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Resilient Ecosystem Growth in a Structurally Constrained Market

How Partners Build Durable Growth with Tencent Cloud

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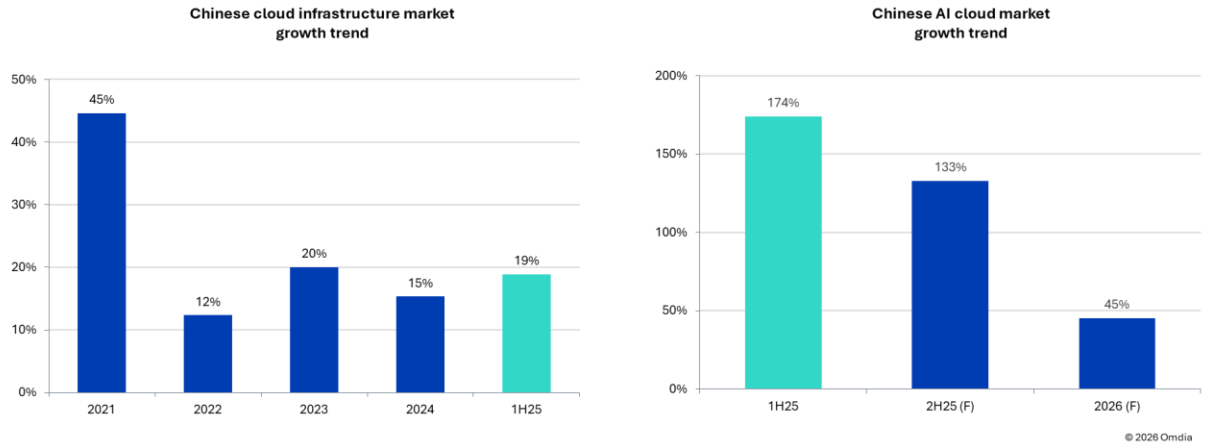
1. Market dynamics shift: from scale-driven expansion to structurally constrained growth

China’s cloud infrastructure services market is undergoing a clear phase transition. After several years of rapid, scale-driven expansion, overall growth momentum has moderated as the market enters a more mature stage. According to Omdia estimates, annual growth declined from around 45% in 2021 to approximately 19% in 1H25. This slowdown does not reflect a contraction in underlying demand, but rather a structural shift in how growth is generated.

As the market matures, broad adoption alone is no longer sufficient to sustain expansion. Price competition has become normalized, customer scrutiny over ROI has intensified, and core infrastructure services are increasingly commoditized. Since 2024, major Chinese cloud providers have implemented multiple rounds of price adjustments across core offerings. While these actions have helped stimulate short-term consumption, they have also continued to erode value captured per unit of cloud resource, reducing the effectiveness of growth models that rely predominantly on volume expansion.

Figure 1: AI cloud market far outpacing growth in cloud infrastructure services



Source: Omdia

In this context, incremental growth is increasingly concentrated in higher-complexity scenarios rather than broad-based usage expansion.

Two forces are becoming central: the acceleration of enterprise AI adoption and the overseas expansion of Chinese enterprises. Omdia data shows that China's AI cloud market grew approximately 174% in 1H25, nearly tripling year-on-year (YoY), and far outpacing growth in cloud infrastructure services. At the same time, over 70% of enterprises are either actively pursuing or planning to localize operations in overseas markets.

These dynamics open new avenues for cloud spending but also raise the execution bar for cloud projects, particularly for enterprises and their delivery partners. AI deployments and cross-regional operations typically involve longer delivery cycles, deeper system integration, and more stringent regulatory, security, and operational requirements than traditional infrastructure-focused projects. Consequently, execution risk becomes more material, and the cost of failure is more visible.

Enterprise cloud consumption behavior is evolving as a result. Decision-making is shifting from an emphasis on initial adoption and short-term price advantages to demonstrable business outcomes, delivery reliability, and end-to-end execution capability. Omdia research shows that around two-thirds of customers now prioritize end-to-end solution capability, delivery reliability, and demonstrable business outcomes. These factors outweigh short-term price advantages when selecting cloud partners. This is especially evident in AI and overseas expansion scenarios, where execution failures can translate directly into material commercial and compliance risks.

Overall, China's cloud infrastructure services market has not lost its growth potential. However, growth is increasingly anchored in complex, execution-intensive use cases rather than automatic consumption expansion. This shift is reshaping not only competitive dynamics among cloud providers, but also the ways in which partners can realistically participate in—and capture—future growth.

2. Partner growth under pressure: structural limits of traditional operating models

For a growing share of enterprise customers, sustained delivery capability and robust risk management are no longer differentiators; they are minimum requirements. This shift is exposing fundamental weaknesses in traditional channel operating models. Many of these models were designed for an environment in which scale expansion and transactional efficiency reliably translated into growth—an environment that no longer exists.

Cloud demand remains, but growth is no longer driven solely by selling more cloud services or expanding customer coverage. During the early expansion phase of the Chinese cloud market, partner success was largely driven by volume. Rising consumption, combined with relatively stable margins on core infrastructure services, allowed revenue growth to be achieved through scale alone. Under those conditions, sales execution was the primary differentiator, while project complexity and long-term delivery risk remained broadly manageable. Transactional efficiency was sufficient to sustain growth.

