



THE MIGRATION MANIFESTO

according to NCS

The five commandments of merging and migrating to a single M365 tenant

Culture: the X-factor in a successful merger



“Cultural issues stood in the way of success for 100% of M&A deals where significant value was lost relative to purchase price.”

PwC, Creating Value Beyond the Deal, 2019

At NCS we're acknowledged experts in technology transformation. We partner with Microsoft and have won awards for our best-practice approach to endpoint and identity management.

M&A transitions are something we've worked on many times. For one client we've brought two organisations into a single, inherited environment. In another program, we developed a single greenfield tenant for three distinct brands to share. And what we've learned from every engagement is that realising value from these technology transitions hinges on culture as a major consideration.

What has technology got to do with the cultural 'fit'?

For any transformation project, success comes from understanding the nuances of a business structure and how this shapes technology requirements. When there is a merger involved, this adds an extra layer of complexity because you're trying to reconcile two sets of requirements for the business to move forward with the best fit operating model and a tech environment to match.

You need to assess both the tangible elements - who does what and how - and the intangibles that make up a workplace culture. The two are very much intertwined and ignoring the impact of one on the other is going to slow down or even sabotage the whole technology migration project.

There are the practical elements to define - for example establishing a consistent set of identities across the whole organisation and managing levels of access. But in doing that, you're also resolving different approaches to technology and how they have shaped the two distinct organisational cultures you're seeking to unite. Managing these two streams of transformation in tandem means operating on many different levels to manage change. There is the change coming from an uplift in tech capability and the change coming from a consolidation of culture and practice.

In bringing you these five commandments of migrating an M365 environment to support a successful M&A venture, we're laying out some practices and principles to help drive a technology transformation that's grounded in the reality of a new operating model and the culture that it supports. I hope it will help you make the connection between effective planning for the mechanics of a technology migration and the desired outcome of a connected, cohesive and productive workforce.

Neil Griffiths

Director - Microsoft Solutions

Contents

INTRODUCTION:

The key to maximising value in M&A.....04

#1 It's not (only) a technical project 06

#2 Put people first 09

#3 Get real on scope and complexity 11

#4 Stay on top of your work streams 13

#5 Make the most of your investment 15

The key to maximising value in M&A?



When a merger or buyout is on the cards, it's driven by due diligence focussed on assets, financial performance, forecasts and more. CEOs, shareholders and boards invest valuable time and energy unearthing all the economic details of a deal before and during negotiations up until the contract is signed.

But there are two critical asset categories that can often be overlooked in this meticulous process – talent and technology. Now we are not saying they are never assessed; however, DD (Due Diligence) usually looks at what's on paper. Understanding the true value of these assets comes more from understanding each of these and their intrinsic value to the business overall - not just the bottom line. If overlooked, these can become more of a problem during merger planning.

Deal breakers

70%

of deals that underperformed their 24-month shareholder return sector average, stakeholders placed limited emphasis on technology early in the deal cycle ¹.

82%

of deals where significant value was destroyed, between 10-30% of key employees left post-deal ².

Optimised technology keeps talent on board

As the numbers show, keeping talent engaged is a critical value play – in both the short and long term. Easing employees on both sides through the merger process takes an investment in communication about their role in the future organisation as the transition approaches. Optimisation of technology will help them stay engaged and productive once the new normal is underway.

Not only are there a host of user transitions to map out and put into practice, there is a goal of cultural alignment that is often far harder to plan for and execute. Prioritising and navigating both these people pathways is essential for delivering value both from an M&A deal overall, and from ongoing investments in technology.

The first two chapters in this guide highlight the people and productivity component that's essential in maximising value from technology migration and integration.

We'll share:

- The three key benefits to keep in mind.
- A high-level project plan that keeps people and processes at the heart of the transformation journey.

¹ Accenture, [Mapping the DNA of M&A value](#), 2022

² PwC, [Creating Value Beyond the Deal](#), 2019

Get clear on the technology opportunity

When technology considerations are prioritised from the outset, this can uncover where the value lies in the future capabilities of a merged entity. In fact, 96% of CIOs taking part in technology due diligence revealed issues or opportunities likely to have material impact on the planned deal. Reporting on these levers of value is critical if shareholders and directors are to grasp dependencies on core technology and be fully informed on all the pros and cons of making a deal.

