

# CL*i*UD

TECHNOLOGIES & STRATEGIES

MAGAZINE

*An Interlink Cloud Advisors Publication*

## SOLVING THE LICENSING CONUNDRUM

Understanding Microsoft 365 Enterprise can save you licensing dollars

## HEAD TO THE AZURE CLOUD

Review three popular workloads to consider as you embark on your journey to the cloud

## UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR DATA

Convert your data into a single source of truth by combining the features and functionalities of two robust Microsoft-based solutions



**interlink**<sup>®</sup>  
CLOUD ADVISORS



# THE INTERLINK ADVANTAGE



## What Makes Interlink Cloud Advisors Different

Since our inception in 2011, Interlink has focused solely on providing exceptional support and solutions around Microsoft-based technologies. With our extensive knowledge, we educate and assist clients through their implementations and with improving their security posture. We coach our clients through the complexities of Microsoft, including their licensing rules, bundled offerings, incentives, and funding programs. We educate and guide, so our clients avoid overpaying for licensing or purchasing unneeded technologies. By engaging Interlink, our clients can truly experience **The Interlink Advantage**.



## EXPERTISE IN NAVIGATING MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGIES, FUNDING & LICENSING

Interlink simplifies your organization's interaction with Microsoft by helping you:



### GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MICROSOFT-BASED TECHNOLOGIES

As your advocate with Microsoft, we know how to navigate Microsoft's programs, licensing, incentives, and teams on your behalf



### INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING MICROSOFT FUNDING

We have consistently been among the top 10 of partners worldwide for usage of Microsoft funding to assist with your pilots, workshops, and deployments



### FIND THE BEST LICENSING OPTIONS

We have multiple certified licensing experts who understand the complex maze of product and program licensing to find the best licensing options for you



### STAY INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE ON MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGIES

Our team is comprised of thought leaders. We summarize pertinent industry information to keep our clients educated and informed through different channels



### DOCUMENTED, TESTED, AND PROVEN METHODOLOGIES

We have used these in over 1,000 implementations



### COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

These identify challenges in advance, before they impact the project



### ACCELERATED SUPPORT ESCALATIONS STRAIGHT TO MICROSOFT LEVEL III

Minimizes your support frustration



### RESPONSIVE LIVE ANSWER SERVICE DESK

Our team is there to help 24x7x365 with one-hour service level agreements



## MITIGATE RISK

Interlink builds security and compliance into every project through:



### UNDERSTANDING & CREATING PLANS

We help you understand where risks and vulnerabilities exist and create long-term plans



### PROVEN PROCESSES

Our processes are built and tested to help identify and mitigate security risks



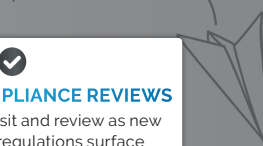
### MEETING COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Solutions are architected to satisfy compliance requirements, such as GDPR, HIPAA, and NIST



### CONTINUAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

We continue to revisit and review as new compliance and regulations surface



## CREATE BUSINESS VALUE

Interlink drives business value from your technology investments because we:



### WE FOCUS ON THE MIDMARKET

We combine resource availability with expertise levels to ensure the right fit



### BUILD PERSONALIZED DEPLOYMENT ROADMAPS

This is to drive long term success



### SUPPORT CLIENT BUDGETING, PLANNING & C-SUITE PROCESSES

Including jointly building ROI and cost justification models



### RECOGNIZED BY MICROSOFT AS A TOP PARTNER

Microsoft has given us awards for helping our clients adopt their cloud technologies



## MICROSOFT SOLUTION EXPERTISE

Interlink has extensive expertise in Microsoft technologies:



### 5 MICROSOFT GOLD CERTIFICATIONS

Across all cloud platforms



### MICROSOFT-CERTIFIED CONSULTANTS

All of our consultants hold certifications from Microsoft



### DEPLOYED THE MOST SEATS OF OFFICE 365

We have deployed more seats than any other partner in our area



### INTERLINK MICROSOFT-BADGED EMPLOYEES

In recognition of our expertise and ability, Microsoft has badged several of our team members



