

WHITEPAPER

Microsoft O365 Integration in M&A Scenarios



Technology integration is one of the most important components of a merger or acquisition. Combining the IT systems of the merging companies is a critical step towards making them one unified entity. Not only does this help realize strategic synergies, it also supports cultural integration.

As an increasing number of organizations are migrating to cloud office platforms, the possibility of synchronizable systems in mergers or acquisitions is relatively common. The challenges faced by those M&A's with two completely different systems can be a tad more overwhelming than a scenario when two O365 environments come together.

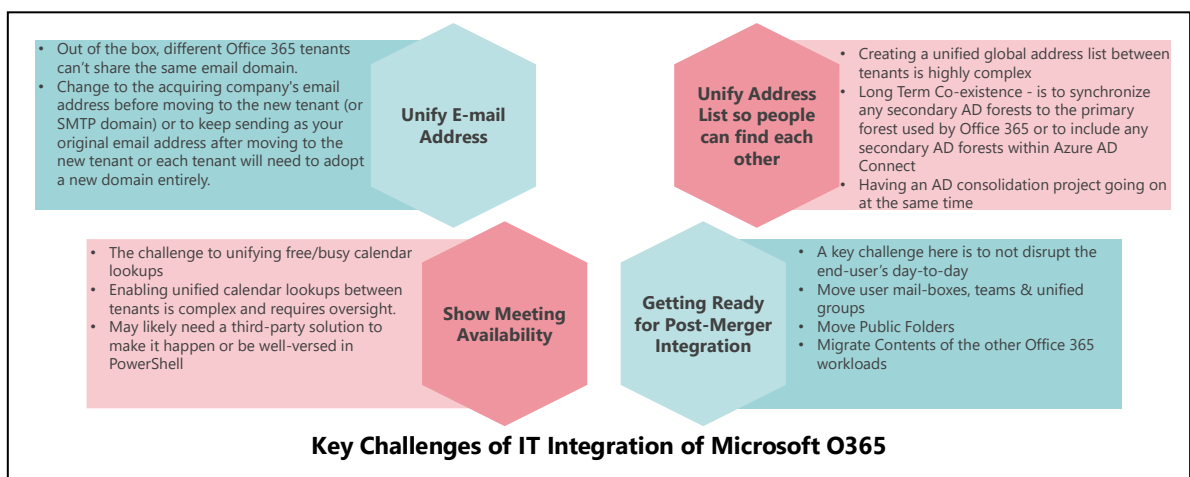
This white-paper will map the 3 scenarios that emerge in an M&A situation, with a deep dive on the most effective migration strategy.

- An O365-based enterprise merges with/acquires another O365-based enterprise
- An O365-based enterprise merges with/acquires a non-O365-based enterprise and must deal with migration, governance, as well as security and application and user management
- A non-O365-based enterprise merges with/acquires an O365-based enterprise and must deal with integration issues, and plan for proper governance

This paper is an experience capture of how Microland mitigated these challenges while deploying Microsoft O365 solutions across scenarios.

Managing complexities across scenarios

The migration and business process integration aspects of M&A activities, especially when multiple Microsoft 365 tenants are involved, can be very complex. While technical issues will be part of the equation, but legal, compliance, support desk, communications, data sovereignty, timeline, and many more factors must also be considered.



Day one is a key milestone in any M&A. It's the first day the merging organizations officially come together and start working as one. From an IT perspective, any organizations goal on that day is to set up systems so users in the merging organizations can easily collaborate.

