Chris Blackburn

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

With over 25 years of professional experience in technology, Chris has spent the last 20 years consulting with a core focus in the Microsoft space. Having an enthusiasm and love for all things Microsoft, Chris has helped lead countless organizations and governments over the last decade successfully shift their technology stack to the cloud leveraging Microsoft 365 and Azure.

Chris brings a specialized approach on both architecting and implementing the full Microsoft 365 suite, covering the Identity, Collaboration, Security & Compliance, and Endpoint Management with a focus on implementing these based on ZeroTrust pillars. Over the last 10 years, he has worked to help build a successful and well recognized Modern Workplace practice for a National Solution Provider, interacting regularly with teams across the Microsoft Sales and Partner organizations, and a key contributor to the go-to-market strategies around Modern Workplace, Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A), and Microsoft Copilot.

With an extensive 20+ years of Microsoft exams under his belt, frequent blogging on the Microsoft 365, experience writing material and training for Microsoft exams, and speaking engagements for the local Minnesota Microsoft 365 User Group, which he sits as a board member, his breath in the Microsoft space goes beyond supporting and maintaining complex Microsoft environments and into establishing standards of practice for successfully repeating these deployments.

TECHNICAL SKILLS
- Microsoft 365 Copilot envisioning, configuring, deploying & prompting
- Microsoft 365 Enterprise deployments, ADFS / Hybrid configuration, MS Certified Administrator
    - Global Enterprise deployment of E3/E5 for 1-100k+ users
    - Full stack Identity, Security, Compliance, Collaboration & Endpoint Management
    - Exchange, OneDrive, Teams, SharePoint (Administration)
- Microsoft Azure IaaS deployments, including VM configuration and networking
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2000-2019, MS Certified Enterprise Messaging Admin
    - Global Enterprise deployments with HLB, CAS arrays & DAGs for 1-100k+ mailboxes
    - Hosted Exchange deployments for multi-tenant environment, for 1-100k+ mailboxes
- Microsoft OCS, Lync Server 2010/2013 & Skype for Business 2015
    - IM/Presence, Conferencing, Enterprise Voice, & Federation workloads
    - Global Enterprise deployments with HLB and enterprise pools
    - SIP/PTSN Integration w/ gateways (AudioCodes) & phone systems (Cisco, Mitel, Avaya, Asterisk)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000- 2019, MS Certified Administrator
- Microsoft System Center 2007/2012 + Current Branch: Configuration Manager, Orchestrator
- Microsoft Windows Server 2000-2019 technologies: Active Directory, Remote Desktop, IIS, Networking
- Microsoft Windows desktop platforms, from Windows 95 to present
- Microsoft Office productivity suites, from Office 95 to present
- Server management software from vendors such as Dell, HP, and IBM
- Server storage platforms from vendors such as Dell, HP, IBM, EMC, & NetApp
- Cisco network hardware - routers, switches, & firewalls
- Firewalls from vendors such as Watchguard, Sonicwall, & Fortinet
- Virtualization platforms from vendors such as VMware, Microsoft, & Citrix
- Open source PBX (Asterisk) and other Linux platforms such as RedHat, OpenSolaris, Centos, & FreeBSD

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Concurrency

Solutions Architect / Capability Lead –Modern Workplace   July 2015 – Present

- Lead Modern Workplace consultant
- Drives technical direction our how Concurrency delivers the full the Microsoft 365 E5 stack along with Microsoft Copilot to customers
- Works with clients globally in an enterprise architect capacity to provide both leadership and implementation guidance around Microsoft 365 technology stack, following the Agile methodology.
- Engages with account executives as presales architect at potential clients to understand problems and propose technical solutions along with cost analysts for licensing and project delivery
- Engages with Concurrency and Microsoft Sellers to align for selling solutions and products into clients
- Works with Concurrency to create solution offerings for the Microsoft partner Marketplace and present for Solution Technical Reviews
- Works with Concurrency to define and document standards of practice to present to Microsoft audits for awarding of Specialization Program designations (Security, Azure Virtual Desktop)
- Participates in dozens of speaking engagements on the Microsoft 365 suite, Microsoft 365 Copilot, and Zero Trust pillars

Minnesota Microsoft 365 User Group (MNCloudLLC)

Sponsorship Coordinator   January 2024 – Present

- Sits on the board of the user group, recognized as one of the top national Microsoft 365 user groups in the United States
- Responsible for outreach to local and national technology organizations for their sponsorship of the monthly virtual user groups meetings as well as biannual in-person (Spring/Fall) workshop events
- Responsible for creating marketing collateral around the user group and events
- Assists with planning and execution of biannual (Spring/Fall) workshop events

Robert Half Technology

Office 365 Architect   March 2015 – June 2015

- Consultant for 1300 user Minnesota county government as lead architect for their Office 365 deployment.
- Provided architectural guidance around best practices for each of the technology stacks found in Office 365: Exchange, Lync, SharePoint, & Office Pro Plus.
- Assisted in deployment of Office 365 technologies alongside staff from different ITS teams within the county government.
- Provided high level documentation around the implementation and support of the Office 365 technologies.

RBA Consulting

Infrastructure Consultant   October 2012 – February 2015

- Worked as an infrastructure engineer with project implementations and architecture of large Microsoft environment, including familiarity with ITIL processes for project implementation and change control.
- Worked closely with client management, staff, and members of multiple business units, as well as preferred hardware and service vendors.
- Engaged with account executives as presales engineer at potential clients.

- Creation of internal technical processes and documentation.
- Responsible for architecting & deploying technologies not only in the Microsoft Unified Communications stack (Exchange, Lync, Office 365), but also Cloud Datacenter (Identity, Infrastructure, EMS) and Systems Management (SCCM).

