

Business Benefits of Migration to Microsoft Office 365

Overview of Microsoft Office 365

Featuring the newest cloud technologies, Microsoft Office 365 empowers organizations large and small to bolster their productivity and efficiency in terms of speed, compatibility, and costs. In addition to upgrading familiar tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and OneNote, Office 365 offers its customers with cloud-based collaboration and communication services through Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Lync Online, and Office Professional Plus. This user-friendly and all-inclusive package enables companies to focus more on its core business and less on technical infrastructure, which Microsoft handles exceptionally well.

Total Costs of Ownership

Not only does Office 365 include familiar applications and programs, it also features online office collaboration software for email, document sharing, and web conferencing. Office 365 surpasses other file-sharing programs such as Google Docs and Dropbox because it combines familiar and new tools in one comprehensive package to save companies from paying for each program or module. By incorporating these various tools into one web-based platform, Office 365 enables companies to easily standardize on the latest software packages, which Microsoft updates “automagically” on their customers’ behalf. Less upfront capital outlay and lower total costs of ownership puts a smile in most CFOs.

Collaboration & Real-Time Communication

Through Lync Online, Exchange Online, and SharePoint Online, Office 365 promotes communication and collaboration among employees. For example, SharePoint Online allows users to share and track different versions of documents. By authorizing only one user to work on each document, SharePoint Online minimizes the risk of users overwriting each other’s work, which often occurs in other file-sharing solutions. For other occasions where real-time interactions are needed, team members leverage Lync Online and its unified communication capabilities (instantly message, online voice and video chats) to hold online meetings and to review documents. Needless to say, fewer meetings mean less time out of office and traveling costs.

Accessibility

Office 365, although some may argue, is the most accessible, multifunctional platform, especially for employees of various technical expertises. Building upon employees’ familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook, Office 365 allows them to use these tools within a web browser and authenticate with their existing credentials in Active Directory. In addition, Office 365 works equally well in Windows or Mac. This level of accessibility increases productivity, as employees bypass the tribulations of setup and instead focus on their core competencies and productivity.

Customer Support

Highly acknowledged for its outstanding customer service, Microsoft offers phone support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When users encounter technical issues, they can seek help from a

real customer representative instead of trying to navigate an automatic voice system (aka voicemail hell). For instance, Kattelo Consulting was helping one of their clients migrate from Google Apps to Office 365 earlier this year. While the migration process went smoothly for IMAP (cloud-based webmail) users, we ran into some unexpected behaviors helping a handful of users who downloaded their messages off the mail server. Within minutes, we were able to reach Office 365's customer support via telephone. A live customer representative provided us with pointers to resolve this slight roadblock. Now that is what we consider to qualify as customer support!

Flexibility & Scalability

All in all, Office 365 significantly reduces IT costs and administration. Subscribers only pay according to how much of the service they use. For instance, Kattelo Consulting has been experiencing exponential growth in a couple of consecutive quarters in 2012. In order to accommodate its growth, Kattelo adopted Office 365 because the pay-as-you-go subscription offers maximal flexibility and scalability. Kattelo can immediately set up new offices, departments, or business units to accommodate the dynamic growth of the company.

Access Anywhere

Lastly, Office 365's cloud-based software permit Kattelo consultants to access work files and documents via Internet access so they can be productive anywhere. While this enables Kattelo employees to create more flexible work schedules, they may also feel pressured to work not only in the office but also at home. Furthermore, because current cloud-based solutions involve relying on network and bandwidth, employees may experience difficulty with working outside the office.

Summary

Office 365 offers small to midsize businesses with reliable and secure tools for enhanced collaboration and productivity. Widespread implementation of Office 365 reduces IT costs and administration, as companies no longer have to run or outsource large data centers, and they only have to pay according to how much they use. Like all cloud-based services, Office 365 may feature some connectivity issues. This minor inconvenience can be offset by the accessibility and strong technical support of this multifunctional program that strengthens internal communication and reduces expenses. Overall, Office 365 would be an excellent investment for companies that are seeking to save costs and enhance their productivity and efficiency.

About Kattelo Consulting

Kattelo (<http://kattelo.com>) is a consulting firm headquartered in San Francisco, California. The primary objective is to help clients leverage technologies to enhance productivity. Kattelo design and create software solutions that accomplish complicated tasks in a simple and effective way. Kattelo's specialty is the development of sophisticated back-office web applications using Microsoft SharePoint and .NET platforms.