That logic is now breaking down. As growth in China's cloud services market moderates and price competition becomes a persistent feature rather than an episodic tactic, the economic foundations of scale-led channel models have weakened. Omdia research shows that average resale margins for cloud infrastructure-related services have declined by approximately 5–10 percentage points over the past two to three years, weakening the economics of scale-led channel models. Margin compression in core infrastructure services has reduced returns from simply selling more capacity, diminishing the effectiveness of transaction-centric growth strategies.

At the same time, incremental growth is increasingly concentrated in more complex areas, particularly AI-driven applications and cross-regional deployments. These projects offer higher potential value but require a fundamentally different participation model—one defined by deeper upfront engagement, longer delivery cycles, and sustained execution

responsibility. Interviews conducted by Omdia indicate that AI and cross-regional cloud projects typically involve extended pre-sales preparation, longer delivery cycles, and multiple rounds of solution design, architectural planning, and regulatory assessment before meaningful consumption begins.

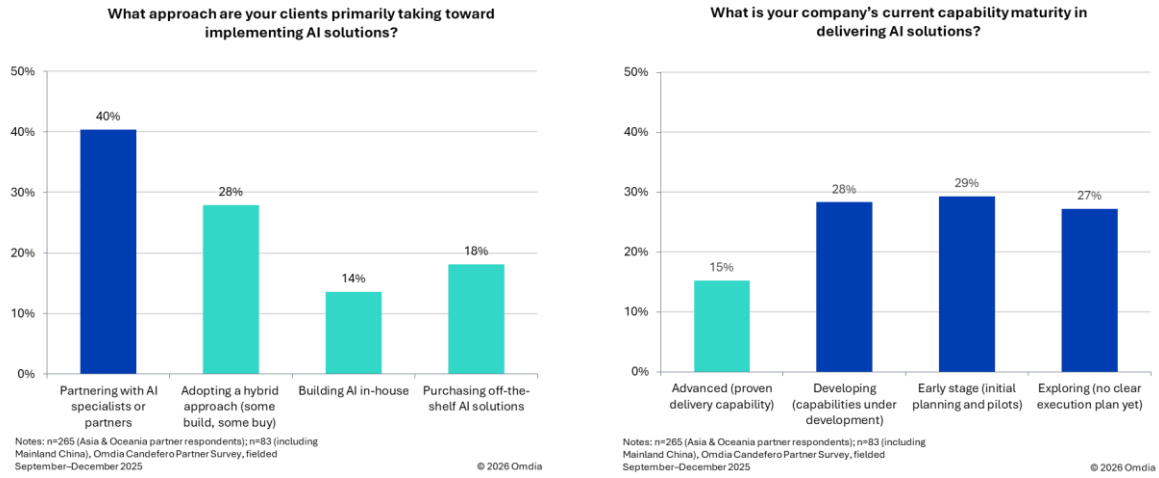
As a result, partners must increasingly absorb substantial upfront investment well ahead of commercial return. Resources must be committed to solution design, architecture definition, compliance readiness, and delivery capability build-out, often over extended project timelines and with materially higher execution risks. In practice, this shifts the economics of participation: monetization becomes slower, more capital-intensive, and more uncertain.

Crucially, this transition does not reduce the importance of partners within the cloud ecosystem. Instead, it redefines what effective participation entails. For enterprise customers pursuing AI adoption and overseas expansion, delivery capability and risk management are now baseline expectations rather than value-added capabilities. The central question is no longer whether opportunities exist, but whether established partner operating models are equipped to support the sustained investment and long-term value creation these opportunities demand.

Omdia research highlights the scale of this misalignment. While partner interviews consistently indicate strong recognition of the growth potential associated with AI-driven and cross-regional projects, survey data suggests that delivery readiness remains uneven.

On the demand side, enterprise AI adoption is taking shape, with implementation approaches largely partner-led or hybrid, rather than fully in-house. On the supply side, however, only 15% of partners actively engaged in AI report advanced delivery capabilities with proven implementation success. The majority still operate in development, early planning, or exploratory stages. As growth becomes increasingly dependent on complex, service-intensive projects, operating models optimized for low-risk, transaction-led business are proving insufficient to sustain large-scale growth.

Figure 2: A Growing gap between AI demand and partner delivery readiness



Source: Omdia

The pressure facing partners today stems not from shrinking market opportunities, but from a growing misalignment between legacy operating assumptions and the realities of how cloud growth is now generated. Where transaction-driven models formed under earlier market conditions continue to dominate, constrained growth is likely to become a structural outcome rather than a temporary disruption.

3. Partners remain essential: building resilient growth structures

3.1 Partners remain relevant, but value capture is misaligned

Despite intensifying growth pressure, partners remain vital to cloud delivery and customer value realization. Omdia research consistently shows that partners remain deeply embedded across key stages of the customer lifecycle, including customer acquisition, complex solution delivery, and ongoing operations. Their role is particularly evident in AI-driven, industry-specific, and cross-regional deployments, where local execution and sustained engagement are crucial for success.

