

Migrating from On Premise to the Cloud the Right Way— with Office 365


softchoice

 Microsoft

Softchoice recommends Office 365.



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Step 1	4
<i>Start with a Good Plan</i>	
Step 2	6
<i>Get Everyone on Board</i>	
Step 3	7
<i>Make Sensible Purchase and Licensing Agreements</i>	
Step 4	9
<i>Protect Your Data – And Your Company</i>	
Step 5	10
<i>Managing the Big Migration</i>	
Step 6	11
<i>Keeping Up Post-Migration Momentum</i>	
Step 7	12
<i>Find a Trusted Partner</i>	
Conclusion	13

Introduction

Software as a Service (SaaS) has revolutionized enterprise IT, changing the way companies manage and deliver applications. End-user productivity is enhanced by providing new ways of consuming data and enabling collaboration across multiple users and devices from virtually any place, at any time.

With the introduction of Microsoft Office 365, many companies are taking the opportunity to address their larger SaaS strategy, including the introduction of new business processes, which, in turn, bring associated technology challenges.

Migrating from on-premises infrastructure to cloud-based infrastructure is a significant undertaking. Everything from planning to post-migration check-ups are crucial to ensuring success. But concerns remain about the complexity of a migration, and how end users and IT staff will respond.

In fact, the Spiceworks survey showed that “nearly half of organizations with Office 365 have deployed within the past year, and most of those still planning are looking to deploy or purchase within 6 months.”²

But as Office 365 has proven itself over the years, organizations are accelerating their integration of cloud and mobile technologies into key business processes and systems. In the process they are examining all of the factors of migration, from adoption challenges and purchasing and licensing to realizing higher individual and organizations productivity as a result of a successful migration.

In this eBook, we will take a closer look at how more organizations migrating to Office 365 every year, overcoming concerns and challenges, and seizing the opportunities to dramatically improve the efficiency, responsiveness and overall effectiveness of their business by migrating to Office 365.

“The hardest part for considering cloud is changing the institutional mindset that our job as an IT specialist is to support the system. By basically taking that role away, we then have a lot more time to do other things, but we always want to fix it and share our historical knowledge of our own environment.”

– IT pro¹

Start with a Good Plan

Since being launched in 2011, Office 365 has become one of the most popular SaaS platforms for the enterprise. Organizations understand the transformational impact that Office 365 has had on everything from reducing costs and decreasing complexity to improving productivity.

