

How to Partner with AWS: Steps, Benefits, and Success

Teaming up with AWS can give your business a serious boost. Whether you run a small startup or lead a large company, partnering with AWS means tapping into reliable cloud tech, global infrastructure, and deep technical support. You get the tools to scale fast, reach more customers, and simplify your operations.

With AWS, you can use proven resources and expert guidance that help keep your business strong as you grow. This post covers what you need to know, from partnership steps to the real-world benefits you'll see along the way.

Understanding the AWS Partner Network (APN)

If your business is looking for new ways to grow with AWS, the AWS Partner Network (APN) is where the journey starts. Think of APN as your front-row seat to AWS programs, tools, and experts. From training to technical boosts and marketing support, APN sets you up with real help and resources that keep your business moving forward.

APN Overview and Benefits

The AWS Partner Network is the official support system for businesses building, selling, or providing services on AWS. Here's what makes joining APN a smart move:

- **Training and Certifications:** Members get access to exclusive AWS training, advanced certifications, and partner-only bootcamps. This helps your team stay sharp and AWS-savvy.
- **Marketing Support:** AWS promotes its partners in many ways, including partner solution finders, case studies, and joint marketing activities. This opens new doors and helps you win trust faster.
- **Technical Benefits:** Get direct access to AWS engineers, solution architects, and early previews of new AWS features, so your team stays ahead.
- **Funding and Credits:** The APN provides special funding programs like Proof-of-Concept funding and credits for partners building new solutions.
- **Partner Programs:** Special programs target different needs, from SaaS development to public sector solutions, all aimed at helping your business do more with AWS.

Joining the APN means you're not just another vendor, you're part of a trusted circle with a direct line to AWS support and new customers.

Types of AWS Partnerships

The APN groups partners into different tracks, each with its own focus and benefits. Here's how they break down:

- **Consulting Partners:** These are system integrators, agencies, or managed service providers who help clients design, architect, build, migrate, or manage AWS workloads.
- **Technology Partners:** Technology partners build products that integrate with or run on AWS. This includes software vendors, hardware makers, and tools providers.
- **Service Delivery Partners:** These partners show deep expertise in delivering specific AWS services, like databases, machine learning, or migration.
- **Other Specializations:** AWS also recognizes partners in areas like Reseller, Training, Public Sector, and more. These classifications help customers quickly find the type of expert they need.

Each partner type has access to resources designed for that focus, from technical support to special marketing paths.

Requirements and Costs Involved

Joining the APN comes with a few hoops but meeting them sets your business apart. Here's what to expect:

- **Eligibility:** Any company with a tax ID can apply. AWS reviews applications to ensure partners are ready to deliver high standards.
- **Tiered Structure:** The APN has four main tiers, Registered, Select, Advanced, and Premier. Each unlocks greater benefits but also higher requirements.
- **Annual Fees:** The Registered tier is free to join. Select, Advanced, and Premier tiers have annual fees, usually starting around \$2,500. This investment unlocks extra resources and perks.
- **Certification Requirements:** AWS wants partners who know their stuff. Each tier has certification goals, such as having a certain number of AWS Certified staff on hand.
- **Customer References:** To move up tiers, partners need to show successful AWS projects and happy customers. This keeps quality high and builds trust with future clients.

By meeting these requirements, companies prove their AWS expertise and dedication to high standards. Joining APN means real commitment—but with every step up, you get bigger rewards and more ways to grow with AWS.

Steps to Becoming an AWS Partner

Becoming an AWS Partner starts with clear goals and takes focused work, but the outcomes can transform your business. Each step, from early research to your final profile, helps build a solid path for lasting results. Understanding this journey will guide you through every stage so you can set up for partnership success.

Assessing Business Readiness and Strategic Fit

Before jumping into the AWS Partner Network, check if the move aligns with your business vision and strengths. AWS wants partners who can add real value to their customers, so it pays to be honest with your self-assessment.

Ask these questions to get started:

- Does your core business depend on cloud solutions?
- Do your customers already demand or use AWS services?
- Does your team have (or want to gain) AWS technical expertise?
- Can you deliver support and guidance to clients using AWS?

