



# CIO Guidance: Why Office 365 Should Be the First Step in Your Cloud Journey





## Introduction

Microsoft's Office 365 productivity suite is one of the most powerful business tools available. According to Gartner, nearly three-quarters of all medium and large organizations in the U.S. use the platform, particularly in areas like healthcare and finance, which have seen usage double over the last two years.

Increasingly, enterprises are deploying Office 365 as a cloud-based service, with projections estimating that more than 70 percent of businesses will have incorporated this model by 2021. The reasons are many and varied. Some technology and business leaders want to avoid a massive capital expenditure to replace end-of-life SharePoint and Outlook servers, infrastructure and software licenses, but may want to consider a dedicated instance but in Azure public cloud.

In addition, others are put off by all of the management requirements and day-to-day care and nurturing of Office 365. Between 2017 and April of 2018, Microsoft released over 200 updates to the platform that traditionally licensed users had to deploy and integrate using in-house staff and resources. And in many cases, these continual updates resulted in business processes being changed to suit the software, affecting workflows, access, security management practices, and collaboration styles.

## Office 365 migration

However, as many companies are finding out, migrating Office 365 from legacy infrastructure is not just a simple matter of spinning up a cloud instance and loading the software. The cloud is a very different environment from the on-premises data center version and this affects how software interacts with infrastructure, management systems, other applications, and even users.

Office 365 features a number of core capabilities that must be configured and supported for individual operating environments and use cases. These include Exchange email, Office productivity tools, the OneDrive content collaboration service, SharePoint content services, and the Skype instant messaging and audio/video system. Secondary services need to be taken into account as well, such as the Delve insight engine, the Planner task management suite, and StaffHub staff management tool. And finally, there are ancillary services like the Flow workflow system and PowerApp citizen development tool.

Managing all of these applications, plus any additional third-party platforms, is time-consuming and distracts IT staff from more strategic tasks. The more time IT personnel spend on daily server maintenance, patch management, and user issues, the less time they have for streamlining processes or supporting strategic growth initiatives. Hosting software like Office 365 on local infrastructure is not only inefficient but tends to drive up costs and lowers end user satisfaction across the entire digital ecosystem.

## Office 365 as a feature rich alternative

For these reasons, many organizations are turning to the cloud to consume Office 365 as a feature rich alternative that is simply billed based on the number of users per month. CBTS provides certified experts who work with clients upfront to establish goals, assess their current environments, and determine the scope of the migration and configuration of O365. From there, implementation teams take over to complete the transition and conduct post-move evaluations to ensure the system is performing optimally before rolling it out to the entire organization. Although each project is different, clients can expect the following steps:

- Configuration of Office 365 specific to client's business objectives
- Expert project management with input from all key stakeholders
- Assessment and documentation of the existing environment conducted to determine scope and timeline
- Extensive Active Directory health check completed
- Design and configuration of Office 365 tenant environment
- Azure Active Directory Connect install and configuration
- Email migration from Exchange, IBM Notes, or GSuite
- Transfer of on-premises files to OneDrive or SharePoint
- Set up of Office 365 Teams
- Implementation of Yammer, Skype for Business, and other communications tools
- Set up of Hybrid Exchange

## Office 365 backup

At the same time, a cloud-based managed Office 365 service requires a sound offsite secondary backup strategy. Cloud backup follows a similar implementation path as the main service:

- **Assessment Phase:** Document and evaluate the current environment to determine outcome-based goals and retention periods
- **Build Phase:** Design, configure, and set up a customized backup solution that can point to a CBTS facility, another Azure instance, or on client premises
- **Protection Phase:** Ensure data is encrypted from Office 365, while in transit, as well as at rest in the secondary site
- **Testing Phase:** Backup processes are monitored 24/7. Data restoration should be completed to test the recoverability and ensure documented success.

In most cases, data will be backed up and protected at a CBTS or Azure destination. By housing backups offsite, the enterprise maintains a reliable history of data stored over long periods, easily searched and retrieved when necessary. For most use cases, this requires 24/7/365 access from virtually any device.

In this manner, the organization receives a professionally configured Office 365 environment, complete with backup and data protection, under a full consumption-based licensing model – no upfront costs, no deployment and integration burdens, and happy end users. In an era when business moves at the speed of data and entire industries can be upended by a simple mobile app, flexibility and reliability of core business applications can spell the difference between success and failure.

## Conclusion

As the digital economy unfolds, organizations will find that the more time, energy, and resources that go toward supporting back-office infrastructure and dedicated licensing, the less is available for core missions, like finding efficiencies or tapping into new markets.

For information on how CBTS can help you build a modern, cloud-based Office 365 environment, please contact

## About CBTS

CBTS provides end-to-end IT and communications solutions that allow mid-sized and enterprise businesses to improve operational efficiency, enable innovation, mitigate risk, and reduce expenditures. From building enablement infrastructure, to deploying cloud services, to employing managed services, to offering top-notch technology consultants, CBTS is your technology partner to gain a competitive edge and deliver quality services.

We are dedicated to building a long-term relationship with your organization by understanding your technology needs and delivering solutions that exceed your expectations. Our flexible delivery models enable you to consume technology solutions with your desired level of technical support and payment options.

To help achieve your business goals, CBTS has maintained state-of-the-art technology platforms, engineering talent, and strategic partnerships to deliver world-class technology solutions. Highly certified and driven by proven operational processes, CBTS provides the best value in the quickest amount of time. With over 700 certified consultants, CBTS offers assurance that your mission-critical data and operations are up and running at all times, protected, and compliant.



Contact us today at [cbts.com](https://cbts.com)

---