### FREQUENTLY RECOGNIZED AND AWARDED BY MICROSOFT

Including Microsoft Partner of the Year



### NATIONALLY MANAGED BY MICROSOFT

This gains us access to a wide array of resources for our clients





# C*i*NTENTS

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01

## SOLVING THE LICENSING CONUNDRUM

*A deeper look at the Microsoft 365 Enterprise Suite*

05

## DEVELOPING A ROADMAP TO THE CLOUD

*Getting the most value out of your cloud investments*

09

## UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR DATA

*Learn how to convert your data into a single source of truth*

11

## AZURE PRICING: HOW TO GET THE BEST DEAL

*Get the best bang for your buck with Windows Server Hybrid Use Benefit, SQL Server Hybrid Use Benefit, and Reserved Instances*

13

## MAKE LIFE EASIER WITH INTERLINK EXCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS

*From new user creation to email encryption in Office 365, learn how two Interlink solutions can simplify your business processes*

15

## MICROSOFT TEAMS: IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION

*A client case study. Find out how Interlink guides a global asphalt construction company through their migration to Teams.*

19

## SECURE ENVIRONMENT ROADMAP

*A summary of how companies are approaching layered security*

21

## IMPROVING SECURITY WITH OFFICE 365 E5

*Five important safeguards that will keep your business safe*

23

## MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE MOBILITY + SECURITY E5

*Learn how this robust solution empowers mobility with increased security and protection*

25

## HEAD TO THE AZURE CLOUD

*A review of three popular workloads to consider as you embark on your journey to the cloud*

29

## MICROSOFT TEAMS: IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION

*Connect and create in brand new ways on Teams, Microsoft's central communication hub*

31

## PROTECT YOUR DATA AND STOP SHADOW IT

*Learn how to reduce the risk of compromised credentials and prevent shadow IT*

33

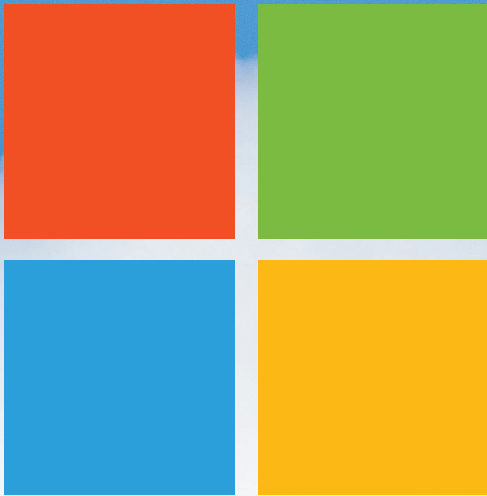
## EASING THE PAIN OF M&A WITH AN OFFICE 365 IT STRATEGY

*Using the speed, scalability and flexibility of Microsoft cloud technology to streamline IT integrations*

# SOLVING THE MICROSOFT CLOUD LICENSING CONUNDRUM

## *With Microsoft's Licensing Bundle — Microsoft 365 Enterprise Suite*

Interview with Matt Scherocman – Licensing Wrangler & President of Interlink Cloud Advisors



Slashing through the dense thicket of software licensing often requires the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Jobs, and an army of product experts. Understanding and sourcing your Microsoft licensing is like poring over the Cheesecake Factory menu. But, instead of deciding between a plethora of appetizers, lunch or dinner dishes, you must wade through pages of operating systems, applications, and security solutions.

“The entire licensing process has always been a problem for companies,” says Matt Scherocman, President of Interlink Cloud Advisors. “Thankfully Microsoft is doing something about it.”

