TOP FIVE WAYS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR NEXT OFFICE 365 TENANT MIGRATION

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Introduction

With organizations around the world rapidly adopting Office 365, IT pros need to be prepared to perform efficient, effective tenant-to-tenant migrations. Whether you're undergoing a merger or acquisition, or it's time to clean up and consolidate your IT infrastructure to drive productivity and growth, a successful migration requires one thing above all else: a tight focus on your users' needs. In the end, success is not measured by checking off pieces of data moved; it's about ensuring that everyone remains productive during the project and after migration is complete.

> The success of a migration is not measured by checking off pieces of data moved. You must ensure that everyone remains productive.

With that key goal in mind, there are five areas you need to pay close attention to as you prepare for your next migration:

- Keep users collaborating

- Preserve access to data

- Focus on Microsoft Teams

- Keep everyone communicating

- Migrate hybrid environments

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Keep users collaborating

Very few migrations happen overnight or even over a weekend. Therefore, one of the most critical questions during planning has to be, "How do I keep everyone productive, no matter which users and resources have been migrated and which have not?"

> How do I keep everyone productive, no matter which users and resources have been migrated at a given point in the project?

Here are the key things to focus on in order to ensure seamless coexistence between the source and target environments throughout the migration process:

- **Unified directory —** Your global address list (GAL) is, essentially, your company's electronic address book. To ensure users can communicate and collaborate throughout the migration, you need a single GAL that covers both the source and target, and that is both complete and accurate. Users should never need to know which users have been migrated and which ones have not; they need to be able to contact one another simply by selecting a name from the GAL.

- **Automatic email routing —** Email remains a vital service for businesses. Every user needs to continue to get their messages promptly, from both inside and outside the company, no matter how far along the migration project has progressed. For instance, if person A, who has been migrated to the target, sends an email

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to a colleague, person B, who hasn't been migrated yet, that email is sent to B's mailbox on the target and needs to be automatically routed to B's mailbox on the source tenant so B sees it right away.

- **Calendaring —** Many organizations rely on the Outlook calendar function for scheduling meetings. To keep the business running effectively, you need to ensure that everyone can see accurate free/busy information across both the source and target tenants throughout the migration project.

- **Domain coexistence —** One key requirement of a merger or acquisition is often to ensure that the resulting company presents a unified presence to the external world, even if, under the covers, the IT environment is not yet consolidated into a single domain. However, Office 365 does not permit a brand domain, such as quest.com, to exist in two different tenants at the same time. Therefore, you need a way to ensure that every email that leaves your company looks like it's being sent from your corporate domain, even if it's actually coming from a tenant with a different domain name, such as the tenant of the organization you're acquiring.

Proper migration scheduling can reduce some of the headaches involved in ensuring seamless coexistence during the migration project. That requires working with your business counterparts to understand their needs and dependencies. For instance, if the marketing and graphics design departments work closely with one another, migrating them together can help minimize communication and collaboration issues.

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Preserve access to data

Of course, migrations aren't just about moving users. Today's organizations rely heavily on data, which is spread across Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business and Teams. Therefore, to be considered success, your migration project must ensure that everyone can continue to access the content they need to do their jobs without skipping a beat.

> How do I ensure that everyone can continue to access the content they need to do their jobs, across Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business and Teams?

At the same time, moving redundant, obsolete or trivial content is a bad idea. Not only will it complicate and lengthen your project unnecessarily, it will clutter up your target environment, increasing maintenance and security headaches for the IT team and hurting productivity and effectiveness for users across the business.

Therefore, it's critical to perform a thorough pre-migration assessment that inventories all the data that you have, and reviews in detail both what content each person has access to and how they're using it. You'll almost certainly discover data that is no longer used, whether it's stale SharePoint documents or Teams that were created for a project that no longer exists. But don't be too hasty — for instance, you can't just assume that no one uses their archive mailbox because some people might

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actually have valuable information stored there that does need to be migrated. Similarly, information in the mailbox of a former employee might be needed by the person who's taking over that job, and some old mailboxes might need to be for legal or compliance reasons.

