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Ensuring Seamless Collaboration and Higher Productivity with Microsoft Office 365

Abstract

Organizations of all sizes realize the impact of seamless collaboration on organizational productivity. The Microsoft Office 365 suite of products help employees in an organization collaborate seamlessly across departments and regions. The latest Office 365 suite of products enable organizations to leverage the flexibility of cloud while enhancing productivity. But migrating to the online environment can be challenging. Invariably organizations require custom services and third party tools to fully exploit Office 365. Moreover, organizations that have invested in the suite must extract the full value of the suite to enhance collaboration within the enterprise by deploying tools like OneDrive, Yammer, Planner, Team

This paper highlights the tools and services that Microland offers to ensure that the implementation of Office 365 beyond Exchange online and migration are streamlined and challenge-free. A tier-1 Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider and an extended delivery arm for Microsoft global delivery teams, Microland helps organizations realize the full potential of Office 365 suite and raise their overall productivity to the next level.

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Are you making the most of your Office 365 investments?

With organizations emphasizing deeper employee collaboration in order to co-create products and services, technology plays the crucial role of an enabler. Microsoft's Office 365 suite of products boosts collaboration at multiple levels. The cloud-based offering of contemporary technologies can run on multiple devices and is easy to use across geographies. The single integrated suite makes it possible to share files, view drawings, conduct virtual meetings, and enable real time multiple-geography collaborations, making work a rewarding experience.

 The runaway success of social media platforms proves that given an opportunity, people like to share their experiences, ideas, and opinions with friends and acquaintances – and sometimes – even with the world at large. In keeping with the changes in the way people engage with each other, the Office 365 suite has also evolved beyond just Microsoft Exchange, Skype, and Microsoft SharePoint. In its current avatar, the Office 365 suite consists of tools like Yammer, Microsoft OneDrive, Office 365 Groups, Office Delve and Microsoft Planner that transform the way employees collaborate with each other to significantly enhance overall enterprise productivity.

If your organization has already invested in Office 365, this is the right time to figure out whether you are maximizing the return on investment by leveraging the suite's wide-ranging features. On the other hand, if you are considering migrating to Office 365, there are significant advantages you can derive from such a move.

Whether you are at the beginning of your O365 journey or some distance along the way, Microland has a set of services backed by robust methodologies built over years of experience to help you achieve the maximum return on your O365 investment.

#1 Upgrade to Exchange Online for seamless communication and enhanced compliance

Among all Office 365 services, email is the most important - the main driver of productivity. The ease of Migrating to Microsoft Office 365 Exchange Online from the existing email platform depends upon the current level of email performance, the volume of data, bandwidth availability, as well as the processes, tools, and people deployed. Microland helps organizations migrate seamlessly from Exchange 2010, 2013, and 2016.

With enterprises targeting higher operational flexibility, cloud-based email services are gaining popularity. However, most enterprises fail to assess the ability of their existing IT infrastructure and data to handle the cloud email infrastructure and the new security threats that come with exposure to the external environment. The transition calls for re-engineering of email infrastructure, revamping of operational processes, and re-skilling of IT support staff.

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With Microland's Messaging/email services, organizations can efficiently manage even the most complex hybrid email infrastructures to ensure a seamless communication experience and improved compliance. Using deep domain expertise and our dedicated center of excellence, we deliver the following outcomes:

○ **Predictability and security** of on-premise email along with the agility and flexibility of a cloud-based solution, using modern email infrastructure architecture

○ **Zero data and productivity loss** at an optimal cost, with seamless migration to the new email infrastructure

○ **Operationalization of modern hybrid** email infrastructure - enabled by updating operational policies, configurations, and procedures

○ **Improved security** - by implementing security controls and policies aligned to organizational standards

○ **Email** archival and retention - by implementing relevant technologies and policies

○ **Enhanced compliance, performance, user experience, and availability** through monitoring and management of the email ecosystem

#2 Address gaps in Yammer for superior social networking and productivity

Yammer can be considered an enterprise social network, because of its ability to connect enterprise users. With Yammer, employees can share ideas and updates, and seek solutions openly from colleagues around the globe. In sync with new-age ways of working, Yammer provides teams with a faster and smarter way to connect and collaborate. Some of the smart features of Yammer that help raise productivity are Groups, Search, Inbox and notifications, and Office integration.

Yammer Groups are like Facebook pages. People working on a project or an event can collaborate and converse until they reach their goal. Members can be added or removed from the group as required and the group can be retained or disbanded after the project is over. The group acts as a virtual workspace that can be as big or small as needed at any given time. In addition, if external collaboration is needed, users can add partners, customers, and vendors to group conversations for either a specific input or for ongoing collaboration.