The constraint facing partners today is not declining relevance, but a misalignment between existing value capture models and the evolving creation of cloud value. Core strengths, such as customer relationships, delivery execution, and local market expertise, remain firmly in place. However, when these capabilities are not translated into

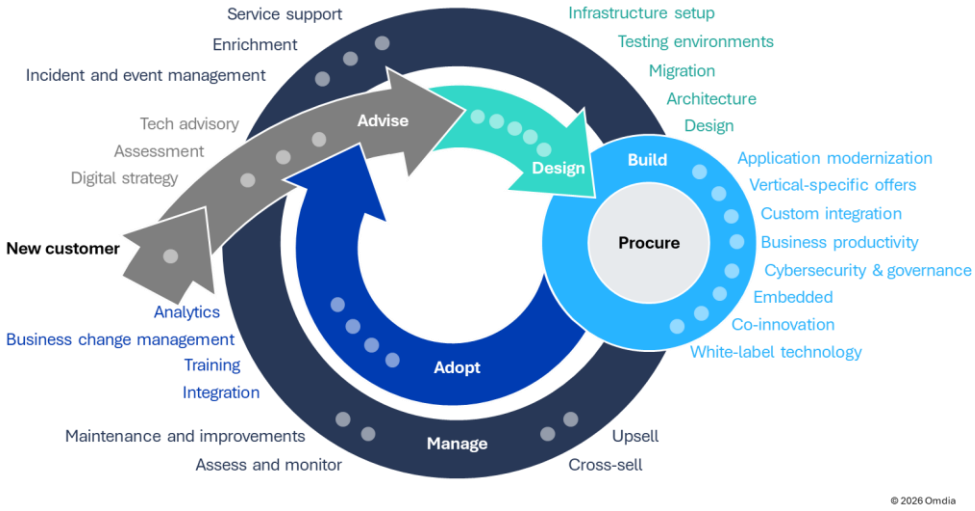
monetizable and repeatable service offerings, including consulting, solution design, or managed operations, the value generated is often limited to individual projects rather than stable, scalable revenue structures.

3.2 The partner ecosystem flywheel as a mechanism for resilient value creation

As customer priorities shift from cloud procurement to measurable business outcomes, value creation is increasingly realized across a broader set of lifecycle activities. Consulting, solution design, systems integration, continuous optimization, and operations are becoming increasingly central to how value is realized. In this environment, the ability to participate across multiple stages of the value chain emerges as a defining factor in partners' capacity to sustain long-term growth.

Omdia's Partner Ecosystem Flywheel provides a useful framework for understanding this transition. Resilient partner businesses operate through a reinforcing cycle that spans consulting, design, procurement, deployment, adoption, and maintenance. By capturing value at multiple points along the lifecycle, partners deepen customer engagement, extend the horizon of value realization, and reduce reliance on any single transaction or policy cycle.

Figure 3: Multiplier across the Partner Ecosystem Flywheel



Source: Omdia

Rather than functioning as a linear sales process, the flywheel reflects a cumulative growth structure. Each stage reinforces the next: consulting informs solution design, design drives deployment and adoption, and sustained operations create the foundation for optimization

and expansion. Over time, this multi-stage participation strengthens both customer stickiness and the predictability of partner returns, improving resilience in volatile market conditions.

3.3 Single-value models undermine partners' resilient growth

For many partners, revenue remains heavily concentrated in cloud resource procurement and vendor rebates. This single-value structure directly shapes behavior and investment priorities. Where returns are generated primarily at the procurement stage, partners naturally prioritize deal volume, purchasing efficiency, and incentive optimization, often at the expense of sustained investment in solution capabilities, service standardization, or long-term delivery infrastructure.

Under these conditions, the partner flywheel cannot operate as a fully self-reinforcing system. Value creation remains fragmented across isolated lifecycle stages, leaving growth highly sensitive to policy adjustments and short-term incentives. Even when commercial activity appears strong, performance tends to be cyclical and vulnerable to external shocks, reflecting the absence of a stable return mechanism for complex, service-intensive engagements.

This outcome does not reflect a lack of awareness among partners. Rather, existing revenue structures fail to reward multi-stage value creation in a consistent and scalable way. Without economic incentives that extend beyond individual transactions, resilient growth remains structurally difficult to achieve.

As a result, many seemingly proactive responses, such as waiting for more attractive vendor policies, chasing emerging technology trends, or making short-term bets on individual technologies deliver limited impact. These approaches extend existing rebate-driven logic rather than addressing the underlying growth mechanism.

What partners ultimately require is not a sequence of tactical adjustments tied to specific technology cycles, but a growth structure capable of adapting to ongoing change. Resilience in this context does not mean eliminating uncertainty; rather, it means absorbing volatility through diversified value sources and complementary capabilities. In practical terms, resilient growth rests on three interlocking dimensions: product resilience that supports differentiated use cases; capability resilience, which enables complex delivery and continuous optimization; and collaboration resilience, which amplifies value through ecosystem alignment.

4. Building resilient growth pathways: from flywheel logic to executable structures

Building resilient growth in today's cloud market requires partners to move beyond reliance on any single point of value creation. Rather than optimizing one stage of the business in isolation, partners must adopt growth pathways that reduce structural dependency and allow value to compound across multiple stages over time. The question this chapter addresses, therefore, is not where partners should begin, but how they can avoid embedding a new single-point dependency at the moment of entry.