Signature Consulting

Enterprise Messaging Architect   January 2012 – October 2012

- Consultant for Bloomington-based company with 4000 users worldwide as MS Exchange lead architect.
- Worked on Messaging team to provide post-migration support and hardening the environment for stability.
- Engaged in MS Health Check, and developed/executed task list to bring Exchange under MS guidelines.
- Lead architect on MS Lync project, designing and implementing LAB/PROD environment.
- Actively involved in support issues and change control process.

Nextek, LLC

Cloud Services Manager (virtual), Contractor   September 2005 – October 2011

- Managing and maintaining cloud environments across 3 datacenters for clients in over 25 states
- Worked on projects and provided technical support to clients and staff.
- Maintained over 200 VMs on top of 30 VMware 4.5/5.5 ESXi servers in 20 different datacenters.
- Deployed VMs on top of Dell Equalogic SANs using Dell/HP networking & Kemp load balancers.
- Implemented Microsoft environment using IIS in a server farm deployment providing web hosting.
- Implemented MS Exchange 2007 & 2010 in hosted environment for over 2000+ mailboxes.

Phoenix Technology Solutions, LLC

Technical Manager   February 2006 - August 2011

- Worked with 200+ companies in maintaining and improving their Windows server infrastructures.
- Managed and maintained 50+ unique VMWare ESXi deployments with both locally attached storage and storage area networks.
- Implemented, upgraded, and managed Exchange 2003, 2007 & 2010 in SMB environments.
- Implemented Microsoft OCS 2007 R2 with migrations to Microsoft Lync Server 2010 with Enterprise Voice.
- Supervised 5 field technicians and provided technical expertise for solving complex problems.
- Provided datacenter implementation and administration for unique customer environments.
- Used writing skills to develop technical documents for admins and proposals for C-class management.

Engineered Management Solutions, LLC

Operations Manager   March 2001 - February 2006

- Worked with over 100+ companies in maintaining and improving their Windows server infrastructures.
- Implemented, upgraded, and managed Exchange 2000 & 2003 in SMB environments.
- Supervised 2 field technicians and provided technical expertise for solving complex problems.
- Coordinated with vendors to place orders and resolve issues.
- Used writing skills to develop technical documents for admins and proposals for C-class management.

EDUCATION and TRAINING

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, COMPUTER NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY – JANUARY 2003
SOUTHEAST COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

DALE CARNEGIE LEADERSHIP TRAINING – DECEMBER 2009

CERTIFICATIONS (ACTIVE)
- Microsoft Security Operations Analyst (SC-200)
- Microsoft Identity and Access Administrator Associate (SC-300)
- Microsoft 365 Security Administration (MS-500)
- Microsoft 365 Fundamentals (MS-900)

CERTIFICATIONS (RETIRED)
- Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate - Office 365
- Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate - Enterprise Mobility Suite
- Microsoft Certified Systems Expert: Messaging on Exchange 2013
- Microsoft Certified Systems Expert: Server Infrastructure on Windows Server 2012
- Microsoft Certified Systems Associate - Windows Server 2012
- Microsoft Enterprise Messaging Administrator on Exchange 2010
- Microsoft Certified IT Professional - Enterprise Support Technician
- Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer - Windows 2000 / 2003
- Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator - Windows Server 2000 / 2003
- Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist
  - Windows Server 2008 Active Directory, Configuration
  - Windows Server 2008 Applications Infrastructure, Configuration
  - Windows Server 2008 Network Infrastructure, Configuration
  - Windows Mobile 6.5, Configuration
  - Microsoft Windows Vista, Configuration
  - Windows Server 2003 Hosting, Configuration and Management
  - SQL Server 2005

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Item Writer, Exam, Microsoft 70-398 - Planning for and Managing Devices in the Enterprise
- Item Writer, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), 70-398 - Planning for and Managing Devices in the Enterprise
- Item Writer, Exam, Microsoft 70-398 - Microsoft 365 Fundamentals
- Speaking Engagement, Techfuse (MN Convention Center) 2015, *Managing Mobile Devices with EMS*
- Speaking Engagement, MMS (Mall of America) 2016, *The Rest of EMS is Security - More than Intune*
- Speaking Engagement, MMS (Mall of America) 2016, *Naked and Vulnerable: A Cybersecurity Starter Kit*
- Speaking Engagement, Azure Science Fair (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2017, *Azure MFA Cloud and On-premises Server*
- Speaking Engagement, Azure Science Fair (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2017, *Converging and Diverging Microsoft Cloud Instances*

- Speaking Engagement, Windows 10 Conference (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2017, *Planning and Deploying Windows 10 in the Enterprise*
- Speaking Engagement, MN O365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2019, *Exchange Online Protection - The Proactive Side of Email Hygene*
- Speaking Engagement, MN O365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2019, *Teams Live Events*
- Speaking Engagement, Concurrency Technology Impact Summit (Sheraton Minnetonka, MN) 2019, *Teams Live Events, Teams Voice, PSTN and Direct Routing*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2020, *End-to-end data protections with Microsoft 365*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) 2021, *Score One for the Team*
- Speaking Engagement, MMS (Miami) 2021, *What Flavor of Defender Would You Like?*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) June 2022, *Your Modern Managed Server Guide*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) February 2023, *The Business Case for Defender is More Than Malware*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG Spring Workshop Day (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) May 2023, *ABCs of MnA*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG Spring Workshop Day (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) May 2023, *Intune Best Practices + Pitfalls + Ensuring Secure Device Management*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG Fall Workshop Day (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) October 2023, *Modern Desktop Conversion*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG Fall Workshop Day (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) October 2023, *Do you THINK you're ready for Copilot?*
- Speaking Engagement, MN M365 UG (Microsoft MTC Edina, MN) February 2024, *Go Further with the Intune Suite*