Don't forget about shared mailboxes, which are often essential for critical business operations and external communications.

In addition to cleaning up the data, it's wise to also clean up permissions. Your goal is to strictly adhere to the principle of least privilege — giving each user only the access rights they need to do their job. Keep in mind that Office 365 enables collaboration not just inside the organization, but with partners, customers and other external parties as well, and you

need to ensure those access rights are maintained, as appropriate. For instance, if a user has shared some of their OneDrive data with people outside the organization, you need not only retain those sharing permissions but also ensure that the related guest accounts in Office 365 are migrated as well.

Note that least privilege isn't always about taking away excessive rights; sometimes it's about granting new ones. For instance, if you're absorbing a small company that doesn't yet utilize all of the different Office 365 services that your organization relies on, such as SharePoint, you might need to grant new security assignments, in accordance with each user's role.

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Focus on Microsoft Teams

Use of Microsoft Teams is skyrocketing around the world, so it's worth focusing on the details involved in migrating it properly. Clearly, you need to migrate the data in Teams, including Excel, Word and other documents, as well as any data in a shared OneNote, calendar and so on.

> **How do I migrate Teams in a way that enables users to continue their conversations and collaborations?**

But Teams isn't just a collection of data; it's a dynamic collaboration environment with active conversations across multiple channels. Because the APIs for Teams migration are still fairly new, you might feel you have no choice but to make compromises. For instance, you might migrate each conversation over into a static file and store it on the corresponding channel so people can read it. However, with that approach, Team members won't be able to respond or interact further, which denies them a key benefit of the application. You want to make sure that you migrate Teams in a way that they can continue their conversations.

Another key issue to work out during the migration planning phase is duplicate channel and Team names between your source and target platforms. You need to work with your business counterparts to develop a renaming system that works for everyone, and ensure users are up to speed on the changes so they can continue to collaborate effectively.

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Keep everyone communicating

Every migration involves changes for users, so it's essential to provide strong communication and appropriate training. You need to help people understand what the new environment will be like and how to use it, what to expect during the migration, when various events are going to happen, and who can help if they have questions or experience issues.

> How do I ensure that my organization can continue to communicate with users and provide appropriate training to different groups of people?

Many organizations have standard communications channels. We've already talked about the need to ensure the seamless flow of email. Another critical channel is SharePoint — organizations often have dedicated sites for FAQs and project updates.

During the migration planning phase, carefully consider how your organization will communicate with users and provide appropriate training to different groups of users. Also identify who is responsible for what, so nothing falls through the cracks and users know where to turn if they need additional information or instruction. Then ensure that these communication and training channels are available to everyone throughout the migration, regardless of how far along the project has progressed.

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Migrating hybrid environments

So far, we've talked about issues that you'll face in any tenant-to-tenant migration. However, things are even more complicated if any of the IT environments involved are hybrid, with the on-premises Active Directory being synched to the cloud tenant via Azure AD Connect.

> ## How do I ensure a seamless migration when one or more hybrid environments are involved?

In these situations, the goal is usually to have a single hybrid environment, with one on-prem AD being synched to a unified Office 365 tenant. That means that in addition to the tenant migration, you need to perform an on-prem AD migration. Often, on-prem directories have been around for so long that they have become convoluted and messy — especially if they are the product of multiple previous mergers and acquisitions. Therefore, a comprehensive inventory and cleanup of the on-prem AD environments is critical to a successful migration.

For instance, you might have domains with resources that you don't realize your users or customers still depend upon, such as an essential homegrown application. If you fail to migrate that domain, users will lose access to those resources, which could disrupt important business processes. At the same time, you don't want to migrate

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unnecessary data in your on-prem environment any more than you want it in your tenant migration, so you need to get insight into what content is actually being used, and then work with business users and your legal and compliance teams to determine what needs to be migrated and what can safely be left behind.