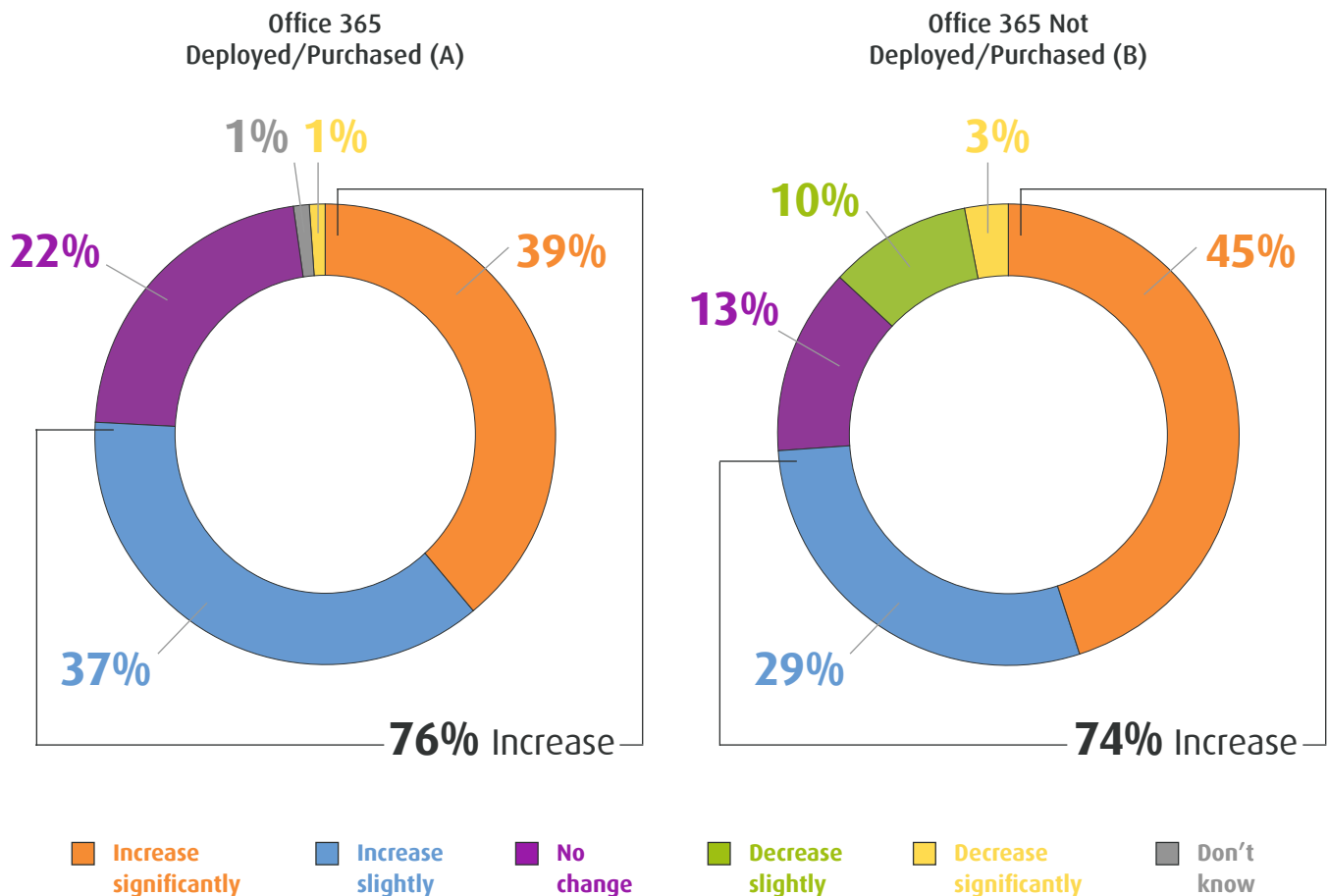
This can explain why “the vast majority of organizations expect Office 365 usage to increase within the next year.”²

But in order to fully realize all the benefits that Office 365 offers today, it’s important that companies carefully plan for every step of the migration. It’s only by doing your homework, or working

with an expert partner with deep Office 365 expertise, that you can ensure a smooth transition through every step of the process.

When key systems are moved outside an organization’s firewall into a SaaS model, it’s easy for staff to overlook the differences and unique requirements of designing authentication versus authorization or access. Providing single sign-on (SSO) access for end users and developing a company-wide identity management solution that accounts for both current and future SaaS or Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) initiatives is absolutely crucial to putting a winning technology solution in place.

EXPECTED CHANGE IN USE OF MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR



In today's security climate, it's critical to ensure that only authorized users have access to designated applications and resources. IT staff also need to be able to easily audit, report, and re-certify the access permissions over time. Too often, authentication is provided without taking authorization into consideration. You can think of it this way: just because someone has a driver's license does not mean that they can drive your car.

SaaS applications are designed to make it easy for users to do their jobs. While this is great for users, it can also cause compliance issues or expose important company data. IT must have a deliberate plan about how they will manage and extend their organization's identity management strategy into every new application. This level of planning should go beyond Office 365, and be a crucial component of your SaaS strategy. It is only through diligent preparation (or leveraging the knowledge of experts) that you can steer clear of obstacles and oversights that may inhibit the success of your Office 365 migration.



Get Everyone on Board

Adopting a new cloud-based platform is a huge undertaking, even if it's an established solution like Office 365. All too often, leadership teams view the process as another project with a start date and completion date. But that's not how users or organizations truly function. Business leaders can misunderstand the knowledge, skills, and comfort level that various users have in adopting to new technologies.

"It's been very painful [talking to e-staff]. We need something to help us explain, 'You're losing money by staying here. You can gain X amount by going there. You can gain these abilities by going there' and then weigh out the pros and cons."