That “something” is Microsoft 365 Enterprise. Formerly known as Secure Productive Enterprise (SPE), Microsoft 365 Enterprise may make licensing headaches a thing of the past. This secure, desktop licensing bundle is sold by user and gives customers two different package options — E3 and E5. Before getting to this new, streamlined offering, however, Microsoft has taken us on a bit of a winding branding and bundling journey.

## INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT VS. BUNDLED PURCHASES

When buying licenses for Office 365, you have an a la carte menu of 25+ separate products. Microsoft has taken these individual options and grouped them into 10+ different bundles. The most popular for business is Office 365 E3, which contains Exchange email, SharePoint, full Office Professional, and all the basic collaboration functionality. Microsoft then added three new sets of technologies —

Security, Analytics, and Voice — into a new bundle called Office 365 E5 — a new brand that elevated E3 beyond simply Office 365 to a new level of functionality with other Microsoft products. Microsoft 365 Enterprise takes it a step further by grouping these bundles with the Enterprise Mobility + Security Suite (EMS) and Windows Desktop, which provides a full set of tools for each user.



Does this sound confusing? It shouldn't. Microsoft 365 Enterprise simplifies things.

Microsoft 365 Enterprise is a combination of Office 365, the Enterprise Mobility + Security Suite (EMS), and Windows Desktop Upgrade licensing. It is sold in two different packages.

**PACKAGE 1:** M365 E3 includes Office 365 E3, EMS E3 and Windows 10 Enterprise E3

**PACKAGE 2:** M365 includes Office 365 E5, EMS E5 and Windows 10 Enterprise E5

Want to learn more about the functionality in each bundle? Check out our summary sheet with pricing below.

MICROSOFT 365 ENTERPRISE (M365) SUITES	MICROSOFT 365 ENTERPRISE E3 - \$36	<b>Office 365</b> <b>Office 365 E3 - \$23</b> <b>APPLICATIONS</b> <b>Microsoft 365 Apps &amp; Microsoft Mobile Apps</b> Single sign-on to Cloud and Office apps on up to 5 PCs and Macs <b>SERVICES</b> <b>Exchange</b> Unlimited archiving <b>OneDrive</b> Cloud storage, sync and file sharing <b>SharePoint</b> Teams sites and internal portals <b>Microsoft Teams</b> Chat-based collaboration tool Online meetings, IM and video chat <b>Microsoft Viva</b> Viva Connections - Curated & company-branded employee experience, Viva Learning (Partially Included) - Accelerated learning integrated within Microsoft tools, Viva Insights (Partially Included) - Balance productivity and wellbeing <b>***Plus***</b> PowerApps & Power Automate for Office 365, Encrypted Email, Data Loss Prevention, Rights Management, Stream, Delve, Sway, Yammer, To Do, Planner, My Analytics, Kaizala, Lists, and more!	<b>Enterprise Mobility + Security</b> <b>EMS E3 - \$10.60</b> <b>IDENTITY AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT</b> <b>Azure Active Directory Premium P1</b> Single sign-on to Cloud and on-premises applications Self service password reset Security reporting/multi-factor authentication <b>MANAGED MOBILE PRODUCTIVITY</b> <b>Microsoft Endpoint Manager</b> Mobile device and app management to protect corporate apps and data on any device Includes SCCM client license Windows Autopilot <b>INFORMATION PROTECTION</b> <b>Azure Information Protection Premium P1</b> Encryptions for all files and storage locations <b>Windows CAL</b>	<b>Windows Enterprise</b> <b>Windows E3 - \$7</b> <b>SECURITY</b> <b>BitLocker Management</b> Enterprise-grade disk encryption managed on-premise or Cloud <b>MORE PRODUCTIVE</b> <b>Application Virtualization (App-V)</b> Simplify app delivery and management on any device <b>BranchCache</b> Allow users' PCs to cache files, websites, and other content from central servers, so content isn't repeatedly downloaded across the wide area network (WAN) <b>Virtual Desktop Access</b> Allow connections to Virtual Desktops including Windows Virtual Desktop in Azure <b>Per User Licensing</b> Install on up to 5 devices <b>Direct Access</b> Always on VPN connection to on-premise resources
		<b>Office 365 E5 - \$15 (Incremental to O365 E3)</b> <b>SECURITY</b> <b>Microsoft Defender for O365 P1 &amp; P2</b> Deep email scanning, safe links, anti-phishing Identify, simulate, and understand attacks <b>Office 365 Cloud App Security</b> Policy and security alerting <b>Office 365 Advanced Compliance</b> Advanced eDiscovery Advanced Data Governance Customer Lockbox Customer Key <b>ANALYTICS</b> <b>Power BI Pro</b> Live business analytics & visualization <b>VOICE</b> <b>Audio Conferencing</b> Worldwide dial-in for online meetings <b>Phone System</b> Business phone system in the Cloud	<b>EMS E5 - \$5.80 (Incremental to EMS E3)</b> <b>Azure Active Directory Premium P2</b> Advanced risk based identity protection with alerts, analysis and remediation Privileged Identity Management <b>Microsoft Defender for Cloud Apps</b> Bring enterprise-grade visibility, control, and protection to your Cloud applications <b>Azure Information Protection Premium P2</b> Intelligent classification and encryption for files shared inside and outside your organization <b>Microsoft Defender for Identity</b> Detect and investigate attacks on premises and in the Cloud	<b>Windows E5 - \$5 (Incremental to Windows E3)</b> <b>Microsoft Defender for Endpoint</b> Behavior-based, attack detection Built-in threat intelligence Forensic investigation and mitigation built into Windows Includes VDA License and virtualization rights to provide full capabilities of Windows Enterprise in virtual environments

