

Microsoft appoints Comztek to launch Office 365

Microsoft has appointed local technology distributor - and long-standing partner - Comztek as its first channel developer partner for cloud services in South Africa ahead of the commercial launch of its Office 365 productivity suite. The move will effectively see Comztek tasked with developing a channel of partners who will promote Microsoft's cloud services offerings to the marketplace.

Microsoft's distribution account manager, Leane Hannigan believes the move offers considerable value to potential partners, who will benefit from a range of value-added extras that Comztek provides. This includes a combination of sales and marketing support, training and technical assistance and product specialist experience of working with Microsoft solutions.

"This is an important step in building a strong partner eco-system across South Africa to support the roll-out of Office 365," said Hannigan. "Although Office 365 is a direct service between an end-user and Microsoft, we see huge potential for partners to add layers of value and services on top of this basic offering, while being part of the revenue stream of Office 365 itself."

Specialists in cloud computing

Comztek business unit director, David Caygill says his company's value-added distribution business model and experience in dealing with partners and resellers makes it ideally placed to grow a cloud services channel around the Microsoft offering.

"Where Comztek comes into play is through providing access to its team of qualified specialists that understand infrastructure, desktop and cloud-based computing; assistance by way of support; and value-added offerings such as training led by product specialists that are leaders in their fields," Caygill says.

Hannigan says the Office 365 distribution model stands out in the marketplace by offering partners a chance to promote cloud services at no risk to themselves, while retaining a commission stream. Rival offerings work on a model where the partner becomes liable for the resell licence.

"We're seeing a new breed of partners emerging in the local market - the 'born in the cloud' partner, who understands intimately how to develop services on top of a software-as-a-service offering. Then there's the existing partner that's moving to the cloud themselves. We're confident that Comztek will be able to service the needs of both groups very effectively," said Hannigan.