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Search quickly leads users to experts, conversations, and files so they do not have to reinvent the wheel. Office integration allows users to do all the tasks they do in Office, such as preview, edit, and co-author documents. Users can also compare versions and finalize changes easily.

However, Yammer has certain limitations. For instance, Yammer lacks granular security functionality; users cannot secure files and messages individually and they must place them in a private folder. Yammer's administrative controls can be inadequate. Particularly, it does not provide group administrators with analytical reports, which limits their insight into group activities.

Organizations can overcome these issues with certain workarounds and solutions. Microland Office 365 **assessment services identify these issues at an early stage**. **Our design and deployment services ensure that the right set of solutions are implemented to meet the objectives of each organization.**

#3 Move from on-premises to online SharePoint for scalable, secure, and compliant information sharing

Microsoft Office 365 SharePoint Online is the cloud-enabled version of SharePoint with additional features. As part of the Office 365 suite, it gives users the tools they need to be productive, wherever they are. Office Graph, a feature of SharePoint, provides intelligence to help employees stay up to date with all teams and projects they are involved with. This happens through 'activity feeds and recommendations' that are, in turn, based on users' association with others and the content they are working on. SharePoint gives enterprises a scalable solution that is both secure and compliant, as it applies unified policies across all workloads and devices.

In addition, SharePoint provides enterprises the flexibility to store content on-premises and in the cloud. For employees and users, content is always available, no matter where it is stored.

In virtually all but the most basic cases, to migrate data properly from on premises to online SharePoint, organizations require third-party tools. Larger enterprises might experience longer migration times due to bigger data volumes and greater customization in their current on-premises environments.

It's also important to remember that custom code from on-premises iterations cannot be carried over to SharePoint Online and it must be rewritten or implemented differently.

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The good news is SharePoint Online supports hybrid architecture to provide an experience that might not be possible otherwise. Although hybrid SharePoint integrates SharePoint 2013 with SharePoint Online, it is not a turnkey solution and organizations require customization or third-party tools to ensure that it functions properly. **Microland services help organizations successfully navigate this path by migrating existing SharePoint sites to SharePoint Online and integrating it with collaboration solutions to gain maximum productivity benefit**

#4 Leverage 'Delve' the smart personal assistant for information immediacy

Microsoft Office 365 Delve, the Office 365 personal assistant, comes with often underutilized but remarkable features. Although equipped to do much more, here are some of its key features and functionalities:

Forager: With Forager, Office Delve brings to the users' notice content that is relevant or of interest to them. It searches, mines, and offers content from across Office 365, including from OneDrive for Business, SharePoint, Exchange, Yammer and other programs.

Finder: Using Finder, Delve helps users identify the file, folder, or the title of the document containing the most recent content they have been working on, since these can often slip from their minds.

People connector: With Delve, the user profile is not just a picture, it provides information about the user's work. Users can share their blog or the content they are working on across the organization, and connect with others doing similar work. By clicking on someone's name or picture in Delve, users can know more about them and gain access to documents they are working on.

MyAnalytics (formerly Delve Analytics) provides personalized insights into how users spend their time at work. With MyAnalytics, users can stay up to date with important contacts, share key metrics with a coach, and prioritize the time they spend with different groups.

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#5 Get more out of OneDrive for Business by enabling cloud backup

Microsoft Office 365 OneDrive for Business provides organizations with space in the cloud to store, share, and sync work files. With OneDrive for Business, users can update and share files from any device. But, users cannot whitelist or blacklist shared domains. It does not allow administrators to manage password characteristics, and it does not offer a native remote wipe capability for PCs and Macs.

With OneDrive for Business, users might find it difficult to synchronize files of unlimited sizes, while administrators might be unable to prevent certain types of files from being shared. Users might also face issues while synchronizing their folders with others.

At the back end, OneDrive for Business is a SharePoint site and it does not have a stand-alone administrative console in Office 365. It is instead controlled through the SharePoint Online administrative console.

In spite of the advantages offered by OneDrive for Business, there are a number of issues that must be addressed:

- Provides access to users from different end-point devices including PCs, tablets, and smartphones, making **sensitive enterprise data vulnerable to leaks.**
- **Does not provide any built-in functionality for use as a cloud backup** for end users.
- **Administrators do not have direct access to the end user's OneDrive for Business content as** it is geared towards end users.
- **Controls to prevent enterprise users from sharing the documents** stored on their OneDrive for Business **are not enabled.**
- Has by **far the longest list of restrictions and limitations among virtually all of Microsoft's products** such as the number of files that can be synced, file size, file name length, characters that can be used, and reserved file names.
- While the underlying technology base of OneDrive for Business is SharePoint, it **behaves differently than a normal SharePoint team site.**
- **OneDrive and OneDrive for Business** are two different solutions targeted toward different types of end users.

