

RETURN TO WORK, RETURN TO GROWTH

Rapidly deploy Microsoft's Return to the Workplace solution and leverage the underlying technology for future growth





"We've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months. From remote teamwork and learning, to sales and customer service, to critical cloud infrastructure and security—we are working alongside customers every day to help them adapt and stay open for business in a world of remote everything."

- SATYA NADELLA, CEO OF MICROSOFT, APRIL 2020

More than six months into our age of pandemic, organizations around the globe have turned their attention to the task of returning to work even as virtual work continues to blossom.

Microsoft Teams recently saw more than 200 million meeting participants in a single day, generating more than 4.1 billion meeting minutes amongst more than 75 million daily active users. And Power Platform—the low code application platform that is transforming 97% of the Fortune 500—is now home to more than 19 million monthly users.

We find organizations worldwide asking questions in two key areas regarding the future of work and its organizational and economic impacts.

How do we return to work safely?

Will the technologies that allowed us to be productive away from our workspaces support us returning to them? What has Microsoft created to help us be successful from here, and how do we rapidly deploy and use those technologies?

How do we then return to growth?

Ultimately more important than returning to work today will be leveraging today's investment so that we may return to growth and prosperity in the months and years to come. The current environment presents us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the world of work.

Return to work is just the first step in a larger journey back to growth—and can be viewed as a test case to prove the long-term benefits of building skills and business processes around low-code, automation, and analytics capabilities that can revolutionize the daily agility and impact of your workforce.

Today's "C" level conversations emphasize employee safety and business continuity as top priorities. However, as the pandemic becomes better managed, attention will turn to the "Next Normal" in a post-COVID reality. Employee wellness will remain top of mind, remote everything will continue to be embraced, organizations will rethink their real estate and use of space, and business growth will re-emerge different from before the pandemic.

All of these priorities will require new automation, which is where the Power Platform shines. For customer organizations this means adopting and employing this technology strategically; as a platform first and with the Return to the Workplace solution as an example and a place to start.

This white paper provides Microsoft customers and partners with a strategy for using our Return to the Workplace solution built on Microsoft Power Platform in responding to the two challenges discussed above. It is a strategy document presenting a blueprint that organizations may use to translate these ideas into actionable, yet strategically minded, next steps.

RETURN TO WORK

The goal of the Return to the Workplace solution is to help customers return to work with confidence. It enables organizations to reopen responsibly, monitor intelligently, and protect continuously with solutions for a safer work environment.

"There is no standard handbook for reopening a business during a global pandemic. Each organization faces the daunting task of minimizing risk in conference rooms, factory floors, storefronts, and more to ensure the safety of every employee and customer."

- Charles Lamanna, Microsoft Corporate Vice President, Low Code Application Platform

The Return to the Workplace solution includes tools for Location Readiness, Workplace Care Management, Employee Health and Safety Management, and Location Management. They are built to be customized based on organizational needs and feedback. Implementing these templates will help you maximize resources by quickly making data-driven decisions when it matters most to maintain safe work environments, enabling them to adapt workflows and processes to changing needs to streamline reopening efforts.



GIVE EVERYONE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION THE TOOLS THEY NEED FOR A SAFE WORKPLACE



Preparing your locations

Equip facility managers and task force leaders to make informed decisions to reopen locations safely.



The workplace experience

Empower employees to return confidently with selfservice tools for working safely and productively.



Ongoing management and prevention

Help health and safety leaders ensure the care and wellbeing of your workforce.





This section presents a strategy for meeting the **Return to Work** challenge, guiding you through helping you to define your initial Power Platform strategy and providing guidance to turn on the Power Platform in support of your return to the workplace efforts.

ENVISIONING YOUR RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE ROLLOUT

The first step in building confidence in a return to the workplace solution is to ensure that you understand the organizational needs and complexities. The return to the workplace templates are largely geared to standard office scenarios—from small business to enterprise scale. Ensuring how the solution can meet organizational needs out of the box and what customization or integration are required is essential. We recommend holding both an envisioning and IT management workshop to align the technical solution with business operations requirements.



An **Envisioning Workshop** focuses on business activities and outcomes. Here you'll want to involve your **Return to Work** team (e.g., human resources, security, facilities, health and safety, etc.) to determine how we will configure our Return to the Workplace solution to meet the organization's needs. Ideally, you will have already deployed the solution into a development or testing environment so that you can work through each application with your stakeholders, determining what needs to be further configured (and in some cases, what's not needed at all).