User account migration is also more complicated in a hybrid scenario. You need to plan for both accounts that exist only in the cloud (such as B2B and B2C accounts created for partners and customers) and hybrid accounts, which are synched from the on-prem AD to Azure AD but almost always have cloud-only attributes that are not stored in the on-prem AD object. These attributes include things like Office 365 licenses and membership in cloud-only groups, both of which are critical to meeting your key goal of ensuring that each user retains seamless access to the resources they need to do their job.

Finally, don't overlook the resource processing phase of your migration. In Active Directory, permissions are assigned to users via Access Control Lists (ACLs), and these lists rely on the security identifiers (SIDs) of those users. To ensure that resources will still be available to users when they start using their target accounts, the ACLs of all the resources in the network need to be processed to refer to the new SIDs. These resources include things users rely on directly, like user workstations and file and print servers, along with foundational resources such as Exchange Server, SQL Server, SharePoint Server and Systems Management Server (SMS). Therefore, effective resource processing is crucial to user productivity, and thus to a successful migration.

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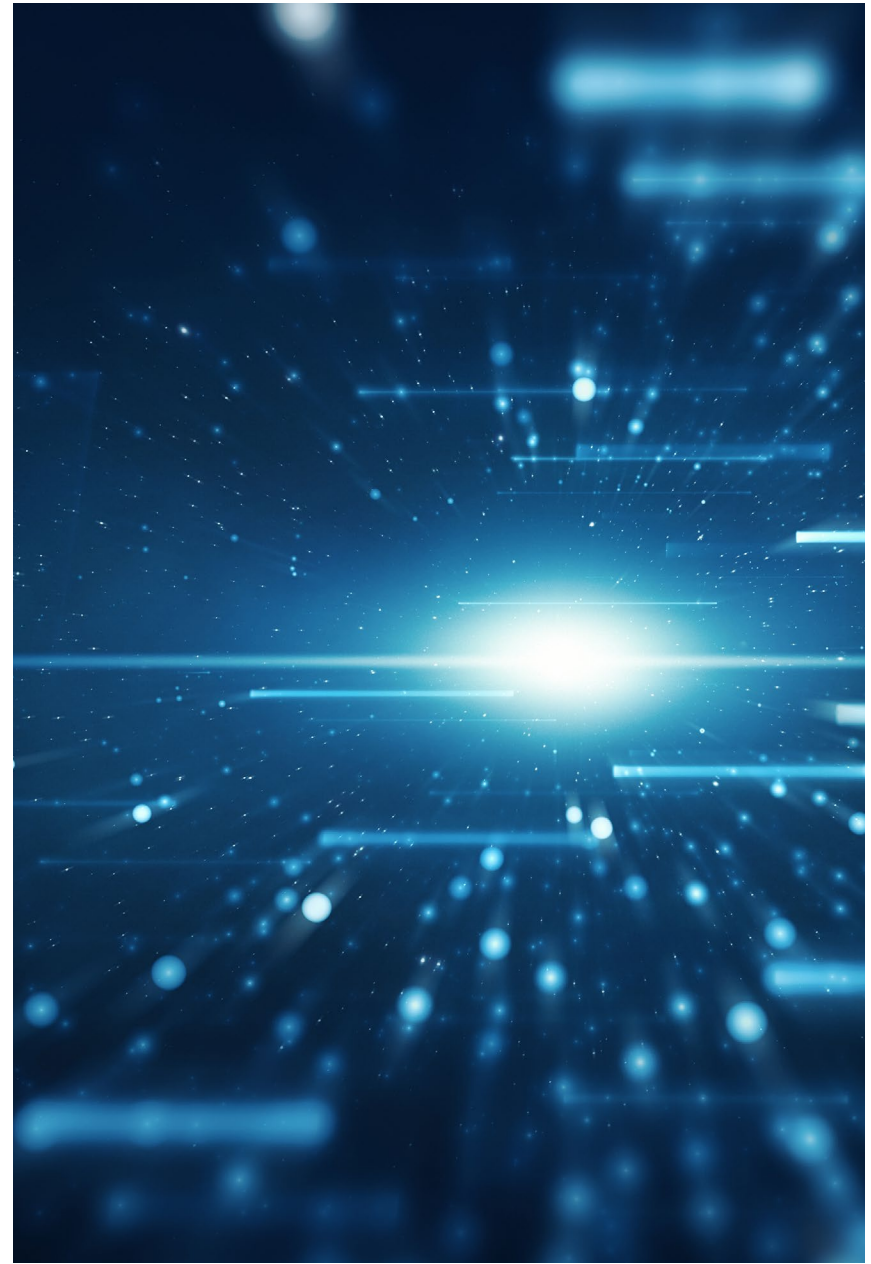
Get help from the migration leader