This challenge cannot be solved by attempting to build everything at once. Omdia partner interviews show that uneven capability and resource distribution is the norm rather than the exception. In periods of elevated uncertainty, efforts to cover multiple value stages simultaneously tend to raise entry costs and execution risk without improving outcomes. Crucially, sustained growth does not require a fully formed flywheel from the outset; it requires avoiding long-term lock-in to a single, non-scalable value node.

Performance data reinforces this distinction. Omdia research indicates that among partners delivering stable growth for more than three consecutive years, 56% have developed at least two monetizable core revenue streams. Partners that remain heavily dependent on cloud resource procurement and vendor rebates, by contrast, exhibit significantly higher revenue volatility. Structural resilience, in practice, emerges not from the speed of expansion, but from the presence of multiple, reinforcing sources of value.

In practice, partners that sustain growth tend to activate the partner ecosystem flywheel in stages rather than attempting to build it all at once. They typically enter from a position of relative strength, establish an initial loop within the partner ecosystem flywheel, and then add a second, and eventually a third, interconnected value anchor over time. This staged expansion reduces reliance on any single value stage and materially improves the structure's ability to absorb volatility.

As a result, while partners' initial entry points differ, their structural evolution paths converge. Across products, capabilities, and partnerships, successful partners ensure that at least two value anchors become monetizable and mutually reinforcing over time. The following sections examine how each of these dimensions can serve as a viable starting point for building resilient growth in practice.

4.1 Product-led entry anchors customer engagement

Within the partner ecosystem flywheel, products most often serve as the starting point of activation for customer engagement and demand. In early-stage cloud projects, Omdia research shows that approximately 65% of customers begin their evaluation around specific application scenarios or solution use cases, rather than by directly comparing underlying cloud resource pricing. In practice, this makes products the primary interface through which partners establish initial customer relationships.

The structural value of a product-led entry path, however, lies less in the product itself than in what it enables downstream. Omdia analysis indicates that partners that focus on repeatable, scenario-based products typically generate a higher share of service revenue compared with those relying mainly on highly customized, project-led engagements. Products with clear application boundaries, standardized delivery models, and upgrade potential not only lower pre-sales and delivery costs, but also create natural extension points into consulting, deployment, and ongoing operations. These products are typically delivered as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) or productized services, enabling repeatable, use-case-driven engagement rather than bespoke project execution.

In a more uncertain growth environment, product-led entry should not be interpreted as simply "selecting the right product." Its viability depends on whether the product is designed to support expansion beyond the initial transaction. Only offerings with scalable delivery, repeatable deployment, and built-in headroom for downstream activities, such as implementation, operations, and continuous optimization, can serve as a viable starting point for a multi-anchor growth structure. When product value is concentrated primarily in one-time sales or resource resale, revenue remains shallow and difficult to extend, thereby limiting the product path's contribution to long-term growth resilience.

4.2 Capability-led entry anchors long-term value

Within the partner ecosystem flywheel, capabilities sit where value is amplified and realized over time. They determine whether activated demand can be converted into repeatable, cumulative returns. In segments where product differentiation is limited, partners that achieve sustained growth often do so not by broadening product coverage, but by building deep advantages in specific capability areas.

Omdia data shows that partners with managed services, or ongoing operations capabilities typically generate 20–30% of their revenue from non-resource sources, a significantly higher share compared with partners focused primarily on infrastructure resale. During vendor incentive adjustment cycles, these service-led partners also experience materially lower revenue volatility than those heavily reliant on rebates. Once established, such

capabilities can be replicated across customers and markets, strengthening pricing power and reducing exposure to changes in individual vendor policies. In practice, they become some of the most durable value anchors within the partner flywheel.

That said, capability-led entry does not automatically translate into structural resilience. Its viability depends on whether a capability can be expressed as a clear, monetizable, and sustainable business model that can be reused consistently across customers and projects. When monetization hinges on a small number of large engagements, a single customer, or temporary platform subsidies, growth risks becoming locked into a narrow capability node, exposing partners to new forms of structural vulnerability.

Therefore, capability development requires deliberate investment, but its success can only be confirmed through repeated validation in real customer and project contexts. The role of vendors in this process is less about providing capability directly, and more about enabling controlled experimentation under viable commercial conditions, such as lowering early trial costs, offering standardized tools, or facilitating access to live customer projects. Ultimately, a capability proves its value only when it is repeatedly adopted across customers and consistently generates billable returns.

4.3 Partnership-led entry reduces structural risk

Within the partner ecosystem flywheel, partnerships rarely generate billable revenue independently. Their importance lies at a more foundational level: they shape whether partners are willing to commit to long-term, often irreversible, business investment. Omdia research shows that when partners consider entering new product areas or initiating capability build-out, their primary concern is not short-term incentive levels, but the predictability of customer ownership, service boundaries, and value capture.

Where partnership frameworks fail to clearly define how different routes to market participate across the customer lifecycle, the risks partners assume—through early customer engagement, solution investment, and capability development—become difficult to assess or justify. In such environments, even when growth opportunities are visible, partners tend to default to low-commitment participation models, consciously avoiding the structural uncertainty associated with deeper, longer-term involvement.