Think about your resources and bandwidth. Partnering takes time, training, and ongoing effort. If cloud isn't already a part of your plan, consider where AWS fits in your roadmap. It helps to map out a one-year and three-year vision to check if AWS lines up with your future.

Application Process and Key Documentation

Once you decide AWS is right for your business, it's time to apply. The AWS Partner application is straightforward, but complete and accurate details make a strong first impression.

To apply, follow these steps:

1. **Create an AWS Partner Central Account:** It's your home for program resources and the application portal.
2. **Fill in Basic Company Details:** You'll need general info like your tax ID, headquarters address, and official contacts.
3. **Select Your Partner Path:** Choose based on what you offer: Consulting, Technology, or another specialty.
4. **Complete the APN Profile:** List your AWS expertise, services, and key differentiators.

Key documents you may need:

- Proof of business registration (tax ID or similar)
- Customer references or case studies (if applying for Select tier or higher)
- Staff certification records
- Company logo and marketing copy

Meeting AWS Certification and Training Requirements

AWS sets high standards for partners because it protects their brand and customers. That means your team must learn, certify, and prove their skills.

Depending on your target tier (Registered, Select, Advanced, Premier), review the certification minimums. AWS commonly expects:

- 2-4 AWS Certified staff for Select
- Higher numbers for Advanced and Premier

Recommended certifications include:

- AWS Certified Solutions Architect (most popular)
- AWS Certified Developer
- AWS Certified SysOps Administrator

Encourage your technical leads to complete both foundational and specialty exams. Credentials boost your team's skills and show AWS you're committed.

Building a Partner Profile and Validation

A strong public partner profile brings in leads and opens doors. After acceptance, spend time crafting a profile that covers your key strengths.

Include in your profile:

- A short, customer-friendly description of your AWS services
- Industries you serve (healthcare, fintech, e-commerce, etc.)
- Verified AWS certifications and approved case studies
- Project success stories with metrics or quotes

AWS will validate your profile for accuracy and may request updates if things aren't clear. Keep it updated as your business grows.

Pro tip: Take time to gather positive customer feedback to highlight in your profile. Social proof makes your profile stand out to future clients and AWS teams.

Maximizing Value as an AWS Partner

Once you're in the AWS Partner Network, real growth starts with knowing how to use everything AWS offers. Being a partner is more than a badge, it's a direct route to new business, hands-on support, and technical advancement. The key is getting involved with AWS programs, standing out in joint marketing, and taking advantage of training and enablement. Here's how to get the most from your partnership.

Utilizing Partner Programs and Resources

AWS has built a range of programs to help partners boost credibility, expand services, and win more customers. By taking part, you can showcase expertise and attract clients looking for proven AWS specialists.

Some of the most valuable partner programs and resources include:

- **AWS Competency Program:** This recognizes partners who show technical excellence and customer success in key areas like migration, security, machine learning, or industry verticals. Earning a Competency helps you stand out during AWS-led customer searches.
- **AWS Service Delivery Program:** If you have deep know-how delivering specific AWS services (like Lambda, Amazon RDS, or Amazon Connect), this program gives customers confidence in your abilities. These designations often lead to qualified leads from AWS field teams.
- **Co-Selling Opportunities:** As a top-tier partner, you can work with AWS sales teams directly. AWS may refer prospects, invite you to joint client calls, or include your solutions alongside their offerings, giving you wider market reach.

AWS also offers funding programs (for Proof-of-Concepts and pilots), technical validation support, and partner solution libraries to get your offerings in front of the right audience. Taking these steps puts your business where AWS customers look first.

Marketing and Co-Selling with AWS

Promoting your solutions alongside AWS magnifies your message and attracts new leads. Partners who engage in joint marketing see better awareness and more qualified prospects.

APN Marketing Central is a hub where you can:

- Launch co-branded campaigns (email, digital, social).
- Access ready-made assets and templates for faster outreach.
- Learn best practices from AWS marketing experts.