An **IT Management Workshop** focuses on management, governance, architecture, and security of the platform necessary to make it minimally viable for our Return to the Workplace solution. Here you should involve IT stakeholders in identifying current Power Platform maturity within the organization and finalizing tasks to achieve the MVP for **Return to Work**. Use the key considerations discussed in the "Turn on Power Platform to Support Return to the Workplace" sub-section below as your guide for this workshop, and ensure that you have a plan in place that addresses each consideration.

These workshops will help you define the strategy you need to move forward.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TURNING ON POWER PLATFORM IN RETURN TO THE WORK SCENARIOS

You can start building the platform once you've defined the strategy and aligned the solution to necessary business processes. The Return to the Workplace solution requires that you have at least a minimally established Power Platform in your Microsoft 365 Tenant. In other words, you have to have an environment into which the solution can be deployed, users must be able to access it, and you must ensure that it's minimally managed and secured.

We'll address this with key considerations discussed below. They represent the most important considerations for minimally establishing the platform for the return to work scenario. However, they are designed to provide a foundation from which you can grow the platform in the future. In other words, what we're building below can easily be built upon later in your future **Return to Growth** scenario.

WHO OWNS THIS?

Ultimately you will want to use the Power Platform Center of Excellence (CoE) model to provide platform ownership, generally within your IT organization. For the time being, though, what's important here is to designate a Power Platform Product Owner who will be responsible for the early implementation and for owning the platform long-term. A best practice is not to combine the duties of your Microsoft 365 team and the Power Platform CoE, though doing so for the short-term purpose of deploying the Return to the Workplace solution may be expeditious. If you opt for the latter approach, we recommend you plan to separate these responsibilities soon as you transition from immediate, tactical **Return to Work** to the **Return to Growth** strategies we'll discuss later.

MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP) FOR ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT

The Power Platform Adoption Framework defines five pillars of enterprise management for Power Platform, each with a series of component dimensions that should be initially accounted for and matured over time. However, our short-term goal for **Return to Work** is to establish the platform as a minimum viable product (MVP) to which the solution may be deployed. The diagram below highlights in bold and orange the dimensions you need to consider now, and de-emphasizes those that can be saved for **Return to Growth**.

Platform Management

- Project Tooling
- · Backlog Management
- Road Mapping
- COE Starter Kit
- COE Establishment

Enterprise Architecture

- Authentication
- Environments
- · License Management
- · Reusable Components
- Data Ecosystem

Application Lifecycle Mgmt.

- Developers
- · Developer Standards
- Source Control
- Deployment Pipeline

Mature Security Model

- Security Accreditation
- Platform Security
- User Management
- Data Loss Prevention

User Empowerment

- Tiered Support
- Business Onboarding
- Citizen Developers
- Community Nurturing

We'll discuss each of the dimensions necessary for MVP in the sub-sections below.

PLATFORM MANAGEMENT

Platform Management involves the tools for managing the development, backlog, road map, and the platform itself. However, there is only one dimension that we need concern ourselves with for the purpose of our MVP enabling Return to the Workplace. Return to the others when you are ready to begin executing your return to growth strategy.

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (COE) STARTER KIT

The Center of Excellence (CoE) Starter Kit is a solution developed by Microsoft to help IT organizations manage and govern the Power Platform. The Return to the Workplace solution is not dependent on it, so therefore it is not strictly necessary, however, we recommend deploying it to your tenant as a best practice at this stage so that you may maintain situational awareness of the apps, flows, and other activities inside the tenant. Otherwise, you risk the possibility of users running amok, creating apps and flows inside the tenant without your knowledge.

Establish a Power Platform environment and deploy this suite of governance tools to establish a minimum level of awareness as to what is happening inside the tenant. Learn more about deploying the CoE Starter Kit at http://aka.ms/coestarterkit.

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE

Enterprise Architecture involves establishing Power Platform environments within the tenant and using that architecture to support other pillars such as ALM and maturing our security model. There are three dimensions that we need concern ourselves with for our MVP. Return to the others when you are ready to begin executing your return to growth strategy.

AUTHENTICATION

Your organization's users will authenticate to Power Platform using their Microsoft 365 credentials. Assuming you're already established in 365, you should not experience issues here.

