

Softchoice & Entertainment One

Media firm uses cloud-based collaboration solution to smooth business acquisitions

softchoice
CASE STUDY

Business Challenges

Entertainment One (eOne), London Stock Exchange-listed company based in Toronto, Canada, produces and distributes music, film, and TV content for consumers around the world. With 2014 revenues of £819.6 million (US\$1.2 billion), eOne has about 1,500 employees in eight countries.

The company's goal is to be the world's leading independent entertainment group by partnering with top creative talent and developing a locally deep, globally connected distribution network. To help make this happen, eOne has acquired 15 businesses, three in 2014 alone.

As part of its onboarding process, Entertainment One's IT team evaluates the technology products used by eOne and the acquired company to determine which are best to keep. "Our goal is to quickly, and with minimal disruption to work lives, get all employees using the chosen solutions. In reality, however, it could take a year to migrate email and other products and integrate teams," says Taylor Battye CIO, Entertainment One.

The IT team was often in reactive problem-fixing mode and, because onboarding consumed so much time, eOne often ended up putting strategic IT projects on hold.

IT staff also spent a fair amount of time dealing with email issues. Email generated the most support cases—more than twice the number of the next-level category.

eOne wanted to accelerate acquisition onboarding and enhance communication and collaboration, while reducing email support incidents.

Softchoice Solution

In January 2013, Entertainment One acquired Alliance Films, which was using Google Docs and Gmail in addition to Microsoft Office. eOne used Microsoft Exchange Server 2010 and multiple versions of Microsoft Office. When Battye kicked off the technology evaluation, he added Microsoft Office 365 to the mix for another cloud-based alternative.

The first decision that eOne made was to move everyone to the cloud. Doing so would remove the burden of infrastructure management. Next, the company chose Office 365, which includes the Microsoft Office desktop applications along with cloud-based business email, videoconferencing, and file sharing.

In June 2013, eOne signed a six-year agreement with Microsoft for Office 365 E2 with archiving (now Office 365 E1) and Office 365 E3, with the ability to add and remove users. It worked with Microsoft partner Softchoice to migrate users from Google and Exchange Server. Within six months, most employees were converted to Office 365. According to Battye, "The Softchoice team's experience with Microsoft cloud migrations was invaluable in helping to ensure a seamless experience for our end-users."

As of May 2015, the company has subscriptions for 1,500 people. All eOne employees use Microsoft Exchange Online and Office 365 ProPlus, about 1,120 take advantage of the Yammer social network, and many are starting to use Skype for Business for videoconferencing and quickly connecting with colleagues. eOne is also exploring using Microsoft Surface Hub in meeting rooms throughout its global offices to make it even easier for groups of people to collaborate.

Business Outcomes

Integrate acquired companies 300 percent faster

With its new productivity solution, Entertainment One creates synergies with acquired companies much more quickly. "We save a ton of time onboarding workers from new companies. What used to take about a year now takes about three months, thanks to Office 365," says Battye.

Easily collaborate across global employee base

With employees spread across eight countries, it can be difficult to create a team environment. Before using Office 365, eOne didn't have a social network solution or an easy way for people to have face-to-face conversations. Now, working with far-flung colleagues is much easier. "With Yammer and Skype for Business, we've enabled the rich collaboration our teams need to succeed, wherever they're located," says Battye.

Transform IT group from "firefighters" to strategic enablers

The IT team is no longer consumed with reactive problem-solving. Battye says, "Office 365 gives us flexibility and scalability to respond faster to new opportunities. Instead of always being in 'firefighting' mode, we're proactive and strategic and well-positioned for the future."



Case Study Snapshot:

With its new productivity solution, Entertainment One creates synergies with acquired companies 300 percent faster. Office 365 supports easy and efficient collaboration across global employee base and gives the IT group the flexibility and scalability to respond faster to new opportunities.

Client Profile:

Entertainment One (eOne) is the world's leading independent producer and distributor of film and TV content. Acquisitions are key to its growth strategy. eOne uses Microsoft Office 365 to accelerate the onboarding of new companies and create a rich collaboration experience for global employees. Its IT team, no longer constantly reacting to problems, has become proactive and strategic, and email support issues have decreased by 40 percent.

Applicable Business Verticals:

+ Entertainment Industry

Geography:

+ Global

Technologies involved:

+ Microsoft Office 365

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Taylor Battye
CIO, Entertainment One