Organization's messaging users should be able to complete these collaborative tasks:

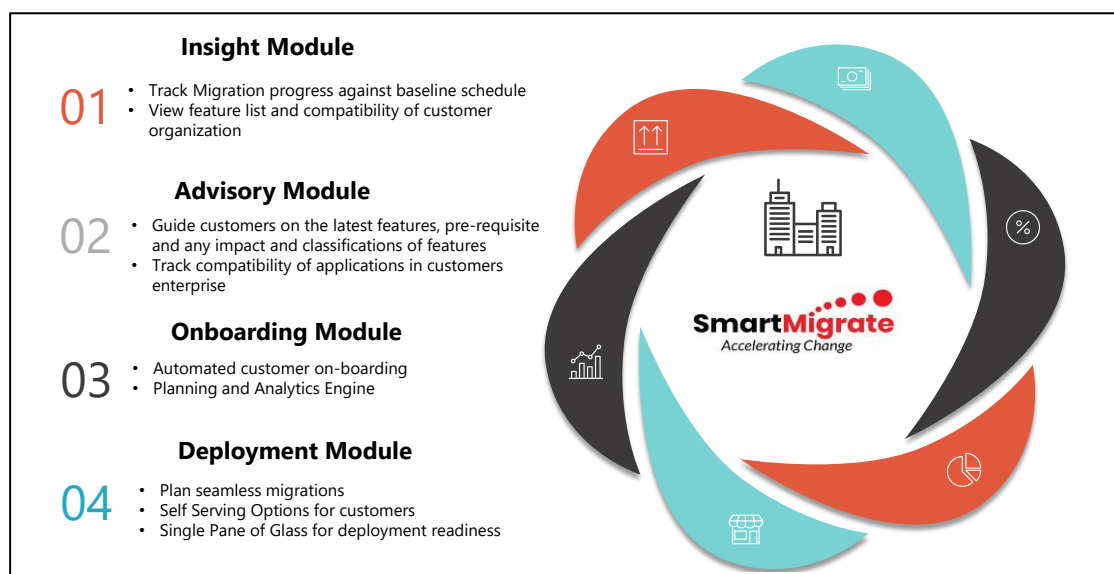
- Send email from a unified address
- Look up colleagues in a unified address list
- Check free/busy availability for all colleagues

In addition to these there could be issues with Directory readiness, Migration Platform Readiness , Mailflow, Teams Integration and Permission.

These challenges are daunting. But they actually tie in with a set of challenges that IT teams at organizations are facing anyway. Therefore, the IT integration required by a merger or acquisition can actually be an opportunity to address a wide range of IT concerns and create an infrastructure that will support the mission of the business into the future.

Microland's methodology to mitigate Microsoft O365 integration challenges

The success of a merger or acquisition is measured, at least in part, by the cost reduction from how quickly enterprises can merge disparate technology platforms and systems. Office 365 is an extremely pervasive email and collaboration platform, and there is a high probability that merging organizations will both use Office 365. Alternately, enterprises may want to use a merger or acquisition as an opportunity to consolidate operations and collaboration infrastructure within Office 365.



Our philosophy of automation-led services has led us to create an integrated, configurable one-stop platform called **SmartMigrate** that helps manage the end-to-end migration. The platform helps accelerate migration timelines and reduce project manager effort during migrations. SmartMigrate is a single platform for planning, scheduling, communicating and tracking end-to-end migration that will help accelerate O365 migration with scalable and repeatable processes.

When it comes to migrations, enterprises might need to spend longer on the planning than on the migration itself. And that's true even when migrating between tenants of Office 365. Many of our clients assume that since everyone's already on the same platform, the migration should be fairly straightforward. But there are a set of unique challenges that are

presented in migrating between Office 365 tenants.