ENVIRONMENTS

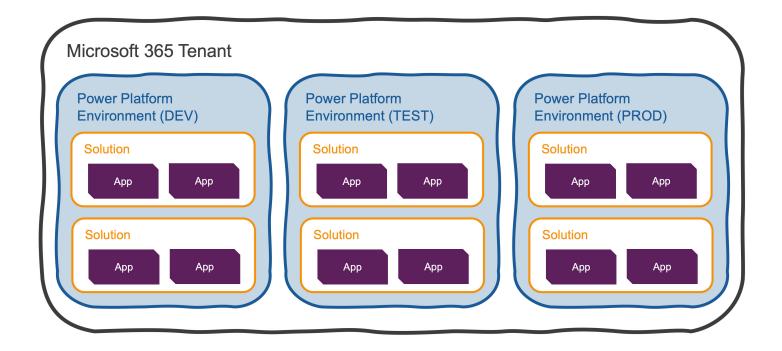
This is perhaps the most important architectural consideration to be undertaken now and at any point in the life of the platform. Environments are an important yet sometimes misunderstood concept in Power Platform. Think of a Power Platform "environment" as a container for Power Platform functionality within the Microsoft 365 Tenant. You can establish as many environments as your licensed capacity allows. When you begin to scale the platform, they will become very important to your application lifecycle management (ALM) strategy. A simple visualization is provided in the diagram on the next page.

Platform Management

- Project Tooling
- Backlog Management
- · Road Mapping
- COE Starter Kit
- COE Establishment

Enterprise Architecture

- Authentication
- Environments
- License Management
- · Reusable Components
- Data Ecosystem



Power Platform "Solutions" are deployed within environments. Solutions serve as containers for like-functionality, including apps. The Return to the Workplace solution is one of these, itself containing several apps as well as the data model and other components necessary to enable the **Return to Work** use case.

Environments are managed through the Power Platform Admin Center at https://aka.ms/ppac, and through the CoE Starter Kit.

In the short term, we recommend establishing a production environment named "Return to Work – CRIT – PROD1" for your Return to the Workplace solution, and task your central IT organization with the responsibility for managing that environment for the entire organization. This will provide the most straight forward deployment and management path in the short term.

However, though the Return to the Workplace solution may be deployed to a single production environment as described above, if you plan to customize the solution you will want to establish a basic deployment pipeline so that you are not customizing in a production environment. We recommend that you adopt application lifecycle management (ALM) best practices early, in which case you would want to create the following pipeline:

- Return to Work CRIT DEVs
- Return to Work CRIT TEST
- Return to Work CRIT PROD

Any customizations you make atop the Return to the Workplace solution should be created in your DEV environment, then pushed to TEST and then PROD. Microsoft provides detailed documentation concerning ALM with Power Platform at https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/alm/.

¹This environment is designated as "Critical" because it will be used organization-wide.

LICENSE MANAGEMENT

So how to go about licensing? Well, for simplicity's sake, let's categorize your users in one of three ways, and then make a licensing recommendation for each.



Return to Work End Users

In the short term, these users will only need access to the mobile employee health and safety selfservice app



Return to Work Managers

These users will use the mobile app for themselves, but will also be involved in managing facility safety and / or workplace care



Return to Growth Users

These users need some combination of the return to work apps, but will also be using the platform for other purposes



Return to Work End Users will only be using one app, so you may apply the Power Apps Per App license for their use.

Return to Work Managers will be using at least two apps (mobile end-user and at least one of the Return to the Workplace management apps). If they are using only one management app (facility safety or workplace care), then the Per App license will suffice. If they are using *both*, they will need either two Per App licenses applied (lowest cost) or a Power Apps Per User license (easiest to manage).

Return to Growth Users are those users assumed to (a) be using some combination of Return to the Workplace apps, and (b) anticipated to be using and / or building additional apps in the near-term future as part of your strategy to leverage the platform for **Return to Growth**. Your IT users involved in managing Power Platform (e.g., your CoE team) also fit this profile. These users should be assigned Per User licenses.

In addition, users of the Power BI dashboard that's available as part of this solution (most likely those fitting the "Return to Work Managers" user profile) will require a Power BI Premium or Power BI Pro license.



APPLICATION LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT (ALM)

It is not essential that we address ALM for the purpose of our return to work MVP. However, as with the other pillars, we recommend you revisit this topic when you are ready for return to growth.

Application Lifecycle Mgmt.

- Developers
- Developer Standards
- Source Control
- Deployment Pipeline

MATURE SECURITY MODEL

Mature Security Model involves the use of platform tools to secure your applications and data. There are three dimensions that we need concern ourselves with for our MVP. Return to the others when you are ready to begin executing your return to growth strategy.