Whether partnerships can genuinely support structural investment, therefore, depends on more than just incentive design. It hinges on whether platforms offer growth opportunities that partners can practically absorb, along with mechanisms that allow capabilities to be tested and validated in real customer contexts. Stable sources of demand, clearly defined entry points, and the ability to deepen participation through live projects are all critical in this regard.

Accordingly, the core value of partnerships within a resilient growth structure lies not in the scale of short-term returns, but in their ability to reduce institutional uncertainty around long-term investment and to provide a clear, verifiable path to downstream value realization. Only under these conditions are partners likely to pursue cross-stage positioning across products and capabilities, rather than remaining confined to low-risk but structurally constrained participation models over time.

4.4 Different paths converge on the same structure

Ultimately, a partner's ability to move beyond single-point dependence relies less on its initial entry path and more on whether each element can realistically extend into adjacent stages of the value chain. Product-led entry points must preserve clear headroom for downstream value capture, including delivery, operations, and continuous optimization. Capability-led approaches must translate into monetizable, reusable business models rather than remaining tied to individual projects or temporary support mechanisms. Partnership-led paths, in turn, must provide institutional predictability for long-term investment and enable partners to deepen their participation progressively across the customer lifecycle.

When these conditions are met, different starting paths ultimately converge toward the same structural outcome: a multi-anchor growth model that reduces reliance on any single value node and strengthens overall resilience.

5. Tencent Cloud's platform role in enabling resilient partner growth

As partners move from single-point participation to multi-anchor growth structures, the role of cloud platforms is becoming more nuanced. Vendor value is no longer defined primarily by short-term growth mobilization but by whether partners can experiment, validate, and deepen participation without assuming disproportionate structural risk. In this phase of the market, vendors increasingly shape not just opportunity access, but the conditions under which partners are willing to invest.

Cloud vendors have responded to this shift in different ways. Some emphasize faster scale-up through more clearly defined engagement paths and near-term commercial levers. Others place greater weight on flexibility, continuity, and controlled entry conditions, allowing partners to adjust investment pacing as participation deepens. Tencent Cloud broadly aligns with the latter, reflecting a preference for steady-state partner

engagement rather than acceleration-led expansion. This positioning does not imply faster near-term expansion but reflects a structural preference for enabling partners to test and evolve their participation with clearer expectations around boundaries, roles, and value capture.

Against this backdrop, Tencent Cloud serves as a useful case for examining how platform design choices can support partners seeking resilient growth pathways. The following sections assess Tencent Cloud's practical execution across three dimensions, partnership mechanisms, product design, and capability enablement, using the entry pathways outlined earlier.

5.1 Partnerships: prioritizing certainty over rapid expansion

In a resilient growth model, partnerships matter most when they reduce uncertainty around long-term investment decisions. For partners considering entry into AI commercialization or cross-regional expansion, the primary concern is often not short-term incentive levels, but whether customer ownership, service boundaries, and value capture mechanisms are sufficiently clear to justify sustained capability investment.

Market feedback suggests that Tencent Cloud's partnership framework places relatively strong emphasis on role definition across the customer lifecycle, particularly around customer origination, delivery participation, and ongoing service responsibility. For partners, this translates into clearer expectations regarding where they can engage, what contributions are recognized, and how value is captured over time. While such clarity does not accelerate revenue growth directly, it lowers the institutional uncertainty that often discourages early-stage experimentation in complex or emerging scenarios.

> **"Direct sales and partner engagement are handled as separate tracks. Direct sales teams do not jointly pursue deals with partners, which helps avoid overlap in customer engagement."**
>
> *—Tencent Cloud regional partner*

Beyond role definition, policy predictability also plays a critical role in shaping partners' willingness to commit resources over longer horizons. Where core collaboration mechanisms and incentive structures remain broadly consistent over time, partners are better able to form baseline assumptions around payback periods and resource allocation. This reduces the need for frequent recalibration and makes longer-horizon experimentation more viable, particularly in complex or emerging scenarios.

> **"Over multiple years, the core monthly and quarterly commission mechanisms have remained broadly consistent. Most adjustments have tended to occur at the annual incentive level rather than at the underlying rebate structure."**
>
> *—Tencent Cloud reseller*

Taken together, clarity around participation boundaries and predictability in collaboration mechanisms help lower institutional uncertainty for partners. While such conditions do not guarantee growth outcomes, they make it more feasible for partners to layer new scenarios onto existing customer operations, validate participation models incrementally, and adjust investment intensity based on real project feedback rather than policy volatility. In the current market phase, this form of partnership environment is structurally aligned with gradual, stepwise movement toward multi-anchor growth.

5.2 Products: scenario-led entry with controlled upfront investment

In a resilient growth model, the value of a product-led pathway lies not in maximizing one-off sales, but in enabling partners to enter new business areas with controlled investment while preserving room to expand after initial validation. Products with structural value lower entry barriers without pre-defining or constraining a partner's long-term capability ceiling.

