



Moving Productivity to the Cloud: Successfully Managing Change



Who this content is for

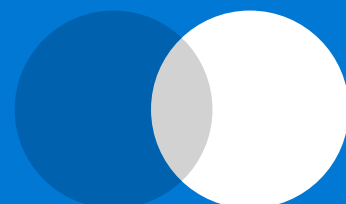
This eBook is for line-of-business executives and managers who are considering moving to a cloud productivity platform, as well as the IT executives and managers who will be charged with implementing the changes. The book outlines considerations and strategies for minimising disruption and user dissatisfaction when making the change, and suggests a four-phase plan for a seamless and successful transition.



Estimated reading time:
eight minutes

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- Why change?
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Introduction

In a time when remote work and hybrid environments have become a common imperative for doing business, companies are accelerating their move to cloud productivity platforms to improve collaboration and overall agility. With centralised resources in the cloud, companies can store, access and leverage information much more quickly and easily, and remote workers can access their data from any location. But such a change can be disruptive.

People are used to working with familiar point solutions – storing documents on local hard drives, collaborating via e-mail and chat, using legacy file sharing platforms to send documents and meeting via conference calls or in person. Thus, they may resist changes in software tools, even if those changes could make them happier and more productive in the long run. In addition, executives may resist deploying new solutions if they're afraid those solutions will hamper long-standing business processes or hurt the bottom line.

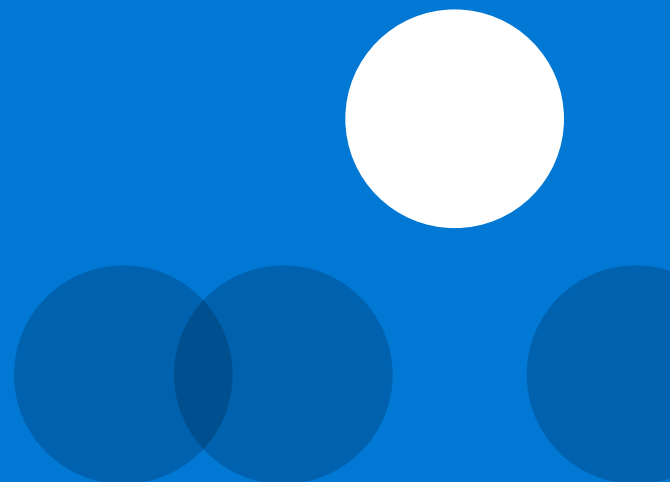
This resistance is in spite of the fact that independent research shows that cloud-based solutions improve security, device management and users' ability to collaborate quickly on shared documents, thereby improving business agility and competitiveness. (For more detail about this research, see the **Why change?** section below.)

What it takes to succeed

Moving to the cloud, while not a simple process, can be accomplished more effectively by strategically managing change – especially when you choose the right cloud productivity platform. For example, if the productivity platform uses applications that your workers are already familiar with, the change isn't nearly so daunting. In fact, it can even feel like a seamless transition for your team.

Along with choosing the right solution stack, think of your strategy in terms of four key phases: gaining executive sponsorship, building awareness across business groups, always-on and consistent learning and top-down adoption. This structure will help make sure you achieve the benefits of digital transformation while minimising impacts on your business.

This eBook presents an overview of the key concepts for implementing an effective change management strategy that will help make that process as seamless and efficient as possible.

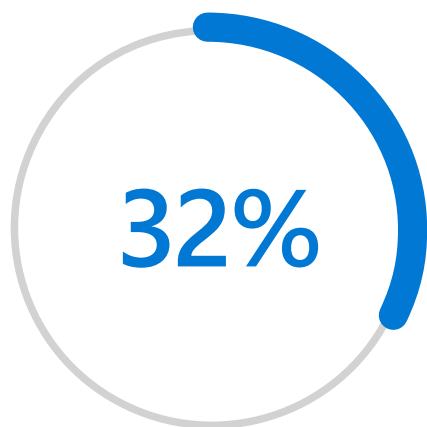




Why change?

In an era where forward-thinking companies have embraced cloud-based technology and infrastructure solutions, a simple imperative has become clear: **evolve or get left behind.**

First-movers in cloud-centric digital transformation have found that they can seize opportunities more quickly, gain access to important data more easily, better support remote workers and hybrid environments, improve security and reduce costs. In other words, whether their organisation is still co-located, fully remote or operating within a flexible hybrid working model, they're more competitive.



In fact, a Harvard Business Review study cites business agility as the primary advantage delivered by the cloud, with 32% of respondents saying it was their primary reason for choosing a cloud platform.¹

¹ 'Business Agility in the Cloud', Harvard Business Review, 2014.