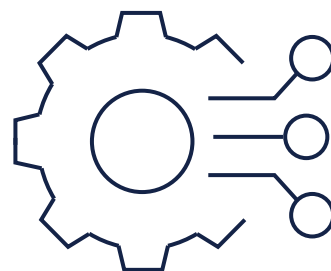
At we recommend developing a high level assessment to determine what does and doesn't align across two technology environments in an M&A deal. And this shouldn't be limited to a detailed profile of tenants, data architecture, user permissions, security, infrastructure and more. It needs to start with the operating model for each company and how technology is being harnessed to support key functions and strategic goals. Not only can this identify the quick wins in cost-efficiency that directors and shareholders are looking for, it provides the foundation and framework for a successful, long-term optimisation of technology for the combined organisation.

In chapters three and four, we'll take a deeper dive into developing the scope and plan for a migration project to support strategic goals for the business.

We'll share:

- How to define and deliver key outcomes and wins to build on post-migration.
- Our approach to helping organisations stream and prioritise their efforts

In the fifth and final chapter we'll bring it all together in an overview and checklist for the migration journey. This part also highlights some project areas that often get overlooked when organisations and IT teams are under pressure to deliver an integrated tech environment at speed. Based on what we've seen across multiple migration engagements, we'll explain which shortcuts can cost you far more in the long run.



It's not (*only*) a technical project

Treating an M365 tenant migration as a technical project puts cost savings and efficiency at risk.

The C factors

It's to be expected that the migration value equation will identify savings on licensing and maintenance costs as major benefits. But a focus on cutting these costs can lead to a major oversight on the critical results a successful migration should deliver for less tangible value drivers – collaboration and culture.

At NCS, we've learnt that a successful migration engagement starts with acknowledging that much of the value in harmonising tech environments comes from the culture and collaboration benefits.

- Enabling collaboration is key to productivity. When employee consolidation can deliver significant efficiency gains. 06
- Giving your workforce a shared tech identity is an essential part of building a cohesive culture for the merged entity.
- By addressing the quality and consistency of the merged tech environment, a consolidation program can also uplift quality of employee experience. This is vital as mergers are a time when the risk and potential cost of talent loss is far higher.



BENEFIT #1

User Experience Uplift

Technology goal

- Standardised workplace experience across identity, access, tools and devices

Strategic goals

- Improved and simplified collaboration across employees and partners.
- High quality shared environment drives a cohesive culture, employee engagement and productivity.

From double to single: maximising savings

Duplication in a merged entity is always going to be costly. Whether it's licensing costs or running parallel customer facing and internal teams, the value of a swift technology consolidation to reduce overhead is often top of the migration agenda.

Taking time to adopt best-practice in a merged tenant environment can deliver far greater value, both immediately and over the long term.

- Setting up a single environment that's well defined for the desired future state of the merged entity can allow IT resources to focus on evolution of that environment instead of patching and maintenance. 07
- With this extra bandwidth, they can focus on optimising the tech stack by adopting more Azure capabilities and taking full advantage of the Evergreen model Microsoft now offer.
- The team can also use their time and expertise on driving adoption of tools across the workforce, further enhancing the collaboration uplift coming from the migration effort.



BENEFIT #2

Operational & Cost Efficiencies

Technology goal

- Cost savings – licensing and reduced operational overhead
- Best of breed configuration and management of merged environment

Strategic goals

- Focus on development and uplift instead of maintenance.
- Maximise value/impact of technical expertise.

Secure and user-friendly

We've already noted that a highly organised and comprehensive approach to consolidating user identity will make a big difference to the quality of employee experience in a merged entity. But it's also a win for a cybersecurity model that's robust and compliant without making significant compromises on flexibility for end-users.

- A complete and well-defined set of attributes for device and identity management can deliver compliance and control with less impact on useability.
- When configured correctly there are native solutions and controls in the MS Azure and 365 environments that can simplify device and identity management routines for IT teams and end users.

When two entities merge, the list of legacy issues to address as part of a cybersecurity strategy can be substantial. While uplifting device and identity management is going to be an integral part of the desired future state, this workstream should run in tandem with another that identifies, records and prioritises these inherited issues for action on a risk register.



BENEFIT #3

Security Uplift

Technology goal

- Standardised user identity and access management
- Better leverage M365 security and compliance capabilities.
- Automated auditing, reporting and compliance on access and security

Strategic goals

- Simpler path to adoption of cybersecurity compliance standards – e.g. Essential Eight.
- Reduced risk of cybersecurity breach.

Put people first, then processes

Getting your technology environment right is vital for retaining talent and realising value from your workforce following a merger.