AWS customer references are a secret weapon. Showcase real client wins, use cases, and testimonials with AWS support and branding. These stories serve as trust signals, making it easier to win business. Partners can submit case studies to AWS, and with approval, gain wider exposure through AWS sites, webinars, and events.

Co-selling lets you work hand-in-hand with AWS reps. This could mean running joint presentations, sharing sales leads, or even presenting at AWS-sponsored events. The process is straightforward and supported by tools within the Partner Central portal, making collaboration as easy as possible.

Accessing Training, Support, and Technical Enablement

AWS invests heavily in partner training so your team can stay ahead. Take full advantage of the extensive learning and enablement resources.

Keyways to level up your technical and sales teams include:

- **Training and Certification:** Free and discounted courses, bootcamps, and certification vouchers for your staff. These range from basic cloud fundamentals to advanced architecture or DevOps.
- **Partner Solution Architects:** Direct access to AWS technical experts who'll help you scope solutions, review architectures, and prep for customer proposals.
- **Support Plans:** Enhanced support tiers for partners give prompt access to troubleshooting, technical case management, and escalation paths if issues get complex.
- **Workshops and Immersion Days:** Hands-on sessions, sometimes with AWS engineers, to train your team or run joint demos for your clients.

Consistently investing in these areas means you always have a skilled team and can offer customers the latest AWS solutions. This not only wins projects, it protects your reputation as a trusted AWS advisor.

By tapping into these programs, your AWS partnership becomes a launchpad for both business growth and technical strength.

Best Practices for a Successful Long-Term AWS Partnership

Building a strong, long-term partnership with AWS is about more than signing up and following the rules. It's about growing together, staying sharp, and always looking for new ways to grow your teams and your business alongside AWS. Simple habits set you apart—like continuous learning, working on joint projects, and taking part in the wider AWS partner community

Maintaining Certifications and Continuous Learning

Up-to-date AWS certifications aren't just a requirement—they're your ticket to new business and deeper trust. The best AWS partners encourage their teams to keep learning, so skills never get stale and you're always ready for new AWS launches.

- **Build a culture of learning:** Set time aside for team members to study and train regularly. Offer exam vouchers, group study sessions, and incentives for new certifications.
- **Stay current:** AWS updates its tools all the time. Assign a team lead to track AWS release notes and announce important changes at team meetings.
- **Encourage specialty certifications:** Go beyond basics. Specialists in security, machine learning, or data analytics can help your team win more complex projects.

Joint Solution Development and Innovation with AWS

Success as an AWS partner grows when you work together on new tech, products, and use cases. Don't just sell what you know, build something new with AWS teams.

Here are a few practical ways to collaborate:

- **Share your idea early:** Reach out to AWS partner managers with ideas for joint solutions, integrations, or new features.
- **Take part in pilot programs:** AWS runs early-adopter programs and beta tests. These offer direct feedback and sometimes lead to co-marketing or special launches.
- **Mix teams:** Pair your top developers or architects with AWS solution architects. This leads to stronger, faster build cycles and unique value.

Investing in joint innovation leads to better offerings and deeper trust with AWS.

Engaging in the AWS Partner Community

Being part of the AWS Partner Community adds weight to your relationship and helps your team grow faster. Active partners learn first, make valuable contacts, and find new ways to expand their reach.

Ways to get the most from the community:

- **Join regional and global partner events:** AWS hosts summits, webinars, and workshops. These help you discover new programs and bring back new skills.
- **Share knowledge:** Contribute blog posts, technical guides, or case studies to AWS community forums or partner portals. This builds your authority and helps others.
- **Network with other partners:** Relationships with fellow partners often lead to project referrals, knowledge sharing, or even new collaborations.

The more your business and team lean into the AWS partner community, the more likely you are to spot and seize new opportunities before anyone else.

Conclusion

AWS partnership opens doors to real growth, new customers, and stronger teams. With the right steps and steady effort, your business can tap into training, programs, and joint opportunities that set you apart.

Now is the perfect time to act if you're thinking about joining AWS as a partner. Follow the path, stick to best practices, and your hard work will pay off.