Partner feedback indicates that Tencent Cloud's strengths in experience- and scenario-driven offering, such as video and media services, instant messaging (IM), and content security, stem from product designs that align closely with customer business scenarios. This allows partners to anchor early engagement and validation around concrete use cases, rather than relying on extensive upfront education or technical explanation.

> **"The products are not tightly linked together. From our perspective, that lowers the initial complexity when we're getting started, as we can work with individual products without having to understand the entire platform upfront."**
>
> *—Tencent Cloud managed service partner*

These products are typically delivered through standardized application programming interfaces (APIs), software development kits (SDKs), and mature solution frameworks, enabling partners to complete baseline delivery even before their capabilities are fully developed. Once use cases are validated, partners can then choose whether to extend into deeper integration, operations, or ongoing optimization. Importantly, this design avoids locking partners into one-time transactions or pure resource resale, while preserving clear entry points for downstream value creation.

A similar logic underpins Tencent Cloud Agent Development Platform (ADP). By standardizing application structures, resource invocation, and delivery workflows, ADP enables partners to validate scenarios with limited upfront capability investment. Decisions around platform-based or scaled delivery can then be made post-validation, based on partner readiness. Rather than screening partners by capability maturity, this approach separates capability development from investment pacing.

At this stage of market development, the structural value of such product models lies less in accelerating adoption and more in reducing early experimentation risk, enabling gradual expansion toward more resilient growth configurations.

5.3 Capabilities: expanding boundaries through validation

Within a resilient growth structure, partner capabilities determine whether initial engagement can be translated into repeatable, cumulative value over time. Prior to commercial validation, certifications or staged progression models alone often provide an incomplete indication of real-world replicability and commercial viability.

Market feedback indicates that Tencent Cloud's approach to capability enablement is not centered on intensive certification requirements or tightly tiered capability ladders. Rather than prescribing uniform development paths, it allows partners greater discretion in deciding where and how to invest. While this reduces the predictability associated with highly structured enablement models, it places clearer responsibility on partners to assess readiness and manage investment pacing.

Accordingly, Tencent Cloud's capability support focuses less on formal qualification and more on enabling participation in real business scenarios. Through pre-sales collaboration, project-level support, and targeted resource involvement during delivery, partners can engage in higher-value stages even before their capabilities are fully mature. This allows capability viability, both in terms of reusability and commercial feasibility, to be tested directly through live projects rather than inferred through proxy indicators.

Under this model, capability development still requires deliberate planning and sustained investment by partners themselves. Whether a capability ultimately holds, however, is determined by its ability to generate stable returns across multiple customers and projects, not by certification status or stage labels. While this lowers the threshold for validation, it also demands stronger judgment from partners through execution.

From a capability perspective, Tencent Cloud's capability approach is oriented less toward accelerating capability leapfrogging and more toward enabling validation-led expansion. While not suited to all partner types, it provides a more controlled evolutionary path for partners operating in a phase of heightened market uncertainty, where capability investment must be cautious and proven in practice.

As partners increasingly need to sequence investments while viable growth paths are still being validated, the central challenge shifts from capturing isolated opportunities to managing exposure across different stages of engagement. In this context, platform value is defined less by aggressive growth commitments than by the ability to provide stable partnership boundaries, controlled entry conditions, and mechanisms for capability validation through real customer projects. Viewed through this structural lens, Tencent Cloud's partnership mechanisms, product design, and capability enablement approach support progressive validation and disciplined deepening of partner engagement in the current market phase.

6. From enablement to execution: validating Tencent Cloud's resilient growth path

Building on the structural analysis in the preceding chapters, this section examines whether Tencent Cloud's partnership, product, and capability mechanisms translate into effective execution in real operating environments. Through four practical engagements, it validates these growth pathways across different scenarios and provides clear reference points for partners to assess where—and how deeply—they can participate.

6.1 AI-Driven value expansion: lowering the barrier to capability growth

For most partners, AI is no longer about whether to engage, but where to begin. The challenge is to expand into new AI-driven value areas without committing to heavy upfront investment or assuming disproportionate delivery risk.

By absorbing model complexity, compute orchestration, and architectural overhead at the platform layer, Tencent Cloud enables partners to extend their service boundaries incrementally, without taking on responsibilities tied to model development or infrastructure ownership.

6.1.1 Case 1: Dashenlin—Organizational AI as a replicable starting point

This case illustrates a low-barrier participation path in organizational AI, where potential partner engagement could be structured around existing professional and industry expertise rather than deep model ownership.

As one of China's leading pharmaceutical retail chains, Dashenlin operates an extensive nationwide store network supported by a broad industry ecosystem. Dashenlin's AI adoption illustrates how organizational AI can serve as a low-barrier, highly replicable starting point for partners. Rather than treating AI as a standalone innovation initiative, Dashenlin embedded it directly into core operational workflows, including knowledge management, frontline support, and managerial decision-making.

Built on Tencent Cloud's agent development platform, the company established a unified AI knowledge hub and made it accessible to frontline staff through SaaS applications, such as WeCom. This allows expertise distributed across headquarters and regional stores to be accessed in real time and continuously refined. Crucially, this implementation does not rely on bespoke model development or complex system re-architecture.