PLATFORM SECURITY

Power Platform is secured at the Tenant, Platform, and Application levels. For Return to Work purposes, we will assume that you're already working in a properly secured Microsoft 365 tenant. We will also assume that the Application-level security built into the Return to the Workplace solution will suffice. Therefore, at minimum, we recommend that you ensure you're controlling who can create and manage environments in the Power Platform admin center. Refer to the Microsoft documentation at https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/admin/control-environment-creation. We'll discuss user management, data loss prevention, and limitation of external connectors below.

USER MANAGEMENT

Users are most likely already managed in your Microsoft 365 tenant. In other words, we assume that your organization has procedures in place to create, deactivate, and manage security groups to which users are assigned. It is best practice to map the production environment containing your Return to the Workplace solution to an Azure Active Directory security group containing the users you wish to access the solution (likely to be all or most of your users). Your users will also require the Power Apps mobile application in the App Store for iOS and Google Play for Android devices. This is the application through which Power Apps are delivered to end-users on mobile devices. Power Apps apps on Android and iOS are also integrated with Intune and support Intune policies for mobile application management, enabling customers to have better control and security over their data.

DATA LOSS PREVENTION (DLP)

DLP allows us to create policies to control the data connectors discussed earlier and apply those policies to Power Platform environments. For example, you may wish to prevent users from creating a flow that posts your facility readiness data to a social media site. These policies may be quite sophisticated and should certainly be a focus for your broader platform governance as you Return to Growth. Still, for now, we recommend that you apply a single DLP policy to the environment in which your Return to the Workplace solution will be deployed.

Mature Security Model

- · Security Accreditation
- Platform Security
- User Management
- Data Loss Prevention

USER EMPOWERMENT

Mature Security Model involves the use of platform tools to secure your applications and data. There are three dimensions that we need concern ourselves with for our MVP. Return to the others when you are ready to begin executing your return to growth strategy.

TIERED SUPPORT

This is really all about your existing help desk or another end-user support system. At minimum, you ought to make your support organization aware of the Power Platform + Return to the Workplace rollout, provide minimal guidance as to installing the Power Apps mobile application and using the employee health and safety self-service app, and provide your support agents with an escalation point to your product management / CoE for resolution of further issues that may arise. We also recommend that you work with the cognizant business groups within your organization (e.g., human resources, communications, etc.) to ensure that expectations for the use of the tools have been updated and that all employees have been notified.

User Empowerment

- Tiered Support
- · Business Onboarding
- · Citizen Developers
- · Community Nurturing

DEPLOYING AND CONFIGURING THE RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE SOLUTION

Now that you understand the MVP required, deploying the return to workplace templates is relatively straightforward. We've generally found that someone knowledgeable in the technology will be able to complete the solution deployment and configuration in a single day. However, the configuration may require additional time if the organization does not have its act together from the perspective of re-opening process and useful data. For example, you will struggle to configure the solution if the organization does not possess a good data set for its facilities. These potential challenges can be mitigated during envisioning upfront.

The Return to the Workplace solution must be deployed to an environment within your tenant, and then configured to reflect the organization correctly. Microsoft has provided step by step documentation to achieve this at https://aka.ms/returntowork, and direct links to each topic are available as well:

- Deploy the Return to the Workplace solution https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/powerapps/sample-apps/return-to-workplace/deploy
- Configure the Return to the Workplace solution https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/powerapps/sample-apps/return-to-workplace/configure

We've chosen not to replicate these step-by-step guides in this white paper so that a single authoritative source of guidance may be maintained in the online documentation. We did complete the step-by-step instructions as we wrote this white paper, though, to validate their completeness.

Remember to deploy the solution following the environment strategy discussed earlier. In other words, employ ALM best practices early by deploying first to DEV, then to TEST, then to PROD.

Do not neglect the "Configure" portion of the rollout, because it is through configuration that you will bend the solution to the organization's specific policies, procedures, and guidelines. For example, you will want to define Reopen Phases in the solution that match the policies set forth by your organization, and you will want to determine specific facilities where your employees actually work. You can even theme elements of the application to match the organization's color and branding guidelines. This is all explained in depth with step-by-step guidance in the "Configure" documentation referenced above.