**NEED HELP?**  
**Contact Interlink Today!**  
 hello@interlink.com | (800) 900-1150 | (513) 444-2020  
 www.interlink.com



## THE ADVANTAGES

“Purchasing these products with 365 Enterprise is really in your best interest,” Scherocman continues. “You get a bigger discount and since you’re buying what Microsoft wants you to buy, the opportunity for negotiating a favorable deal rises significantly.”

Although it initially may not seem like it, Scherocman stresses that Microsoft’s goal is to simplify the complex licensing process.

“They’re saying ‘we’re going to give you a ton of software with an attractive discount if you buy these bundles,’” he explains. “They really aren’t trying to make licensing painful, and they believe this will make the process much simpler and cost effective.”

The numbers prove their point. According to their estimates, licensing all the products you need — data classification, server security, endpoint protection, compliance solution, advance security, advanced analytics and voice — from multiple vendors would cost \$124 a month. Buying each product as a stand-alone from Microsoft drops the cost to \$58.50.

**\$124** PER USER FROM COMPETITORS



Purchasing everything in a 365 Enterprise bundle costs only \$33, which is about a 75% price reduction.

But there is another major advantage to go the 365 Enterprise route in addition to cost savings — vendor consolidation.

“Maybe today, you’re paying McAfee for endpoint protection, Symantec for data classification, Cisco for security and mixing, and matching products from all those different providers,” Scherocman explains. “That’s a waste of time and resources. When something doesn’t work, you must go back to all these different vendors. Plus, you have to manage licensing agreements, keys, and credentials from all of these different vendors.”

“With 365 Enterprise, all these applications work together,” he continues. “For example, if your Teams meetings are enabled with PSTN calling, you can call in without having to join via a computer. That functionality is all built in with Office 365 and enabled with your 365 Enterprise licensing. In addition, you can now make it your phone system so you can have it call you to join the meeting or call directly out to add someone to the conference. The level of integration available is pretty awesome.”

“Another example would be having conditional access, if an employee is logging in from a risky IP address, then the software could automatically require multi-factor authentication — similar to your bank sensing that you are connecting from a unique PC.”