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Given these complexities and security concerns, adopting OneDrive for Business is anything but easy. **Microland has consolidated industry-wide best practices and developed a unique methodology for small, medium, and large enterprises to seamlessly adopt OneDrive for Business** in order to:

Protect and securely share enterprise data by enabling data loss prevention policies and integrating with Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Suite (EMS) to drive device management, conditional access, and rights management

Enable secure and incremental backups with Microland solutions that leverage OneDrive beyond its Enterprise File Synchronization and File Sharing (EFSS) solution capability, making it a cloud backup solution

Enable administrators to manage and control what enterprise users can store, sync, and share using OneDrive for Business by using PowerShell

Help administrators and end users drive greater value from the solution using administrator and end-user guides

#6 Switch to Office 365 Planner for up-to-date task management

With Microsoft Office 365 Planner, teams can easily create new plans, organize and assign tasks, share files, chat about the work being done, and get updates on individual and team progress. The following are the productivity-driving features of Office 365 Planner:

Single-click launch: With a single click, users can launch Planner to start creating a new plan. Thereafter, a set of tools help build a team, assign tasks, and continuously update the status.

Easy to follow plans: Visually easy to follow, each plan falls into its own board, and users can organize tasks into buckets. Users can color code and classify tasks based on their status or who they are assigned to. They can also drag and drop tasks between columns to reassign tasks or login updates.

Comprehensive list of tasks: My Tasks provides a comprehensive list of all tasks and their status across all plans. Users are always aware of who is working on which task and how much progress each team member has made.

Email notifications: When a user is assigned a new task or added to a conversation, an email automatically updates the user about it.

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Why Microland

Enterprises today understand that there is more to Office 365 than email and workloads. As a trusted partner, Microland helps organizations overcome the technical challenges during the deployment of the suite of products and streamline their implementation. We help organizations adopt all the components and features of Microsoft Office 365 including Exchange, SharePoint, OneDrive, Yammer, Skype for Business and Delve by :

- **Incorporating** Office 365 **in alignment with enterprise productivity solutions**
- **Providing comprehensive support** for the evaluation, planning, rollout, and management of Microsoft Office 365 cloud deployment
- **Increasing adoption** for Microsoft O365 services

We facilitate enterprise-wide adoption of Microsoft Office 365 by leveraging the following differentiators:

Best-in-class management: Our management practices are aligned with ITIL best practices for incident, problem, configuration, capacity, performance, and availability management.

Global experience: We bring to the table over fifteen years of experience in partnering with Fortune 10 and other large enterprises, effectively addressing their collaboration needs.

Technical expertise: We manage the world's largest private Microsoft Exchange environment spread over 40 countries and across 450,000 user mailboxes in a hybrid setup.

Robust delivery model: Our service delivery internet protocol and factory-led migration model ensure a seamless transition at an optimized cost and scale.

smartCenter^{SM}**:** Microland's **smartCenter**^{SM}, an ITIL-based service management platform, can be integrated with monitoring infrastructure for seamless service delivery and smart monitoring.

Industry-leading partnerships: A tier 1 Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider and an extended delivery arm for Microsoft global delivery teams, we have been ranked as Microsoft's best infrastructure services partner for eight years.

Skilled professionals: We offer the services of certified professionals aligned with cloud productivity competency in the Microsoft Partner Network.

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Partnering with Microland to realize the true potential of Office 365

Working in teams across departments or even across the globe, has never before been more rewarding or easier. Microsoft Office 365 tools for collaboration and seamless information sharing are device agnostic and raise the productivity of small as well as large organizations. Microland helps organizations visualize and reach their collaboration and productivity goals by unleashing the full potential of the Office 365 suite.

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About the author

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Manickam Sethuramalingam has over 20 years in the IT infrastructure management space has played various roles in project delivery, presales, consulting, solution engineering and service management. As a Senior Director – EUS Practice, he is responsible for service line management and new service creations specific to cloud based messaging and collaboration and end user workplace technologies that enables enterprise to improve the user productivity and enhance user experience.

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About Microland

Microland is a leading Hybrid IT Infrastructure Service Provider and a trusted partner to enterprises in their IT-¬as-a-Service journey. Incorporated in 1989 and headquartered in Bangalore, India, Microland has more than 3,400 professionals across its offices in Europe, Middle East, North America and India. Microland enables global enterprises to become more agile and innovative through a comprehensive portfolio of services that addresses hybrid IT transformation, workspace transformation, service transformation and end-to-end IT infrastructure management.

Lear more about us at:

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