CUSTOMIZING THE RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE SOLUTION

The Return to the Workplace solution may be customized by Power Platform developers in the customer organization or in the Microsoft partner community. This is encouraged in order to develop additional functionality to meet the organization's needs. However, customizations must be undertaken in a supported way. All customizations should be made in a separate "solution" (refer to the previous discussion of "Environments") layered atop the base Return to the Workplace solution. The goal here is to extend the solution, rather than customize the core apps and data model. This keeps the organization on an upgrade and support path provided by Microsoft. Unsupported partner customizations can fork the solution and limit or block a customer's ability to take advantage of future updates, so developing customizations to Microsoft standard best practices is essential. Customer organizations requiring customizations should consider consulting a trusted Microsoft partner before undertaking potentially unsupported customizations.

RETURN TO GROWTH

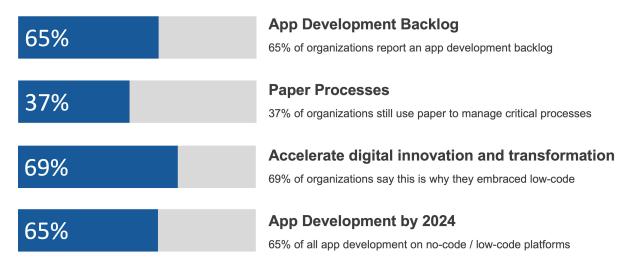
The "big idea" on which our **Return to Work, Return to Growth** blueprint rests is that of **Low-Code Cloud Transformation**. We'll begin our **Return to Growth** strategy here.

LOW-CODE CLOUD TRANSFORMATION

For many years, organizations relied on a technology model built principally around custom software development and commercial off the shelf (COTS) software as a service (SaaS) solutions. These two approaches balanced one another, but were together unable to meet the demands of most organizations. Some business challenges can be solved with custom software development, but there's only so much of that in which you can invest. Some business challenges can be solved with COTS / SaaS solutions, but there isn't always an app for that.

Everything else—the vast array of business challenges that, due to financial constraints or practical considerations, could not be solved through custom development or COTS / SaaS—this has been the missed opportunity to transform and modernize in the cloud. **Low-code cloud transformation is the answer.**

Independent research backs up our big idea.



Low Code Cloud Transformation by the Numbers, Sources: Gartner (2019), outsystems (2019), In2 Project Management (2020)

Let's linger on the fourth statistic for a moment: Within four years—in the precise moment we are returning to work as the global economy is recovering from pandemic—65% of all app development will transition to low-code application platforms (LCAP).

In Microsoft's "three cloud" ecosystem, that low-code application platform is **Power Platform**, the very technology atop which our Return to the Workplace solution is built and deployed within your organization. This means that by adopting Power Platform to support **Return to Work**, you're also adopting the leading LCAP on which you can transform and modernize in the cloud as you **Return to Growth**. Modernizing your business applications with Power Platform is how we leverage your **Return to Work** investment to build agile business processes, generate value with proactive insights, activate digital selling, enable always-on service, build resilient supply chains, manage financial risk and reduce fraud... and more.

Building the Return to the Workplace solution on Power Platform is the key technical quality that allows organizations to invest in future growth while meeting their immediate return to work needs. The platform is a durable investment for today, and whatever comes next. With Power Platform, you're not just investing in today; you're investing in your future staying agile and innovative by easily creating intelligent, custom apps and automating processes with low-code solutions designed for everyone.

ONE PLATFORM FOR YOUR PRODUCTIVITY AND ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

Far beyond **Return to Work**, Power Platform is unique because—when properly managed and governed—it is a single platform serving three flavors of solution need (shown below).



Empower Citizen Developers

Straightforward tools in a secure space for your "citizen developers" to build productivity apps for themselves and their teams



Build Enterprise Solutions

Build mobile and web apps, business intelligence, automation, virtual agents, and AI atop a single source of truth for data



Leverage Pre-Built Functionality

Use case focused and industry specific solutions ready to meet business needs out of the box or to be further customized



Citizen Developers are the business users building components on Power Platform in service of their full-time job functions, but they're not full-time working on the platform. They don't work in IT. They use Power Platform to build apps, data components, automation, chatbots, and more using no-code / low-code tools. They generally focus on creating less complex productivity apps for themselves and their teams and are critical to accelerating cloud transformation and getting ahead of that app development experienced by 65% of all organizations.



Enterprise Solutions meet those essential and mission-critical business needs without which the organization cannot function. Power Platform enables full-time developers to create these solutions in the form of modern mobile and web apps, business intelligence and data visualization, automation, virtual agents, and AI, all sitting atop an integrated single source of truth for data. Organizations that have made the most of this are running billions of dollars each year through their mission-critical, globally deployed Power Platform solutions.



