

The background is a dark blue gradient with a stylized globe in the center. The globe is composed of a grid of dots in shades of blue and purple. Overlaid on the globe are several white lines connecting dots, forming a network or mesh structure. The lines are more prominent in the upper right and lower left areas.

# First Distribution: Enabling and scaling the partner network in South Africa.

# MAKING INNOVATION HAPPEN WITH A MICROSOFT FOCUSED CHANNEL.

First Distribution's role as a Microsoft Indirect Partner is not to just find partners to sell the Microsoft public cloud across South Africa and the African continent. We are heavily invested in partner business enablement and supporting our partners to scale their organisations.

## OUR ROLE: ENABLEMENT AND CREATING DEMAND AND SCALE.

We analyse all the local requirements for cloud solutions and enable our partners selling solutions by facilitating their costing model and building solutions on public cloud that they can take to market.

- The conversation is no longer focused on infrastructure as a service on its own.
- It's about capabilities and building out solutions that solve specific customer pain points.

Since the model is ever changing, we no longer see ourselves as simply a distributor. When it comes to being a Microsoft Cloud Provider, it's important for us to help evolve the channel. This moves beyond selling licenses and into a space that offers a platform with many benefits to our channel. We help them build out solutions and support their strategic relationships with their end customers.

## THE JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD IS, NOW MORE THAN EVER, A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

### Leveraging a P2P network to support migration to the cloud

*Leveraging the opportunity in market is critical when it comes to P2P (partner to partner) relationships and evolving this ecosystem.*

*We strongly believe that a partner cannot have the ability to do everything across all three clouds, however, we do not want them to move away from an opportunity should they not have the resources, skill or capability to fulfil customer requirements.*

*The P2P ecosystem is therefore becoming a valuable tool when we support partners in creating IP co-sell solutions.*

*First Distribution is a hub of knowledge in what works, what doesn't work, and what customers expect across various markets. This knowledge is critical for us to share and facilitate across our partner network.*

# HERE'S HOW WE ARE SUPPORTING FIRST DISTRIBUTION'S PARTNER NETWORK

## ENABLEMENT

**The challenge:** Customers have more and more cloud options to choose from, they are flooded with messaging and they're confused by what is and isn't relevant. Cipherwave needed a way to:

- Create messaging that talks directly to customer needs and differentiates them from other providers coming to market with alternative solutions.
- Develop messaging that specifically supports their products in the cloud space, including Private Cloud, Azure, O365, HE and backups.

*"We didn't actively market Microsoft offerings this financial year, as our goal was to focus on readiness. A presales cloud engineer has helped to formulate our dedicated offering. Engaging with First Distribution's team around this and other challenges has helped us solidify our messaging and key offering. Our Webstore, which is powered through First for Cloud, has also simplified the order process of O365 licenses. All of this has prepared us for growth.*

*"We have seen a massive increase in the need for managed cloud services, be it private cloud or public cloud. Many customers have come to us for assistance with improved or more stable and reliable cloud services to manage and handle their workloads. Our ability to understand customer needs has helped us to win some significant customer cloud projects."*

**Wayne D'sa**, Managing Director, CipherWave

First for Cloud effectively lets partners offer their own products and services on their own webstore, powered by First Distribution. The webstore is fully branded for the partner and gives the partner the ability to add Microsoft and 22 other brands, products and services through their own portal. This tool can be leveraged to either manage the end-customer's licensing requirements with direct API integration into the vendor, or be exposed publicly to give customers a self-service capability, with only a few clicks to self-provision.

## SUPPORTING DEMAND AND SCALE

**The challenge:** Infoverge Solutions had a number of key objectives for 2019/2020:

- Achieve Microsoft Gold Accreditation.
- Scale the business to have a footprint in at least five regions across SADC including South Africa.
- Increase its customer base.
- Increase its credible partnership base.
- Be nominated in one of the Microsoft awards categories.
- Build the Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM practice.

*“First Distribution assists its partners in every way possible to scale their Microsoft businesses. The professional guidance and support, skills and competency of First Distribution’s team makes it easier for us as a partner together and navigate the Microsoft ecosystem. This in turn gives us a clear sense of direction to move our business forward with sound knowledge.”*

“As a result, I am proud to mention that we are Microsoft Silver Accredited on the following competencies:

- Data Analytics
- Datacenter
- Messaging
- Application Development
- Collaboration and Content
- Project and Portfolio Management
- Cloud Productivity

*Itumeleng Chuene, Business Development Manager, InfoVerge Solutions*

### **Stand-out results achieved by InfoVerge over the past 12 months:**

- Obtain Microsoft Silver Accreditation on key core competencies (Data Analytics, Application Development, Project and Portfolio Management, and Cloud Productivity).
- Getting business outside Gauteng and establishing a satellite office in the Free State (Bloemfontein).
- Increasing its customer base by nearly 50% in the Cloud Productivity area, which includes amongst other services Activation, Deployment, and Implementation of Microsoft 365 productivity suite.
- Participate in the Microsoft Black-Owned Programme initiative, which aims at enabling and empowering Black-owned IT companies.

## SUPPORTING DEMAND AND SCALE

**The challenge:** Growing annuity income through cloud services was a key objective for AVeS in the 2019/20 financial year. The problem was developing and seeding successful marketing campaigns that were technology orientated, and that could land key messaging to speak to decision makers.

*“First Distribution has been remarkable in co-developing go-to-market IP co-sell opportunities with AVeS as well as sponsoring the marketing for it. Additionally, the support and willingness to assist has been second to none. A stand-out result for us in particular has been the development of the SecureCloud campaign and overall cloud sales.”*

**Charndré Mey**, Infrastructure Technical Director, [aves.co.za](https://aves.co.za)





## SUPPORTING DEMAND AND SCALE

**The challenge:** In the 2019/20 financial year, iSquared's key objectives were growth and new business acquisition. Achieving quality creative design, demand generation and an online store that incentivised customers to buy and retain iSquared's services were all critical to achieving these objectives.

*"First Distribution's team identified our focus areas and the investment that they could make to support our growth plans. The Office 365 campaign was launched once our new First for Cloud webstore was made active, and this generated some amazing content and leads. Launching during South Africa's lockdown period due to Covid-19 has meant that the response is slower than we had anticipated, but we are confident that sales will pick up sharply once everyone is out of isolation."*

*"One stand-out success over the past 12 months was migrating 100% of our Microsoft CSP direct base to First Distribution in one day, which was largely as a result of First Distribution support, manually migrating each customer with us."*

**Jonathan Allmayer**, Managing Director, iSquared

## SUPPORTING DEMAND AND SCALE

**The challenge:** In 2019/20, tdglobal's key objective was to extend its cloud presence, specifically working with FD on Azure. In the current environment, tdglobal's main challenge was to develop more inbound sales-related activities to help its sales teams and extend its already formidable market presence.

*"First Distribution has been a trusted partner since the end of last year. The team is in constant communication and discussions with tdglobal to ensure our joint Azure initiative gets off the ground. Stellar professional support and a strong, albeit new, partnership with the First Distribution team has been a breath of fresh air, and is echoed by our whole team."*

**Tommy Erlank**, Data Director, tdglobal