From a partner perspective, the case highlights three structurally important features:

- **Product**: AI entry does not require highly customized solutions. A standardized combination of intelligent agents, enterprise knowledge bases, and integration with existing systems forms a repeatable and scalable delivery model.
- **Capability**: Partner value is concentrated in data organization, knowledge structuring, and workflow design, rather than proprietary model development—capabilities that many industry-focused partners already possess.
- **Partnership**: Tencent Cloud consolidates models, compute, and agent infrastructure at the platform layer, while leaving application design, scenario deployment, and ongoing operations to partners, preserving clear and meaningful participation space.

Rather than requiring steep technical upgrades, this case highlights how organizational AI can be approached as a gradual capability extension, where existing professional expertise can be leveraged within a structured platform environment.

6.1.2 Case 2: GreenCloud—extending capabilities beyond delivery

This case illustrates a productization-led participation path in AI. It shows how mature partners can convert AI capabilities into scalable products and recurring revenue streams beyond one-off project delivery.

If Dashenlin illustrates vertical capability deepening, GreenCloud demonstrates how AI capabilities can spill over into new business models. As a long-established IT service provider in the hospitality and travel sector, GreenCloud moved beyond improving internal delivery efficiency and leveraged Tencent Cloud's large model and multimodal capabilities, supported by product-level enablement and training, to package AI into customer-facing offerings. These solutions—covering content generation, precision recommendations, and private-domain operations—are designed to be scalable and repeatable across multiple clients.

From a partner perspective, the value of this case is reflected across three aligned dimensions:

- **Product**: AI is no longer limited to an internal efficiency tool. It is productized into sellable, customer-facing solutions, enabling partners to externalize AI capabilities and unlock new revenue streams.
- **Capability**: With sufficient technical and industry foundations, partner capabilities can evolve from one-off project delivery toward a combined model of industry insight, solution packaging, and continuous operations, significantly increasing the commercial leverage of each capability investment.
- **Partnership**: Tencent Cloud does not internalize industry-specific AI applications at the platform layer. Instead, it preserves space for partners to define products, own customer relationships, and sustain ongoing operations, with product and training support helping align partner services with platform capabilities.

This case shows that even as rebate-driven margins continue to compress, partners with sufficient technical and industry foundations can create new growth engines by extending capabilities outward and pursuing productization-led expansion paths. Early investments in partner enablement, including platform product capabilities and training resources, provide a starting point for supporting capability alignment and upgrading.

6.2 Cross-regional expansion: product-led entry points for partners

Compared with AI, cross-regional expansion is typically viewed as a heavier and more complex growth path. However, as core capabilities mature and are increasingly delivered

at the platform level, overseas expansion is shifting from a high-barrier, high-uncertainty undertaking to a long-term opportunity that can be entered incrementally.

This shift creates more accessible starting points for partners, where clearly defined, high-quality products—rather than large upfront investment—serve as the initial anchor for participation and growth.

6.2.1 Case 3: Midea—overseas expansion as a long-term service space

This case illustrates a delivery-intensive participation path in cross-regional expansion, characterized by long-horizon service engagement and sustained capability investment.

Midea's overseas expansion illustrates a delivery-intensive participation path in which cross-regional growth is treated as a long-term service space rather than a one-off initiative. Supported by Tencent Cloud's globally integrated infrastructure, localized cloud dedicated cluster (CDC) professional clusters, and multi-region compliance capabilities, overseas operations are built on a stable and scalable technology foundation designed for sustained evolution.

From a partner perspective, this case does not represent a lightweight or experimental entry. Instead, it points to a growth model defined by sustained investment and ongoing service engagement, reflected across three aligned dimensions:

- **Product**: Overseas expansion is no longer delivered through fragmented or temporary engineering projects. It is increasingly structured around modular building blocks, such as overseas IT foundations, compliant cloud architectures, and coordinated local compute and cloud resource deployments. These modular components provide partners with repeatable and expandable productized entry points.
- **Capability**: Partner value is concentrated in architecture design, cross-region system migration, cloud-native transformation, and long-term operations with continuous optimization. These capabilities deepen alongside customers' overseas business evolution and place higher demands on delivery execution, project governance, and sustained customer service.
- **Partnership**: Tencent Cloud absorbs the most foundational and highest-risk layers of complexity, including networking, compute, and compliance, without compressing the partners' service space. Platform stability instead creates the conditions for partners to establish multi-year service relationships at the mid and upper layers of the stack.

Within Tencent Cloud's environment, overseas expansion emerges as a service-intensive growth space, where value is built through sustained delivery and long-term operational engagement rather than episodic, project-based execution.

6.2.2 Case 4: Trina Solar—a lightweight path to overseas participation

This case illustrates a lightweight participation path in overseas scenarios. It enables partners to engage overseas demand with lower investment thresholds and reduced delivery risk.

In contrast to the delivery-intensive model represented by Midea, Trina Solar illustrates a lighter participation path to overseas expansion, defined by lower investment thresholds and reduced delivery complexity. In its global operations, Trina Solar prioritized organizational coordination and IT integration at the global level, using a unified platform to enable cross-regional access, system connectivity, and day-to-day collaboration.

