, yeah.
No, absolutely.
And that's why when we start, we're focused on the workloads that have zero active usage and we're focused on the, the faculty and staff members, especially in most of the security stuff, the student use benefit shouldn't.
They shouldn't be applying it to the students anyway, so we get that. That's not the issue here.
The issue is that none of them at all ever. For the last year and a half have been paid out.
Or have even shown up.
On the reports and you know opening tickets, going to our FP Miss, our FPM just got let go so.
They were unable or unwilling to help and just asking for a simple person of like a simple name.
It's like James, who is the person that I should talk to about this, that could have a teams meeting with me and and show this. I don't think anybody knows that person's name or if so, they're just not willing to share it with me. And I Don.
Necessarily know that you want to put it.
On blast on this open forum, but that's what I'm currently in need of. When you talk about, you know, engineering expertise, pulling them off of coding, I do believe that there is a major miscalculation on GCC only not GCC high. I want to be completely crystal clear here.
Regarding defender for cloud apps.
They are not calculating active usage on defender for cloud apps and I've gone through this with a couple of different subject matter experts.
From the Microsoft side, they're like, yes, we have set up, we have configured everything.
They're absolutely adopting it.
They are using it.
We see they're using it when we're doing the over the shoulder stuff via teams meeting with them and it is not showing as they're showing, you know, Flatline 0 active usage on the report.
And we've triple checked everything we needed to check with the subject matter experts.
So there's definitively a breakage on that sort of reporting specifically for GCC.

Clients as well that we've identified, but again I can't get to somebody that can bring in that engineering level expertise on a call because again, James this is not.
Your your you need to be aware of it I guess.
But again, I need to be get into the person that can bring this all together, right?
I'm sorry.

James Daley 1:03:57
Yeah, I I hear you and I don't want to guarantee that we can find the right person and then not be able to. What I will do is I will raise this with I have an internal analytics team that works on the design of all of these program.

Speaker 1 1:04:04
Mm hmm.

James Daley 1:04:11
And so I'll I'll make sure that you know as they kind of review everything and we plan for next year that that they are aware that this appears to be.
A more widespread issue than than, you know, perhaps is getting acknowledged or or that we're even aware of.
So I can ask them to do an investigation and and we'll see.
What they can come up with and and in the meantime, you know, feel free to send an e-mail to me directly and I will do what I can to try to get us in contact with the right person.
But you know, as you know, and as as you experience it can be, it can be difficult, especially when we're dealing with these really these really technical issues that need engineering support, right.
It's outside of the realm of of scope or policy.

Speaker 1 1:04:56
Thank you.

James Daley 1:04:58
And I am sorry, but we are at time and I have got another call that I need to attend.
I really appreciate everyone's participation and engagement.
We covered a lot of ground.

We will be doing more of these calls as we refresh our incentives in July and October.
There will be multiple office hour sessions, 1:00 every single month will provide the registration links with Amy and team so that they can distribute them.
Across your guys channels.
Make sure that you are attending those.
You'll get all of the details on on what's coming, and then as we progress throughout the year, especially as we get closer to our launches in October, we'll start to go deeper in terms of process and we can go into reporting and we wanna make sure that all.
Of the the subjects that you are interested in hearing about are covered and we can bring in experts to talk about things like the designation specializations.
So please keep the feedback coming and thank you as always, for partnering with Microsoft.

Amy Jarosky (AG Consulting Partners Inc) stopped transcription