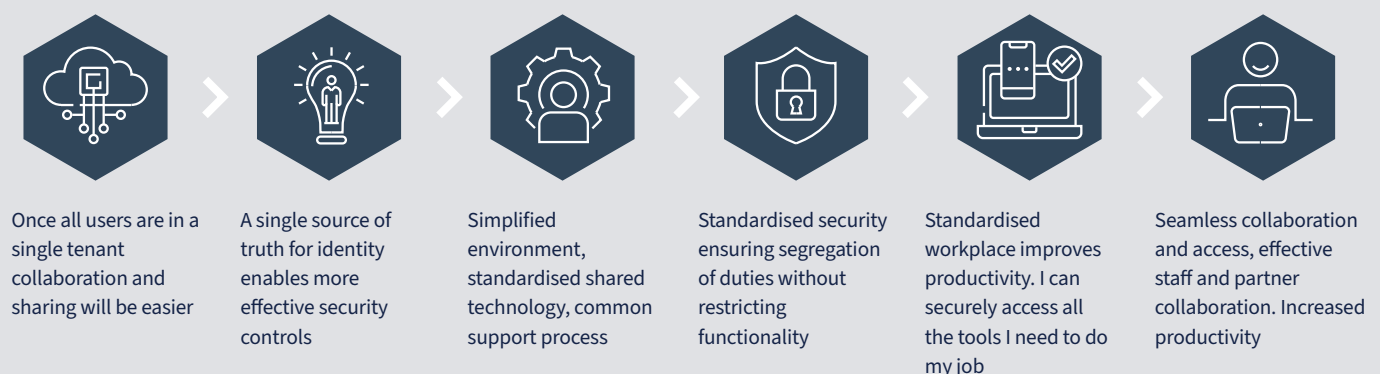
Ultimately it's people who are the drivers and beneficiaries of a migration project. This is why we put them, along with the processes they follow to perform their work, at the centre for every stage of the migration journey.

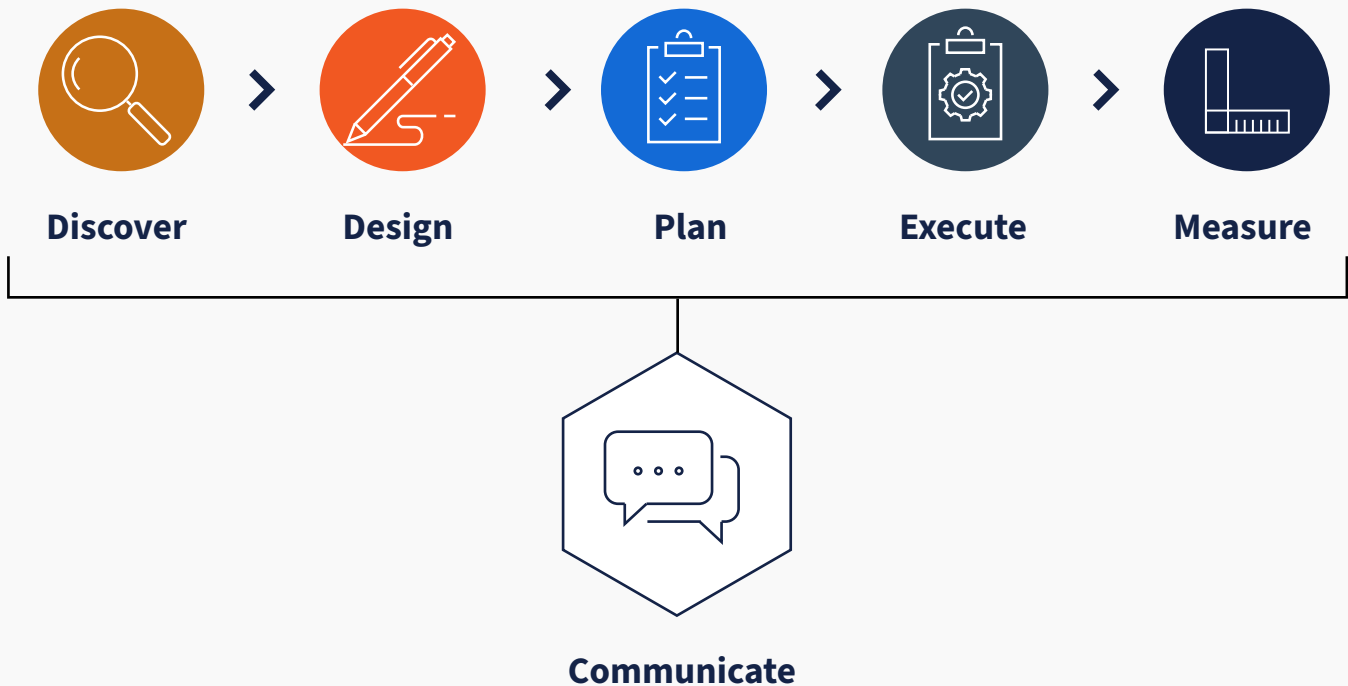
Looking at this graphic, you'll see that the before and after of an effective migration hinges on empowering people to perform their work efficiently, securely and with more collaboration and less frustration. The ultimate goals – and payoff – is the productivity and performance uplift that technology promises to deliver.