Key Issues	Description	Mitigation
Migration Platform Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the right Migration Platform – Tool is very critical since each environment is different Agents used by tools needs to be approved by customer MFA config policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microland works with customer to identify the right migration platform which suits customer environment Microland has repository of automated scripts for different environment Microland's smartMigrate Tool helps deploy it with integration of Industry Standard Migration Tools
Directory Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronization of Distribution lists could be a challenge as there will not be federation between the two orgs i.e. Source and Destination and this could delay the velocity migrations due to unavailability of DLs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microland has readymade scripts which were built to read the DL export from Source directory and create corresponding DLs in target directory which was otherwise a mammoth effort and consumes lot of time.
Mail-flow Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrong target address mapped to user resulting in users receiving emails that they are not intended to. It will also result in security breach as confidential emails may end up in different users' mailboxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to validate the target address against the email address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated checking through this smartMigrate Tool
Active Directory Authentication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If customer's Cyber security Team has a requirement of having MFA for all O365 user & they didn't want to continue with migration of mailbox without it, this would result in time consuming activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solution include thorough assessment of customer environment during "Discovery Phase" smartMigrate includes this as part of the entire project migration time-lines and project the exact timelines for completion
Data Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of Box data/One Drive data if not done before the start of the project, it results in delay in completing the project Synch issues for One Drive with sharepoint hosted shared folder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage end users to create landing zones or site collections Migration of data to SharePoint is best handled by users themselves as the sites are created at department levels and they can better manage the landing zone and permissions rather than we migrating to SharePoint in bulk.
Network Bandwidth and ports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migration of users from one site would have choked the Network Bandwidth the next day due to OST utilization to open firewall ports from exchange online to exchange servers in corporate network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase wise migration of users from different sites to utilize the existing Network Bandwidth effectively Pro-actively work with customers InfoSec team for opening required firewall ports

In addition to the above key issues and mitigations, enterprises should consider the following for Microsoft O365 Tenant to Tenant migrations.

- Analyze the entire data in both source and target tenant, including UPNs, email addresses, shared mailboxes, domains, SharePoint data, resource mailboxes, SharePoint data structure, OneDrive configuration, Power BI groups and reports, and Azure security settings.
- Generate reports for both source and target tenant to verify whether there are any duplicate names or aliases that exist in the accounts.
- Go through the security settings, admin roles, license policies, and permissions to analyze the differences between source and target tenant. If any changes are found, then there is a need for a discussion with the technical team about how the changes will impact the source data.
- Build an effective testing strategy, which includes testing the migration process with various users, groups, IT pilot users, etc.
- Verify the types of accounts and objects that will be included in the directory such as sync/password sync/Azure AD Connect.
- Plan meticulously if the migration process seems too complicated

Bringing Smart into O365 integration and migration

Migrations in general are complex, but combining Microland's unique SmartMigrate platform with industry leading Microsoft O365 migrations tools such as BiTitan, Quest and CloudFastPath can handle the challenges very effectively. Microland has a proven track record of successfully migrating and integrating some of the largest implementations of Microsoft 365 across the world.

A Pre-Migration analysis tool provides visibility to the old environment and prepares the environment for a smooth migration addressing 3 critical areas:

- pre-emptively getting rid of duplicates
- optimizing the data for migration with the right level of cleansing and
- enhancing the metadata for greater contextualization.

Microland has successfully migrated 260,000+ mailboxes across the globe in 18+ months. We have adopted an industrialized service approach to leverage a highly skilled shared resource pool working across migrations. This ensures seamless migration by setting up a reporting framework to identify infrastructure issues sufficiently ahead and inform the clients' infrastructure teams accordingly. We leverage tools such as PowerShell, Office 365 Portal, and our very own SmartMigrate™ and for high-velocity migrations.

And all of this, with the one objective of the merged entity performing at its best in an absolute business-as-usual mode.

About the Author



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With Microland for 15+ years, Chandrashekar has been architecting and leading migrations of mailboxes from on-prem to exchange online and between exchange online tenants for a range of clients both large and small, across industries.

About Microland

Microland's delivery of digital and "Making Digital Happen" allows technology to do more and intrude less. We make it easier for enterprises to adopt nextGen Digital infrastructure. We enable this using our expertise in Cloud and Data Centers, Networks, Digital Workplace, Cybersecurity and Industrial IoT, ensuring the embrace of brilliance is predictable, reliable, and stable.

Incorporated in 1989 and headquartered in Bengaluru, India, Microland has more than 4,500 digital specialists across offices and delivery centers in Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East and North America.