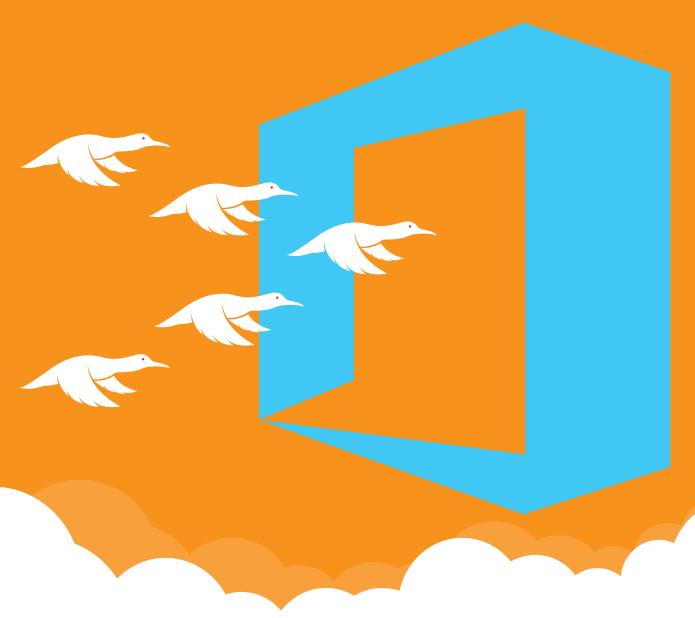# Office 365 Migration Primer

Read these 5 Gotchas BEFORE you Start

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A seamless migration to Office 365 doesn't come easy. Surprise technical issues may arise, while other problems can be due to lack of user adoption or poor training.
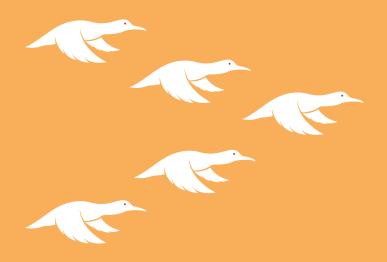
In order to help you get a little closer to an 'Immaculate Migration' to Office 365, we've put together five practical tips.

Where did we find the tips?

We've successfully migrated dozens of organizations to Office 365 and have fine tuned our process to the point where we can migrate a 1,000 seat organization over a weekend. But enough about us, let's talk about what you can do to ensure a smooth migration to Office 365.

Here are some technical considerations and desktop support tips.

Let's get started!

1

Azure Active Directory Synchronization

If your deployment requires a hybrid approach (cloud and on-premise) common to many businesses, please keep reading.

QUESTION: Why should you align your on-premise and cloud directories?

ANSWER: This allows all users to create a single identity for logging on to the local domain as well as accessing Office 365, Azure, and SaaS applications integrated with Azure AD. In addition, if you don't do this, your support staff could be inundated with password reset requests.

GOTCHA: Don't wait until after the migration to sync your active directories through AAD, or you may find yourself having to manually match on-premise APN's to the cloud, which can be prone to trouble and very time consuming.

2

Start the migration with a small batch of users

Note: This gotcha is especially true for organizations migrating more than 500 users.

IT staff, especially those in desktop support, are generally aware of two types of users:

1. People who read instructions, use the support ticket system properly and are pleasant to talk with.
2. People who don't read instructions, call in a panic when something doesn't work, and have issues with technology in general—especially the printer.

Many people are naturally resistant to change, and in our experience, Office 365 migrations are no exception. But once the decision is made to migrate, you might as well plan for the worst scenario.

QUESTION: How do I make the migration as smooth as possible for users?

ANSWER: Start with a small group of staff who are proficient with technology. Choose a cross section of people who have the ability to influence others, regardless of their rank, and stay in close communication.

GOTCHA: Do not roll out the migration company-wide at first, unless you want to test the limits of your support ticketing system! Once the control group is successfully migrated and has no more questions or complaints, write a checklist based on their experience for the remaining staff to follow as an example. When the rest of the company sees the migrated group having no problems, they will be eager to catch up.

3

Replicate your transport rules, retention policies, and connection filtering before adding users

No need to reinvent the wheel—use the same customizations that your staff is used to and meet your organization's compliance requirements.

QUESTION: Is this a good time to look at creating new workflows for email?

ANSWER: Probably not.

GOTCHA: If you have compliance needs that must be addressed, **save them for after the migration**. It's best to start with the same email rules. People are used to the way things work, and if you can get the new environment anywhere close to the old one, you'll score points with the users. Nobody wants to get to work Monday with a new email system and 400 spam emails.

4

SharePoint Online can't do quite everything that On-Premise SharePoint can... yet

As Microsoft continues to evolve its cloud offerings, including SharePoint Online, it may be tempting for IT Directors to move away from SharePoint On-Premise. The idea of not having to maintain a physical server on the property (or paying someone to do it) and the reduced costs that go with it can be attractive, but it's important to note that **not all things possible with an on premise SharePoint Server can be accomplished with SharePoint Online.**

QUESTION: Do I need SharePoint Server, or can I get by with SharePoint Online?

ANSWER: It totally depends on what your needs are.

GOTCHA: Here are a few sneaky deficiencies of SharePoint Online.

1. SharePoint Online comes with capacity limits, so you need to be cognizant of your data sprawl in order to properly understand your costs.

2. Depending on the needs of your organization, you may have compliance issues with storing your data online, as opposed to on-premise.

That said, make a list of all the features you rely on and must have, then cross check with SharePoint Online's capabilities.

5

Office 365 migration—using internal resources or using a vendor

The biggest 'gotcha' of them all :)

QUESTION: Should I migrate my organization to Office 365 myself?

ANSWER: Probably not.

GOTCHA(S): We do not doubt the talent and ability of your IT department to get an Office 365 migration done. We do question their ability to get it done painlessly, especially if they haven't done it before.

Office 365 is full of nuance and indosycracities that can frustrate even a seasoned IT professional. Frustration aside, if a massive data loss happens, you could be in a serious bind to recover it. It's usually not worth the risk.

Even if you and your staff can pull off a successful migration, you will have spent plenty of time and resources learning how to do it. And now that you've learned everything, you'll probably never need to do it again, so the new skill is a wash.

Conclusion

For those about to set out on a journey to migrate to Office 365, we hope this short guide is helpful. Good luck!

For those seeing the potential pain in Gotcha #5, we'll take this time to elaborate on the benefits of using a qualified vendor to help your migration.

License consultation- Choosing the right license is like starting the race at the sound of the gun—you don't have a chance to win if you don't start off on the right foot. While Microsoft has conveniently 'packaged' Office 365 products into bundles that fit many organizations, there's a lot of room to build your own, **if you know what you want**.

And that's one of the hardest parts—figuring out which products you need.

Our team will discuss all your workflows and build a custom deployment that fits your workflows and compliance requirements. We'll also ensure there's no overlap with your existing services. Bottom line, choosing the right license (and getting rid of redundancies) can really help your bottom line.

Ice cold, no mistakes- This describes Iceman's character from Top Gun, but it's also a decent analogy for the work you receive when working with Big Green IT. Simply put, we are experts in Office 365 and have done dozens of migrations of organizations small and large—every single one has been successful.

Are there bumps along the way occasionally? Maybe, but you'll never know because we take care of all that and deliver exactly what your company needs.

Questions? We're here to help— contact us today and we'll set up a time to discuss your needs.

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