Current Experience



New Experience



Get communication right from the start

Above we have a very simple, high-level breakdown of the stages in a migration journey. The communication that informs each stage is critical for both project success and post-migration adoption and productivity.

Understanding how people work (processes) and what gets in the way of that (pain points) is the foundation of a successful migration and change management plan and execution. Effective consultation and communication to understand processes and remove pain points supports clear definition of requirements and outcomes in the discover and design phases as well as providing course correction cues during planning and execution.

Don't leave it all to HR

As technology plays such a big part in our working lives, it's not enough to leave this change and communication management to HR teams as part of the planning and execution stage. Tech leaders need to roll up their sleeves and get involved in a fully integrated communication effort.

To create the momentum and engagement for high quality communication – and to manage expectations – it's important to involve relevant stakeholders at the right time and in the right manner. From requirements gathering, through to change management and checking adoption levels for the new tools and environment, strong planning and execution of communication can make all the difference to the value realised from a migration project.

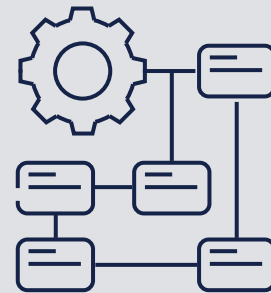
Get real on scope and complexity

To maximise the efficiency uplift and productivity potential of a migration you need to embrace the complexity and an ambitious scope.

Bringing strategic and operational rigour to a tenant migration makes it complex, but ultimately, more rewarding for all involved. As noted in the first chapter, treat it as a series of technical tasks and you're far less likely to get good results – for the quality of the new tenant and environment as well as adoption, productivity and other key success metrics.

Define the operating model

Building a best-fit technology environment for a merged entity starts from a detailed audit of the current state for each organisation. This includes roles and responsibilities, functions and reporting lines. Taking stock of the operating model across the separate entities in this way helps decision-makers address the fundamental question answered through migration design and planning – just how will the merged entity operate?



The future state for a consolidated technology environment will deliver more value when it's mapped to the new organisational structure. This is key if the project is to deliver the business-critical applications needed to support continuity and productivity for new teams and their operations.

This phase can be a daunting reality check for a migration project team. But delivering a fit-for-purpose merged environment doesn't mean doing everything all at once. It's more about knowing what you're dealing with and being strategic and realistic about what to prioritise within each work stream.

Strategic and business considerations

Business Strategy



- Review all facets of the merged business • Articulating a business strategy for the merged organisation to define desired migration outcomes over the short and longer term • This strategy informs a clear technology strategy and helps prioritise goals for development and uplift during and post migration.

Operating Model



- A strategic operating model clearly defines how the merged organisations will streamline and optimise operations and core business functions • Alignment of cross-functional business operations and their associated technology components will provide productivity uplift and cost-efficiencies

Technology unlocks progress on strategy

The impact of a merger and technology consolidation on things like HR systems, identity management and legacy components of the new entity may not be obvious to C-suite stakeholders. When leaders grasp the complexity and scope of a technology migration project, they have a better understanding of why it's a resource-intensive process that takes time to prepare for and execute. Rather than asking them to jump into the weeds with the IT function, they can get a glimpse of the scope and complexity by being involved at the strategic level.

By now, it's fair to say that workplace technology is something everyone must use as they go about their day. That means that technology strategy is in lockstep with business strategy and integral to competitive advantage. Using this lens on a migration helps leaders grasp the flexibility and speed their organisations can expect from strong alignment between technology, processes and strategic goals, and get their buy-in for a more comprehensive, complex approach to migration to deliver greater benefits.