Pre-Built Functionality on Power Platform includes the "Microsoft Dynamics" applications that provide out of the box yet customizable solutions for sales, customer service, field service, human resources, finance, supply chain management, commerce, project operations, project service automation, marketing, and more. It also includes Microsoft-built industry accelerators that quicken the development of solutions in automotive, financial services (including banking and insurance), healthcare, education (including higher education and k-12), nonprofit, manufacturing, and media and communications verticals.

Together the citizen developer, enterprise solution, and pre-built functionality approaches allow us to modernize our organizations in the cloud by meeting new business needs, sunsetting legacy technologies (through migration to the platform), re-imagine existing applications, and digitize previously manual business activities.

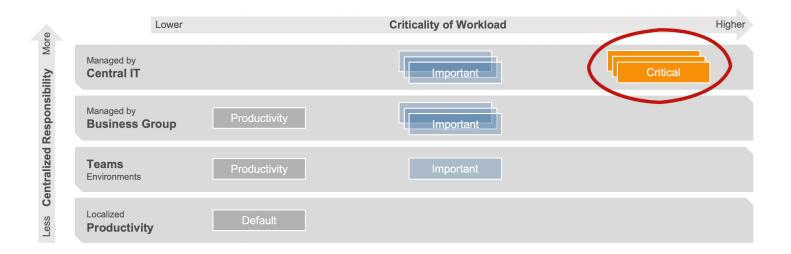
GETTING ESTABLISHED FOR LONG-TERM RETURN TO GROWTH

We unlock this value when we manage and govern the platform for long-term **Return to Growth**. Change management—a change of mindset—is certainly part of this. When speaking at conferences and with corporate leaders, I often say that IT must transition from being a *giver of things* to become an *enabler of people*. This is achievable through a comprehensive approach to Power Platform adoption that builds on the work we've already done, minimally establishing the platform for our **Return to Work** initiative.

For example, earlier we discussed the CoE Starter Kit, which is available for download and with documentation at http://aka.ms/coestarterkit. The Starter Kit is a deployable Power Platform solution that provides management and governance tools meant to be used alongside the Power Platform Admin Center available at https://aka.ms/ ppac. A few things to note, though, about the Starter Kit as you begin incorporating it into your broader Power Platform adoption strategy.

- Like the Return to the Workplace solution, the Starter Kit is a solution that must be deployed to a Power Platform environment (more on that below). We recommend creating a separate production environment named "Power Platform CoE – IMP – PROD" and deploy it there.
- Remember that the CoE Starter Kit is just a start. Deploying it does not mean that you have achieved a
 mature level of enterprise management and governance required to further scale the platform in the future.
 This concept and its accordant best practices are discussed at length in the Power Platform Adoption
 Framework.

Similarly, the Environmental Architecture Model in the Power Platform Adoption Framework provides a best-practices approach for using environments to segment and secure workloads on the platform. We ultimately recommend that you employ some version of that model as you **Return to Growth**. The placement of the "critical" **Return to Work** environments in the model is shown in the diagram below, with other environments dimmed in color to indicate where you should look to mature your platform architecture long-term.



Long-term, it is important to build your environmental architecture within the tenant using ALM best practices. The diagram above uses a stack of three rectangles to indicate environments for which we recommend ALM (DEV – TEST – PROD, at minimum, with automation recommended via Azure DevOps).

POWER PLATFORM ADOPTION FRAMEWORK

The Power Platform Adoption Framework is contributed to by business applications experts worldwide with this in mind.

Mature organizations realize that rigor, discipline, and best practices are needed to truly adopt the platform at scale. The Power Platform Adoption Framework helps them **get to value quickly**, educate and **grow their developer community**, create durable **partnerships between IT and the business**, continuously **drive ROI**, and **enable robust enterprise-grade solution development** alongside citizen developers creating productivity apps for themselves.

- Power Platform Adoption Framework, Second Edition

It addresses four critical topics that will help you get established for long-term Return to Growth and is available on Github at https://aka.ms/PPAF.