TENANT-TO-TENANT MIGRATIONS

Migration is too important and too complex to trust to native tools and manual processes. You need solutions you can trust to get the job done right and with far less effort and expense. Quest has been helping IT pros deliver successful migrations for more than two decades. For tenant-to-tenant migrations, look no further than Quest® On Demand Migration. From a single intuitive dashboard, you get complete visibility into your migration project. You can:

- **Plan your migration —** Discover and assess your source accounts, groups and data, including how the data is being utilized, when it was last accessed and whether there is any duplicate data. That way, you can eliminate unnecessary data to reduce migration risk and timelines.

- **Schedule and track migration jobs —** On Demand Migration helps you plan your migration jobs to minimize disruption for users and IT teams, including all your Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint Online and Teams workloads.

- **Ensure seamless coexistence —** You can empower users to continue to communicate and collaborate seamlessly throughout your migration project. On Demand Migration handles all the key concerns raised earlier, including ensuring a unified GAL, calendar sharing, automatic email forwarding and domain coexistence.

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How good is On Demand Migration? Well, Quest was included as a Representative Vendor in the 2019 Gartner Market Guide for Cloud Office Migration Tools report. In fact, Quest was the *only* vendor recognized for having a solution that supports all 40 of the features and functionalities identified by Gartner.

> How good is On Demand Migration? Quest was the only vendor recognized by Gartner for having a cloud migration solution that supports all 40 key features and functionalities.

HYBRID MIGRATIONS

For hybrid environments, combine On Demand Migration with Quest Migration Manager for Active Directory, which performs the on-premises migration. User accounts are migrated from the source to the target on-prem AD forest, synched to Azure AD, and then matched with On Demand Migration. Migration Manager also handles the critical resource processing to ensure users can continue to be productive after the migration is complete.

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BEYOND THE MIGRATION

Even better, Quest not only helps you complete your migration but empowers you to manage and secure your resulting Office 365 or hybrid environment. On Demand Migration is part of the broader On Demand platform, which also offers secure and reliable auditing, backup and recovery, group management, and license management. With this single Azure-hosted SaaS platform, you can ensure business continuity, contain Office 365 group sprawl, optimize your Office 365 licenses and more.

> The On Demand platform is not limited to migration; it also offers auditing, backup and recovery, group management, and license management.

Figure 1. Quest On Demand is your go-to SaaS dashboard for tackling Microsoft challenges in a hybrid world.

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ABOUT QUEST

Quest provides software solutions for the rapidly-changing world of enterprise IT. We help simplify the challenges caused by data explosion, cloud expansion, hybrid datacenters, security threats and regulatory requirements. We're a global provider to 130,000 companies across 100 countries, including 95% of the Fortune 500 and 90% of the Global 1000. Since 1987, we've built a portfolio of solutions which now includes data-base management, data protection, identity and access management, Microsoft platform management and unified endpoint management. With Quest, organizations spend less time on IT administration and more time on business innovation. For more information, visit www.quest.com.

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Quest Software Inc.
Attn: LEGAL Dept
4 Polaris Way
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

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Ebook-Microsoft365TenantMigration-MPM-LP-59631

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