Here's a very simple example. Imagine two companies in the same business, Company A and Company B. **Company A** uses a cloud productivity platform to integrate applications and collaboration tools, while **Company B** uses point solutions and integrates information through email, a dedicated file sharing platform and in-person meetings. Both companies receive the same Request for Quote (RFQ) from a large customer.



Company A



Company B

Company B's team pulls an RFQ template from someone's hard drive, drops it onto the company's file share and begins working on the request. The team schedules an in-person meeting to go over the details of the response, waits a day or two for participants to compare calendars via email and have the meeting and then trades dozens of emails and manages multiple versions of documents across that file share as it drafts and manages the response through feedback from product managers, salespeople and executives.

Since the response requires product specifications, support procedures and pricing information, multiple team members juggle multiple documents, some of which are in incompatible or outdated formats. Because the file share doesn't support real-time collaboration within those documents, and they don't have the ability to create shared workspaces, such a process could take days or weeks longer than would otherwise be necessary with a cloud productivity platform.

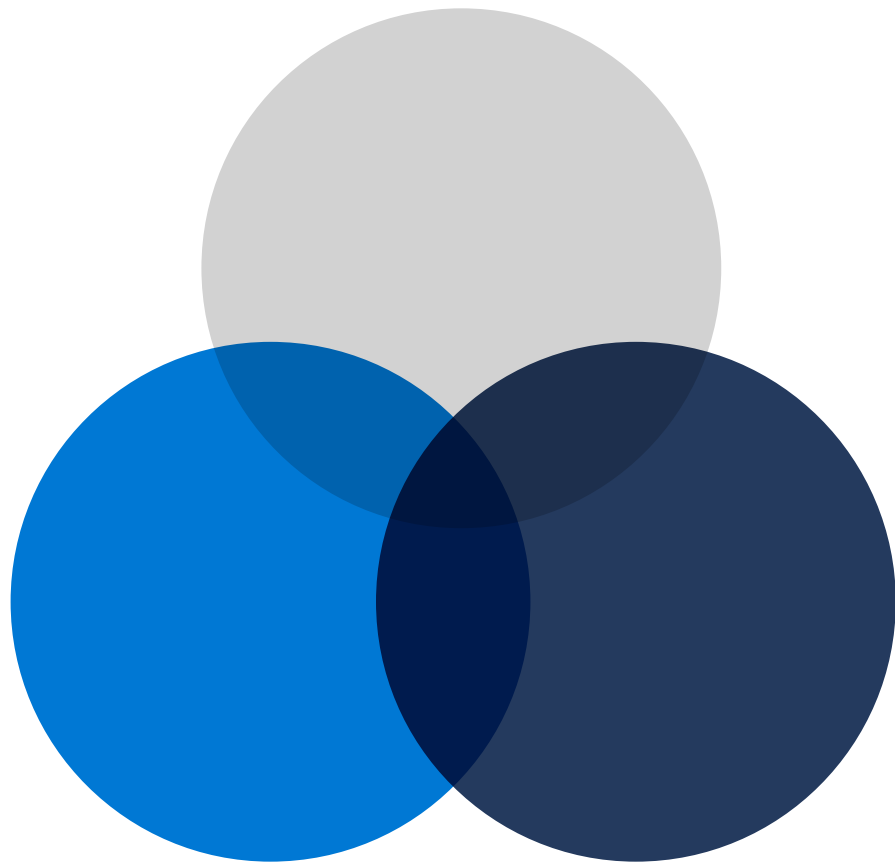
Company A, meanwhile, schedules a meeting, meets that afternoon (including remote workers who participate via laptop or smartphone) and begins work immediately. All of the requisite documents are in a shared workspace hosted in the cloud with real-time collaboration capabilities. Changes and suggestions are immediately visible to all stakeholders (without getting stuck in someone's email inbox or in an outdated file version), and the document is completed and fully reviewed within a few days. So, while the customer is reviewing Company A's response, Company B is still sharing their document around and waiting for comments and approvals.

This is an overly simplified example, but it makes the case: online collaboration and centralised access to information make a company nimbler and more resilient. A survey by the Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) backs this up. ESG found that companies with the "broadest adoption and strongest use" of cloud-deployed technology were more confident in their ability to "deliver the technology needed to thrive through major societal and economic disruptions."²

Early on, the cloud was primarily used for centralised storage, but it has evolved to support a broad range of applications. Platforms like [Microsoft 365](#) integrate cloud-native applications, shared storage, collaboration and security tools, which not only makes life easier for employees, but simplifies software and device management for IT.

² 'Building a Resilient Organization through Integrated Cloud-based IT', Enterprise Strategy Group, 2020.

**So how does your company
integrate a cloud productivity
platform into its operations
with seamless alignment
across the organisation?**





Key steps to change management

Moving to the cloud is a significant change for your business, and a successful migration involves careful planning and execution. Your strategy must take into account the perspectives of end-users, managers, executives and IT pros, and the change must be rolled out in a way that doesn't disrupt operations.