Under this model, overseas expansion is less about complex local deployment or large-scale system reengineering, and more about rapidly establishing a standardized IT operating and collaboration framework across regions. From a partner perspective, this pathway is characterized by three clear features:

- **Product**: Participation is anchored in standardized collaboration and integration solutions, rather than bespoke infrastructure buildouts or region-specific engineering projects.
- **Capability**: Partner value is concentrated in lighter-delivery activities such as collaboration solution design, identity and access management, security policy configuration, user enablement, and ongoing operational support, rather than deep system transformation.
- **Partnership**: Tencent Cloud provides a unified platform and underlying infrastructure, allowing partners to engage without assuming responsibility for complex compute planning, local deployment, or heavy architectural ownership.

By contrast, this case highlights how overseas participation can also be structured around standardized, lower-complexity engagement models, allowing value creation without the depth of delivery commitment required in more service-intensive expansion paths.

6.3 Structuring partner participation across distinct growth paths

Taken as a whole, the four cases demonstrate that partner participation in high-uncertainty growth areas does not follow a single prescribed model. Instead, they surface four distinct participation paths, each defined by a different configuration of product entry points, capability investment, and partnership depth, ranging from low-barrier organizational AI adoption to productization-led AI expansion, to delivery-intensive overseas service engagement, and finally to lightweight, platform-enabled overseas participation.

For partners, this differentiation matters because growth is increasingly shaped not by scale alone, but by the ability to align participation choices with sustainable value creation. Paths anchored in repeatable products, validated capability layers, or long-horizon service engagement are more likely to generate partner ecosystem flywheel effects, where execution experience reinforces delivery efficiency, deepens customer relationships, and improves profitability over successive cycles.

By contrast, partners that continue to rely primarily on legacy, transaction-led models, such as one-off resale or rebate-dependent engagements, often face shrinking margins, limited differentiation, and rising exposure to pricing and execution risk. In an environment where growth depends on complex, service-intensive delivery, maintaining existing operating models increasingly constrains upside rather than preserving stability.

Viewed through this lens, the ability to choose how to participate, across these distinct paths rather than within a single uniform template, forms a practical foundation for resilient partner growth. It allows partners to manage investment risk, evolve capability depth, and sustain profitability as market conditions continue to shift.

Conclusions

As AI reshapes value chains and enterprises extend their service footprints through overseas expansion, the central challenge facing partners is no longer a shortage of opportunity, but the erosion of legacy growth logic. As transaction-led resale and rebate-driven models come under sustained pressure, resilience—the ability to adapt, validate, and evolve under uncertainty—has become a prerequisite for sustained relevance rather than a discretionary advantage.

The findings of this paper underscore that the fundamental value of partners has not diminished. Instead, it is being redefined around roles that are closer to customers, grounded in execution capability, and oriented toward long-term service delivery. Across both AI-driven value expansion and cross-regional engagement, the partners most likely to establish viable growth paths are not those with the broadest capability portfolios, but those that clearly understand their participation boundaries and can translate complexity into repeatable, billable outcomes.

Equally important, the research highlights the growing downside of inaction or misalignment. Partners that continue to rely predominantly on transaction-led models as customer demand shifts toward AI-enabled, service-intensive solutions risk being structurally sidelined, with diminishing value capture even as overall market complexity increases. This is not a question of speed, but of sequencing. Without deliberate choices around where and how to participate, partners face rising execution risk, longer payback cycles, and limited pathways to move beyond low-margin engagement.

For partners, competitiveness increasingly depends on making intentional participation choices, selecting entry points that align with capability depth, risk tolerance, and investment horizon, rather than pursuing wholesale transformation or undifferentiated expansion.

For cloud vendors, the role shifts away from volume-driven mobilization toward enabling structured participation, capability validation, and coordination across more complex delivery scenarios. In this context, Tencent Cloud's value is defined less by prescriptive enablement models or aggressive expansion targets, and more by its ability to provide stable partnership boundaries, accessible product entry points, and execution environments where partner capabilities can be tested, refined, and scaled over time.

Viewed through the lens of the partner flywheel, resilient growth emerges as a cumulative process rather than a one-time transition. Deliberate investments across entry mechanisms, capability development, and partnership structures reinforce one another through repeated execution and learning. Over time, this flywheel effect translates experience into predictability, customer trust into repeatable demand, and selective engagement into durable growth.

In a market increasingly shaped by complexity rather than scale, this disciplined ability to choose how to participate, and to evolve that choice as validation accumulates, is what ultimately distinguishes resilient partner ecosystems from those constrained by legacy operating models.

This Omdia White Paper was commissioned by Tencent Cloud

Appendix

Methodology

This paper combines quantitative survey findings, selective use of Omdia proprietary data assets, and qualitative insights derived from ongoing engagement with the technology partner ecosystem. Omdia market data and reference materials are used to provide structural context on cloud market evolution and partner participation trends. These inputs support directional interpretation rather than serving as the primary analytical foundation. Primary evidence is drawn from structured surveys of cloud partners in China, supplemented by qualitative interviews. Interviews were used to provide additional context around execution challenges, sequencing decisions, and participation models. The analysis is further informed by continuous partner interactions through Omdia Technology Partner Ecosystem research and advisory activities, providing qualitative context on operating models, engagement patterns, and evolving partner strategies.

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