Power Platform

Introduction

How the Pieces Fit Together

Power Platform + Azure + M365



Adopting at Scale

How to Get Started

Ongoing Workstreams

Development Phases



Management + Governance

Enterprise Management Pillars

Center of Excellence (CoE)

Environmental Architecture



Nurturing the Community

Citizen Developers

Power Platform Developers

Organizational Partnerships

We therefore recommend that you make this ever-evolving framework the centerpiece of your **Return to Growth** with Power Platform strategy. Power Platform is a first-class citizen in the cloud transformation journey. Indeed, the platform exists alongside Azure and Microsoft 365 as one of Microsoft's "three clouds." We increasingly see this trend at forward-thinking organizations in some of the most complex or regulated sectors. They realize that Power Platform is an enterprise-grade platform for enterprise-grade workloads.

RESOURCES

We invite you to use the great resources below as you continue your **Return to Work, Return to Growth** journey on the Microsoft Power Platform.

Deploy the **Return to the Workplace** solution

https://aka.ms/returntowork

Strategy via Power Platform Adoption Framework

https://aka.ms/PPAF

Read the Admin & Governance Whitepaper

https://aka.ms/powerappsadminwhitepaper

Download the CoE Starter Kit

https://aka.ms/coestarterkitrepo

Hands on with the Admin in a Day training

https://aka.ms/powerapps/admininaday

Latest from Microsoft

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/admin/admin-guide

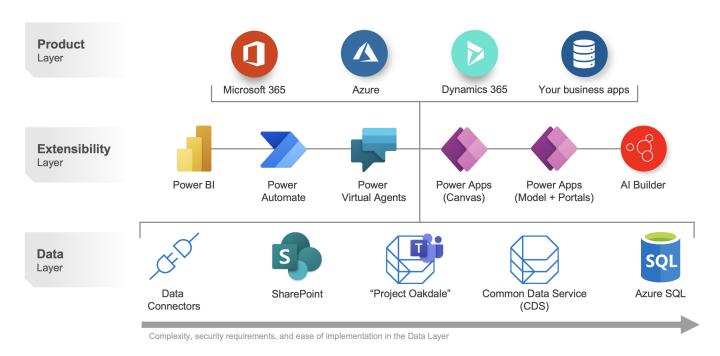
APPENDIX

ABOUT MICROSOFT POWER PLATFORM

Power Platform is the technical backbone of our **Return to the Workplace solutions**, which leverages both Power Apps and Power BI.

The **Power Platform Adoption Framework** is the authoritative strategy for adopting, managing, and governing Power Platform at scale. It is an open-source, community-driven collection of best practices contributed to by Microsoft business applications experts around the world, and then published by Applied Information Sciences (AIS) in contribution to that community. The second edition white paper is available here.

The diagram below depicts Power Platform within the Microsoft ecosystem, beginning with the **Data Layer** (where data is stored), the **Extensibility Layer** (Power Platform's solution development tools), and the **Product Layer** (products built atop of or integrated with Power Platform).



Power Platform in the Microsoft Ecosystem

There are five primary means of storing data for use in Power Platform.

Data Connectors

Approximately 400 data connectors are available out of the box, allowing Power Platform services to connect to both Microsoft and third-party data services. The idea here is that a connector is built once to allow—say—a mobile application to connect to the API of a third-party data source, and that connector can then be quickly snapped into the app without the need for writing additional code.

SharePoint (and Microsoft Lists)

For less complex data storage needs, data may be stored within a SharePoint list or the recently released Microsoft Lists product, and then accessed via solutions built-in Power Platform.

"Project Oakdale"

This technology provides a user-friendly relational data source upon which applications may be built directly within Microsoft Teams. It is the ideal data service for team and business group productivity applications that do not require the more full-featured Common Data Service (CDS).

Common Data Service (CDS)

Power Platform's "native" data source, we think of CDS not just as a data "source", but as a fully-featured service for relational data while enabling extensive capabilities such as mobile offline access, the common data model (CDM), business process logic and calculations, data management tools (e.g., integration with external sources, export service, export to Azure Data Lake, API access, etc.), security controls (e.g. roles, field level, teams and business units, auditing, hierarchical, sharing, etc.), application lifecycle management (ALM), and a vast ecosystem of third-party tooling and COTS applications.

Azure SQL

Power Platform solutions may be built directly atop data living in Microsoft Azure, thus providing a low-code approach to developing applications using data traditionally accessible only by custom-developed software.

Power Platform itself provides four core toolsets for low-code solution development. These tools are used by both citizen developers (i.e., those who develop low-code productivity solutions to enable their primary job function) and Power Platform developers (i.e., full-time, professional software developers) to create a wide range of solutions from personal productivity through those critical to the functioning of the enterprise.