As noted above, to execute your strategy, think in terms of four key phases: [sponsorship](#), [awareness](#), [learning and adoption](#).



Gaining executive sponsorship

Any change of this magnitude must have buy-in from the top decision-makers at your company. To achieve that, start with the business case for moving to a cloud productivity platform. Present a clear, concise description of the project's scope, business impact and areas of ROI. Your presentation should also lay out the implementation process and define criteria for success.



Building awareness across business groups

Once you have approval, market the change internally throughout your company. Communicate the benefits of the change with a well-structured promotional plan that inspires your workforce and everyone who will be participating in the transition. Tactics such as departmental meetings or lunchtime demonstrations, properly executed, can go a long way toward building excitement and trust among your users.

Another way to promote the change is to recruit champions up and down the organisation – those who are most excited by the potential for cloud collaboration and who are proficient with online tools. These champions can help inspire and support other users who may be more wary of the change.

Finally, you should build feedback channels where users can easily report issues and concerns. These could be staffed by your champions as a first-line measure, with more technical requests passed on to IT or other relevant departments.



Always-on and consistent learning

In the learning phase, it's important to follow a reasonable training schedule that allows for flexibility while meeting people's needs. Some employees may need a general introduction to the cloud and its benefits, while others will be ready to jump into hands-on training right away. Your feedback channels should be prepared to answer questions quickly and offer more intensive support as needed. For example, you might use SharePoint to offer ongoing directed and self-guided training.