Stay on top of all your work streams

To move from current to future state without gaps in the plan takes a coordinated, effort across nine work streams.

		
Identity	Active Directory	Network
		
Device Management	Applications	Email
		
Data	People	Operational Support

Overlaying the defined business strategy and operating model will enable project leaders to capture the required objectives and tasks for each workstream.

- Mapping the operating model, roles and process identifies tasks and outcomes related to each stream.
- Steering by strategic goals defines the highest priority objectives for your migration project and determines what's in the plan and what's to come post-migration.
- Narrowing down to a short-list for each work stream is necessary to ensure migration scope and schedule meet stakeholder expectations.
- When a future state requirement isn't included in the migration plan, make sure it's documented for a time when technical capacity has been freed up to focus on development and uplift instead of migration and maintenance.

Workstream summary	Tasks & objectives (examples)
 Identity	• Capture all identity requirements, flows • HR integrations & processes, identity & access management • On/off-boarding & provisioning processes
 Active Directory	• Review all AD related detailed configuration • Define Azure tenant, on-premises AD, trusts, security etc. • Validate source to target configuration
 Network	• Review network configuration, limitations • Site based network, VPN, remote access, Wi-fi • NetScaler, express route, proxy etc.
 Device Management	• Map source to target device requirements • Physical laptops, Windows/Mac OS, MDM, Printers • Software deployment, patching, virtual machines
 Applications	• Applications reviewed by authentication method • Application owners engaged, possible changes • Review current Single-Sign-on method
 Email	• Single brand or brand specific emails to be retained? • Create an email co-existence and migration design
 Data	• Review data requirements, locations and volumes • M365 Data migrated but Cloud data, on-premises data repointed to new identity or synced on-prem
 People	• Understand all business requirements, roles • Migration plan, change management and communications designed to minimise impact
 Operational Support	• Map source to target environment support roles • Understand project support vs BAU support model • Ensure updated knowledge and support process

Make the most of your investment

A structured, people-centric approach to tenant migration will set you up for success. Measuring that success will help you build on it.

Migration plan on a page



Discover

- Stakeholder engagement / setup meetings
- Resources & access requirements

Design

- Data gathering & analysis
- Determine future state technology requirements
- Breakdown all data into Technology & Business streams
- Target state detailed design (by stream)
- Exchange email coexistence high level design

Plan

- User migration plan
- Technical implementation plans
- Change management preparation & readiness plans
- User comms and business engagement plans
- Prepare & test migration tools / scripts
- Change implementation of pre-migration technical changes

Execute

- Conduct testing and pilot-user migrations
- Pilot and test applications
- Prepare 1st wave user migrations
- Perform any additional pre-migration activities prior to each migration wave
- Setup, preparation, change management and user communication activities
- Migrate users and complete user support activities for specified handover period

Measure

- Finalise migration activities
- Complete handover to BAU
- Decommission tenants

A value-first migration mindset

As a recap of the main points in this guide, this check-list brings together the principles that can be applied to any digital transformation project to drive value. It's not a to-do list, but more of a how-to list, helping project stakeholders focus their efforts on maximising benefits for their workforce and customers and value for the business and shareholders.

Tenant Migration Checklist

Audit



- A detailed audit of the operating model and strategic requirements helps decision-makers and IT determine which activities will contribute most to supporting processes and organisational goals and realising value.
- This is why the discover/analyse and design phases are essential before moving to migration planning.

Communicate



- Effective consultation and communication is vital before, during and after execution.
- Communication and engagement starts with consultation and planning to ensure technology outcomes match user roles and process workflows.
- Change management at the migration stage is a responsibility shared by IT and other support services – e.g. HR, business unit leaders etc.

Support



- Dedicate ample resources to support, troubleshoot and drive adoption.
- This investment comes back to your IT team with interest when users are making full use of their tech stack, tools and knowledge base and are less reliant on helpdesk support as a result.

Measure



- Define metrics for success – e.g. user experience, reduced technology overhead, increased security
- Measure to make sure adoption is successful.
- Look for gaps and be proactive in providing the support and education to meet the needs of all users and groups.

About NCS

An expert and partner in your digital transformation

Our passion is unlocking more client value through technology.

Through our commitment to quality, our focus on people and by challenging traditional thinking we believe that technology services can be done better.

Our people bring this to life by advising, transforming and managing technology to help our clients and communities.

Talk to us today about how our team helps yours to drive efficiency, performance and value through technology.

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