- **Power App**s allow for the rapid development of incredible mobile and web applications. Our diagram depicts these as "canvas apps," "model-driven and portal apps," and Al Builder (low-code Al tools) because the canvas apps may be built atop any of the data sources shown, while model, portal, and Al builder are dependent on CDS.
- **Power Automate** enables business process automation, robotic process automation (RPA), and the automation of actions within Power Apps (and across much of the rest of the Microsoft stack).
- **Power Virtual Agents** provide a low-code capability for developing chatbots through which employees and customers may engage conversationally with your business data.
- **Power BI** is the industry-leading business intelligence and data visualization engine. It is widely deployed across the three Microsoft clouds and is native to Power Platform.

Finally, the "Product Layer" of our diagram shows a range of cloud products built atop of or integrated with Power Platform. The capabilities contained within the Microsoft 365 and Azure clouds integrate seamlessly with Power Platform (Teams, SharePoint, Data Lake, etc.). Dynamics 365 is a suite of Microsoft-built Power Apps designed to provide specific business functionality, such as sales automation or customer service. You need not deploy these applications to take advantage of the Return to the Workplace solution, or even to use the platform long-term, but they are there in the event you later wish to use the platform to meet those specific use cases.

ABOUT MICROSOFT'S RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE SOLUTION

The Return to the Workplace Solution was released in July 2020. The solution is one-hundred-percent free for organizations of all sizes to deploy in their Microsoft tenant atop the Power Platform². Designed for fast deployment and customization, the end-to-end components provide location readiness and safety tools for facility managers, self-service health and safety tools for employees, and case management tools for health and safety leaders.

As organizations around the world begin to re-open, they are sending employees back to physical workplaces, customers to physical stores, students and teachers into physical classrooms. Each organization's process will be different, so the solution is pre-built yet customizable, comprehensive yet adaptable to a specific industry, geographic, and organizational scenarios. It is built on Power Platform so that these customizations and adaptations could be performed using low-code tools. The solution includes four core components.

Note: For in-depth descriptions of functionality, visit https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/powerapps/sample-apps/ return-to-workplace/overview.

Location Readiness allows facility managers and task force leaders to determine the readiness of their facilities and efficiently manage their safe reopening by making informed decisions using critical factors like COVID-19 infection rates and safety supply availability.

Employee Health and Safety Management empowers your workforce with self-service tools that help them work safely, confidently, and productively, including a mobile app that lets them check in to work remotely and self-screen before entering facilities.

Workplace Care Management gives health and safety leaders the tools to actively manage COVID-19 cases, identify hot spots for safety improvement, and import data from third-party systems to determine exposure.

Location Management gives facility managers the tools they need to keep locations open safely, helping to maintain a safe environment with tools for monitoring occupancy, health supplies, safety procedures, and other facility-related best practices.

² Power Platform licensing costs apply, and the Return to the Workplace solution is offered at no cost.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Welch is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) for Business Applications, a frequent collaborator with the Power Platform product group at Microsoft, and a principal author of the *Power Platform Adoption Framework*. He focuses on adopting, managing, and governing Power Platform at scale for mission-critical, enterprise-grade solutions. He serves as the Director of Cloud Applications Strategy and Applied Information Sciences (AIS), and is the author of the book *Field Blends*, which—among other things—addresses the changing nature of technology in global society. Find him on Twitter @andrewdwelch and at www.RunwayView.com.



ABOUT APPLIED INFORMATION SCIENCES (AIS)

AIS is the 2020 – 2021 Microsoft worldwide Partner of the Year for Power Apps and Power Automate. Their global business applications team are experts in getting large organizations established on Power Platform, modernizing and migrating workloads, and managing at scale. AIS has worked with Microsoft on Power Platform since its inception. As a leader in taking financial services, healthcare, international NGO, government, and other enterprise clients to the cloud with Azure and Microsoft 365, AIS is able to extend the Power Platform across the entirety of Microsoft Technologies. With nearly 40 years of history, dedication, and deep understanding of Microsoft technologies, AIS has spent decades helping organizations use technology to transform the way people work to achieve desired business goals—from SharePoint to Microsoft 365 to Azure, and now Microsoft Power Platform. AIS has been a Microsoft Partner since 1994. They are a dedicated partner, with 10 Gold Competencies, 7 Microsoft MVPs and counting, and participation in many Microsoft programs – including the Microsoft Regional Director program and the Inner Circle.



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