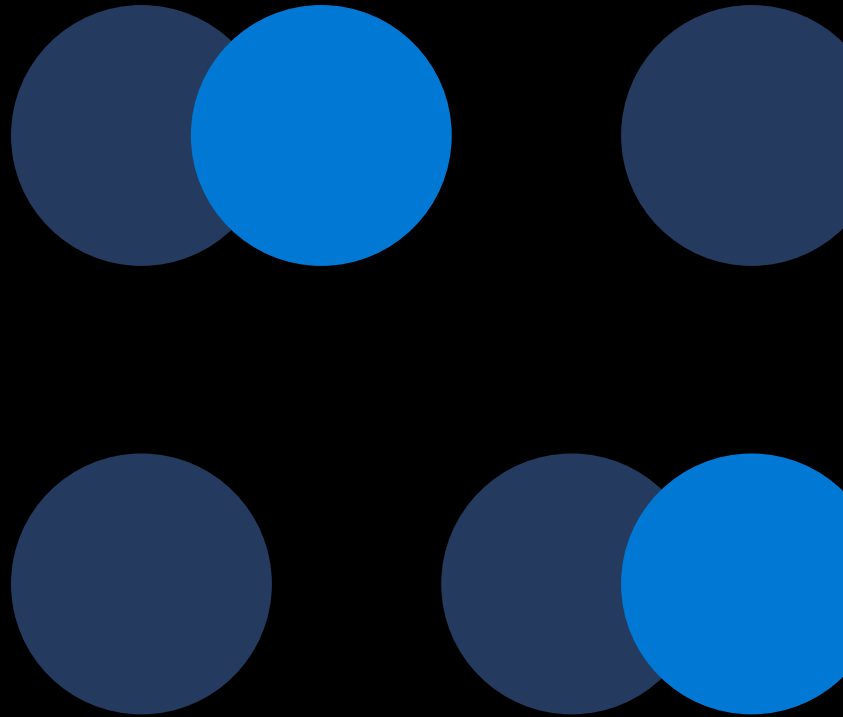


Top-down adoption

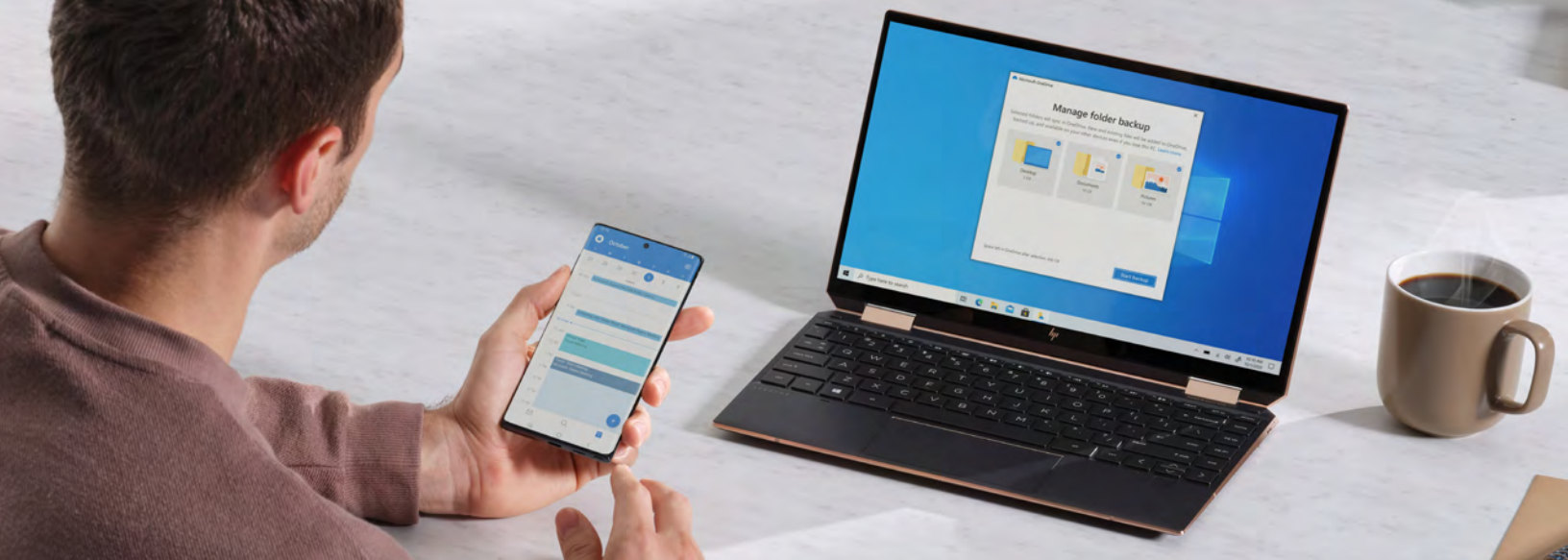
When your training teams have successfully delivered both theoretical and hands-on knowledge to your executives and other users, you're ready to roll out the cloud-based platform. You may want to start gradually, perhaps having users schedule and attend online meetings first, or collaborate on documents in a shared workspace, before you turn them loose with all of the features of the platform.

As you roll out the platform, provide a seamless way for employees to provide feedback and for you to assess their satisfaction. For example, Microsoft Teams includes the ability to create shared channels for exactly this type of communication. As mentioned previously, your champions can play a key role here: as peers, they can gauge satisfaction accurately and respond to individual needs as they arise.

Finally, you'll want to measure adoption so you can report on the success of the project and maintain buy-in with upper management. Surveys can be an effective tool for this. For example, you can use a pre-implementation survey to gauge users' familiarity with the cloud platform, then use a mid-roll-out survey to capture users' attitudes and experience using the new tools and a post-roll-out survey to see whether your initial success criteria for the transition have been met.



In what ways could an integrated suite of cloud-native applications, shared storage and real-time collaboration tools transform your organisation?



Why Microsoft 365?

Microsoft is the leader in cloud-based productivity. Microsoft 365 incorporates trusted applications such as **Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint with OneDrive** cloud storage and collaboration through **Teams** – all with world-class security.

Leveraging decades of experience as the world's leading provider of productivity software, as well as its deep knowledge of cloud environments and digital security, Microsoft developed Microsoft 365 as a productivity accelerator for companies of all sizes across three main areas.



Collaboration and connection

People are equally comfortable using Microsoft 365 on a desktop or mobile devices from remote locations, as it enables them to call, meet, chat and collaborate all in one place. Communication is faster and more effective, and projects get done more quickly. **The ESG research revealed that managers of teams using Microsoft 365 were 51% more likely to report that their end-users have the ability to collaborate in real time.²**

² 'Building a Resilient Organization through Integrated Cloud-based IT', Enterprise Strategy Group, 2020.



Organisational productivity

Enterprises can more easily gather and consolidate employee knowledge and leverage it as a key resource. Work groups can meet much more efficiently using Teams. ESG also found that employees using Microsoft 365 were 13% more productive than those who didn't.²



Management and security

IT managers find it much easier to manage updates and security through the cloud with end-to-end visibility across all user devices. ESG's survey showed that organisations that mostly use Microsoft 365 have reduced device management time by 18%.²

13%

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² 'Building a Resilient Organization through Integrated Cloud-based IT', Enterprise Strategy Group, 2020.

**Have you thought through
an effective change
management strategy?**



Making it happen

Moving operations to the cloud has become an imperative for businesses, but managing such a significant change can seem overwhelming. Nevertheless, with careful change management planning and execution, along with the right platform, your company can join the cloud-enabled, cloud-accelerated group of business leaders without significant loss of productivity or organisational resistance.

Find more research about the measurable effects and productivity gains of Microsoft customers who have partly or fully shifted to the cloud – versus those who haven't shifted at all – and how Microsoft can help.

[Explore now](#)



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