

Case Study

**In-the-cloud cost savings:
Accenture's seamless
take off to Office 365.**

Avanade and Accenture achieve one of the world's biggest Office 365 deployments

Background

Accenture is one of the world's leading organisations providing management consulting, technology and outsourcing services, with more than 323,000 employees; offices and operations in more than 200 cities in 56 countries; and net revenues of \$30 billion for fiscal 2014.

Known for its role in assessing and optimising the performance of numerous high-profile businesses and governments, in this case Accenture needed to review the spending and efficiency of a major department within its own organisation.

With contracts up for renewal and the prospect of expensive and time-consuming upgrades ahead, Accenture was looking to improve the efficiency of its IT services, without adding extra costs.

To date, Accenture had been using a suite of on-premises services that included Microsoft Outlook and Office Communicator, but over the years had recognised that running services on-premises was an expensive option. It involves running costs for operations staff, hosting and storage, as well as the cost of equipment depreciation. It all had to be continually kept up-to-date, maintained and monitored.

Moving to cloud, such as with Microsoft Office 365, would enable Accenture to realise cost savings, while delivering services in a Microsoft environment that was familiar to Accenture's users.

Making the move to cloud

One year on, Avanade and Accenture have completed one of the biggest ever deployments of Microsoft Office 365: involving more than 290,000 users, 11,000 sites and across 54 countries. Within this first year, the solution paid for itself.

As a result of its move to cloud, Accenture was particularly looking to achieve the following objectives:

- The move should be paid for from the savings generated from the transition
- Deliver a seamless migration without any degradation in service levels to staff
- Show immediate improvements, especially in regard to mailbox maximum storage levels

Bill Hub, Managing Director of Workplace Technology and Collaboration, Accenture, responsible for Accenture's Global IT Sourcing Strategy, said: "We knew that we did have a good experience for our employees to date, and there were no amount of savings that would justify any disruption in the quality of services that people had."

"The transition was pretty seamless. As we gathered feedback from people, most of our employees literally were not aware that it had happened until they realised that they had a larger mailbox."
– Bill Hub, Accenture

Accenture didn't just have to grapple with migrating almost 300,000 active users, it also had to do so across multiple geographies that each had its specific challenges and legislation.

In order to meet Accenture's objectives, moving quickly was essential and thorough planning was crucial to enabling a swift migration. Accenture couldn't allow for any downtime, regardless of how much the company would save at the end of the migration.

The secret to success

A focused but adaptable team was key, as Mark Corley, Avanade's CTO comments: "the secret of a seamless migration is thorough up-front planning and a dedicated team with a flexible approach."

Shared incentives were key to finishing on time, while focused project management and change management were a vital part of ensuring a smooth move to the cloud. As with any major IT project of this type, there are challenges along the way, but when properly anticipated, disruption is minimised.

By working closely with Avanade, "the Microsoft focused arm of Accenture" as Corley describes them, Accenture managed a seamless migration of around 290,000 users to a cloud-hosted email, delivering a better product to its end-users at a lower cost.

“As we locked in our business case and we knew the savings per month that we were going to generate, the desire to move quickly to achieve those benefits was important to us. At the same time, we couldn’t face any disruption along the way.” – Bill Hub, Managing Director of Workplace Technology and Collaboration, Accenture

Measurable results

Despite the host of considerations that Accenture had to bear in mind when migrating to Office 365, the move was completed on schedule and produced the anticipated project savings.

Within 12 months, Accenture had accomplished its business case as a result of the move to cloud.

On the whole, users noticed very little differences in their core email service, other than the fact they now had more space to utilise.

What’s more, users are now experiencing additional functionality – only realised in a cloud environment, such as easier collaboration and file management.

Over the course of a year, Avanade and Accenture achieved the following:

- 290,000 users moved to Microsoft Exchange Online
- 13,000 Microsoft SharePoint Online sites created
- 130 TBs of data moved

Accenture emerged from the migration much wiser about the type of challenges that can arise when integrating providers both inside and outside the cloud.

Everything from directories, network integration, security and operational processes have to be accounted for from a compatibility perspective and managed accordingly through careful pilot testing.

Bill Hub’s recommendation for those making a similar move to Office 365 is involving information security early in the process to ensure compliance with security policies and controls.

He also recommends building the platform for ease of movement between Office 365 and on-premises mailboxes – this will provide the most seamless experience for end-users and reduce risk in the long term.

Avanade’s business IT expertise helped ease the transition for Accenture.

Avanade’s Mark Corley: “By selecting Office 365, Accenture was able to partner with a world-class service provider, delivering best-of-breed productivity tools, already familiar to the users, minimising disruption to the business and its employees.”



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem.

Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 29,000 professionals in 23 countries.

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