– IT pro¹

Executive management must understand that a technology migration will significantly change the way people work. This is seldom a fast or simple transition. Staff are used to certain tools and applications. Just because they've been given new tools and applications does not mean that they will be able to easily change how they've done things for years, prior to the

migration. This is one reason that teams leading the migration effort bring in third-party experts to explain best practices for transitioning to the cloud, and the business results that can be expected from following those best practices.

"The challenges aren't as much with the product as they are with the end-users."

– IT pro¹

Pre-deployment training sessions are just the start. It's important to keep users informed, and make them feel comfortable about asking questions when they are unsure or don't understand how to use an application. If users feel like they're an important part of the process, it's more likely they will be open to learning and exploring how to get the most out of a transition to Office 365.

Some organizations conduct surveys or meetings to better understand how their employees work and use applications to perform their everyday tasks. This type of information can provide valuable insights into how to solve challenges and overcome uncertainty or resistance from users. Demonstrate how these new tools can help users solve existing problems and perform processes more easily and intuitively. Don't force major changes on an unprepared workforce. Take them through the process slowly and you're much more likely to win over reluctant users.

Make Sensible Purchase and Licensing Agreements

Office 365 offers a number of purchasing options—each with different levels of functionality—so knowing the requirements of your users is important, given the impact on licensing models and costs.

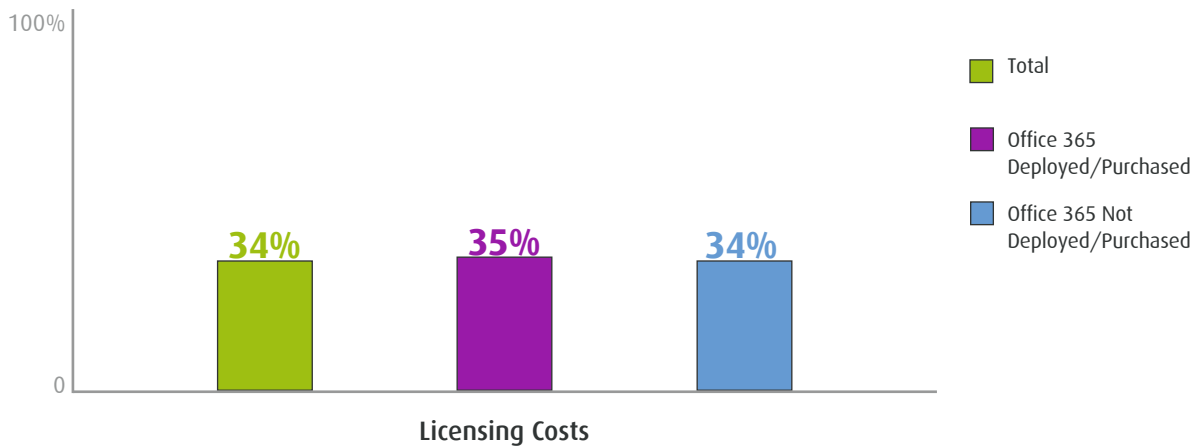
Microsoft offers flexibility in terms of how you bundle and deploy Office 365. For example, you can mix licensing bundles to give one user group an E1 license and another an E3 license suite. This is helpful if you have different user profiles and don't want to standardize everyone on the same products.

Once you've determined what offering make sense for your company, Microsoft offers four licensing models for Office 365: Open Business License Program; Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA); Enterprise Agreement (EA) and Microsoft Online Subscription Program (MOSP).

“Licensing costs is one of the top barriers to organizations deploying Office 365 more fully throughout the enterprise.”

– IT pro²

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES TO DEPLOYING OFFICE 365 MORE FULLY



Open Business License Program

The Open Business License Program is best suited for small to mid-sized businesses since you only need a minimum of five licenses to enroll in an Open Business Agreement. The program offers discounts compared to Microsoft direct pricing and you can use Open Business Licenses for up to 150 seats.

With an Open Business License, you must purchase an annual subscription to Office 365. If you are making more than one Office 365 license purchase in a given year, it is best to initiate a new Open Business agreement term for each purchase. Keep in mind that by doing so, you will need to manage multiple agreements and end dates.

Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)

An MPSA can benefit organizations with a minimum of 150 seats. All of the same online services for Office 365 are available through the MPSA (either as standalone products or as Enterprise Suites) but at greater discounts than the Open Business License Program. No entry minimum is required to begin purchasing through the MPSA. However, to maintain purchasing and discount eligibility, you must commit to meeting minimum point

thresholds within each product pool you purchase. This needs to be done by the compliance anniversary date. The compliance anniversary date is the one-year anniversary of the month you first sign your MPSA.

Enterprise Agreement (EA)

Enterprise Agreements require a three-year commitment and are ideal for organizations with at least 250 users. It's worth considering an EA if you are looking to standardize on one or more of Microsoft's core enterprise products (Office, Windows OS, Excel). EA considerations are covered in more detail later in this guide.

Microsoft Online Subscription Program (MOSP)

Outside of the Open Business, MPSA, and Enterprise Agreements, you can also purchase Office 365 directly through a Microsoft Online Subscription Program (MOSP). This is a direct Microsoft purchase. While this offering reflects retail pricing (i.e. no discounts), it does provide the flexibility of a month-to-month usage commitment.



Protect Your Data— And Your Company

Concerns about security have led some organizations to delay migrating to Office 365 and moving their infrastructure to the cloud. Data is the lifeblood of every company. IT managers tasked with protecting that data are understandably hesitant to trust that security to someone else.

“Security is the top barrier to supporting Office 365 applications and services in the cloud.”

– IT pro²

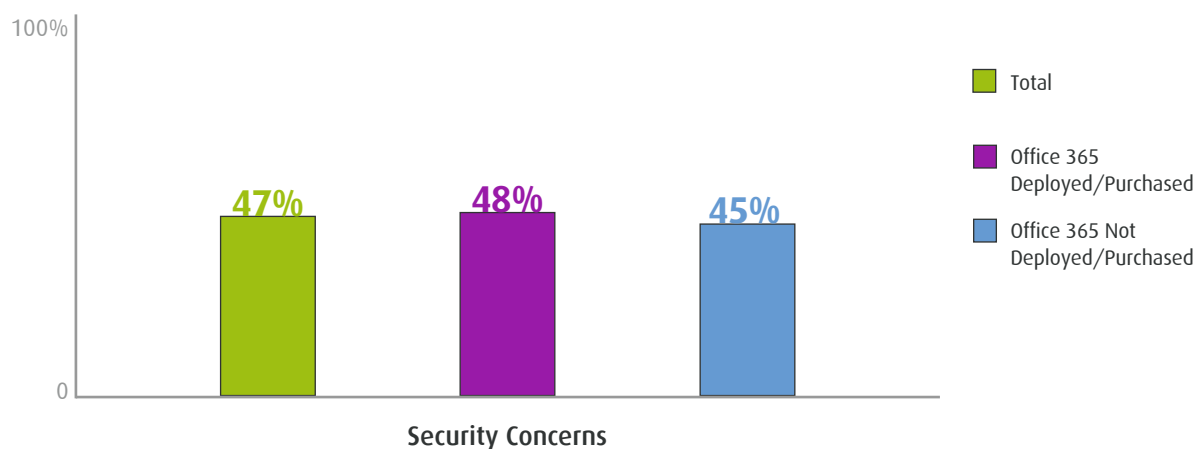
From phishing to social engineering to ransomware, IT staff are continually working to stay ahead of those wishing to inflict harm on their company. Layered security is a common approach to security for many organizations, including those deploying Office 365.

While security concerns surrounding the cloud are valid, any migration comes with risks. Mitigating the security risks of cloud-based migrations can be accomplished through planning and acquiring thorough knowledge of product-specific obstacles.

Organizations are also relying on a customizable information security platform from Microsoft that allows subscription-based clients to secure their data, improve workflows, and save on technical resources.

Microsoft is also working to address these security concerns with a financially backed SLA with a 99.9% uptime guarantee with every Office 365 subscription. Companies are increasingly relying on proven vendors who are experts in Office 365 to ensure they’ve implemented the latest, most effective security safeguards to protect users and data.

REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING ALL OFFICE APPLICATIONS/SERVICES IN THE CLOUD



Managing the Big Migration

Migrating a system of any kind introduces complexities into the entire environment. Even with careful planning, a major implementation project is usually more challenging than it might appear in the documentation and project plans. It's impossible to test every possible scenario and real-world use case thoroughly.

Companies that are migrating from earlier versions of Exchange will need to consider any application that uses email, from scheduling to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) or whatever systems they rely on every day, and make sure they have a plan for messaging with these applications.

With the shift to the cloud, IT management responsibilities evolve from the traditional realm of overseeing machines to managing larger business processes. This introduces significant new responsibilities, such as security, authentication and identity management, access control, and application workflow tasks. It can be enormously challenging for teams who had previously focused mostly on server performance and uptime to learn the complexities of managing the entire enterprise.

Equipment can also be a challenge. If your organization is still using computers running old versions of Windows, you'll run into issues with Office 365. Be prepared to upgrade your on-site computers (and other infrastructure), if needed, during the migration process.

Office 365 also requires robust network to function at its best. Organizations that lack the required bandwidth and connection speeds will be at a disadvantage after the migration. Properly testing your connection, and making necessary adjustments or upgrades, is key to optimizing performance.

You should also strongly consider a pilot migration before moving the entire organization to Office 365. This will help you identify organization-specific glitches that can be addressed before the full migration takes place.

Microsoft has always been open to collaboration. Office 365 works well with a wide range of third-party systems to fill in the gaps around your specific business needs. But you need to work with people who really understand both what problems you're trying to solve and what other applications can help you get there.



Keeping Up Post-Migration Momentum

Once the excitement of a successful launch day is past, that's when the real work begins. Changes in business and technical processes will require additional help desk and training support for end users. There will be new usage and storage quotas to track, in addition to new ongoing licensing and user management procedures.

Companies may no longer need to purchase additional servers to run on premise software, but they will need investment and oversight to maximize Internet capacity—and manage network edge devices.

Another thing to keep in mind is that migration is a great opportunity for business intelligence. Companies should use the data that Office 365 and other SaaS applications provide to gain actionable insights on usage and trends across their environment. This kind of thing can be a big win for IT management within the rest of the organization—by not only understanding the creation of data, but how that information is consumed as well.

While post-deployment can offer challenges, companies that plan appropriately for this period are better positioned to encourage adoption of—and compliance with—new business and technology processes.



Find a Trusted Partner

When you invest in Office 365, you'll find lots of vendors who will tell you how they want to execute your project. The reality is, the planning and design process is more about understanding your needs and environment in order to tailor the right solution.

Not all Microsoft Office 365 migration partners are equal. You often find partners who look good on paper and realize—after it's too late—that they're missing the mark. Sometimes issues arise when a project isn't accurately scoped out, or when Office 365's value (and limitations) are not properly communicated at the outset. In other cases, not enough thought is given to what happens after day two and beyond.

Organizations that are hesitant about migrating to the cloud because of productivity, collaboration, and security concerns can be guided to success by a good migration partner.

The challenge for many organizations is in identifying a partner that demonstrates expertise, a continual drive to expand that expertise, and that can be counted on as a trusted advisor.

Softchoice recommends Office 365.





Conclusion

If your company is considering migrating to Microsoft Office 365, you need to do your homework. But that's just the start. Working with a trusted partner with deep expertise in Office 365 and a long list of successful customer migrations will make the difference between hoping your transition will work, and knowing it will succeed on every level. That's why so many companies rely on Softchoice.

With more than 40 locations across the U.S. and Canada, Softchoice is one of North America's largest providers of IT solutions and services. The company's holistic approach to technology includes solution design, implementation, and managed services. Through unique offerings like Softchoice Cloud, and extensive experience with Microsoft Office 365, Softchoice makes it easy for organizations to source, implement, and manage the right cloud solutions for their business.

[Learn more](#)


softchoice

 **Microsoft**

Softchoice recommends Office 365.

Sources

¹ Spiceworks in-depth interviews with 10 IT pros on implementing cloud productivity solutions

² Spiceworks survey of 200 U.S. IT decision-makers on cloud productivity solutions, on behalf of Softchoice, November 2017