## MICROSOFT 365 ENTERPRISE SAVES CUSTOMERS COSTS

**\$57** PER USER STAND ALONE



The costs of O365 Analytics and Voice alone justify the incremental step up cost

**\$32** IN SAVINGS PER USER WHEN COMPARED TO STAND-ALONES

M365 E3 Step up to SPE E5



## TIME TO CONSIDER MICROSOFT 365 ENTERPRISE

You are likely facing a renewal or new purchase decision regarding a Microsoft product. As you ponder your choices, it's in your best interest to at least consider the M365 Enterprise bundle options.

"This is an entirely new re-branding effort from Microsoft," Scherocman says. "Companies should at least take the time to understand what's being put into these bundles, because it's a lot of functionality for the price."

Licensing is complicated enough without having to deal with a tangle of separate products from different vendors. With M365 Enterprise, Microsoft is making it easier to manage the problem and is offering additional functionality by combining it all in one solution. This not only simplifies your licensing issues, but also enhances the overall functionality of your key applications.

Most importantly, you don't have to navigate the transition on your own. Interlink Cloud Advisors can provide the support and guidance you need.

"The reason Interlink can help you," says Scherocman, "is because we're one of the only companies that actually understands the capabilities and functions of each of the features in these bundles, what you're trying to accomplish as a business, and which of the licensing bundles best meets your needs and budget. We not only know the features, we understand the licensing complexities of each and can recommend the best solutions for you."

Getting a solution that fits your business — that makes life simpler.

”

***Purchasing these products with Microsoft 365 Enterprise is really in your best interest. You get a bigger discount and since you're buying what Microsoft wants you to buy, the opportunity for negotiating a favorable deal rises significantly.***

Matt Scherocman  
President, Interlink Cloud Advisors



# JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD

*Getting the most value out of your cloud investments.*



**As more organizations realize the benefits of migrating to the cloud, one question continues to remain unanswered —**

***What's the best migration strategy for my organization?***

Unfortunately, the answer is never a one-size-fits-all approach, because each organization has unique needs and requirements prior to moving to the cloud, your team must think about a variety of items, starting with the anticipated challenges and business operation disruptions that can or will occur during and after the migration. Next, it's important to develop a clear understanding of how a cloud-based environment will impact your various business units and processes. With all this information in place, your journey to the cloud can begin. However, the journey is only the beginning. The strategy for executing each step of the migration plan brings up more questions that require the right answers.

Interlink Cloud Advisors uses a proven approach that has successfully migrated hundreds of enterprise clients. With each migration, they use a series of phases that strategically align with the client's vision, so they can harness the power, flexibility, and scalability of the cloud.

To start, Interlink deep-dives into a comprehensive environmental assessment that defines your roadmap to the cloud. After leaving no question unanswered, they move on to configuration, education, data migration, and customization. Throughout the entire journey, and even afterwards, Interlink is there to provide the resources and support that empower your users to extract the full value of all the tools the cloud offers.



## ASSESSMENT

Before you start your Cloud journey, you want to ensure that the Cloud is the right fit for your organization. We are here to help you with that.



### The Plan

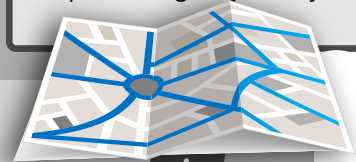
Functionality is rolled out with the highest business impact, least impact to the user and the least amount of rework.

### Workshops for Planning

We help you fully understand what licenses you already own, the licenses you need to purchase and ensure you are getting the best available pricing options.

### Define Your Roadmap

We use our expertise to separate different user profiles so you are purchasing only what you need.



## CONFIGURED SETUP

Your system is setup and configured for your use.

You are provided with information to make decisions around compliance and security policies.

Policies are setup the right way.

Administrators are trained on how to use the platform and maintain it properly.

## MIGRATION

Data is successfully migrated across all workloads, with minimal challenges and data loss.

Our team shows you the tools and strategies to best utilize OneDrive.



## CUSTOMIZATION

We configure the tools for usage for your particular business.

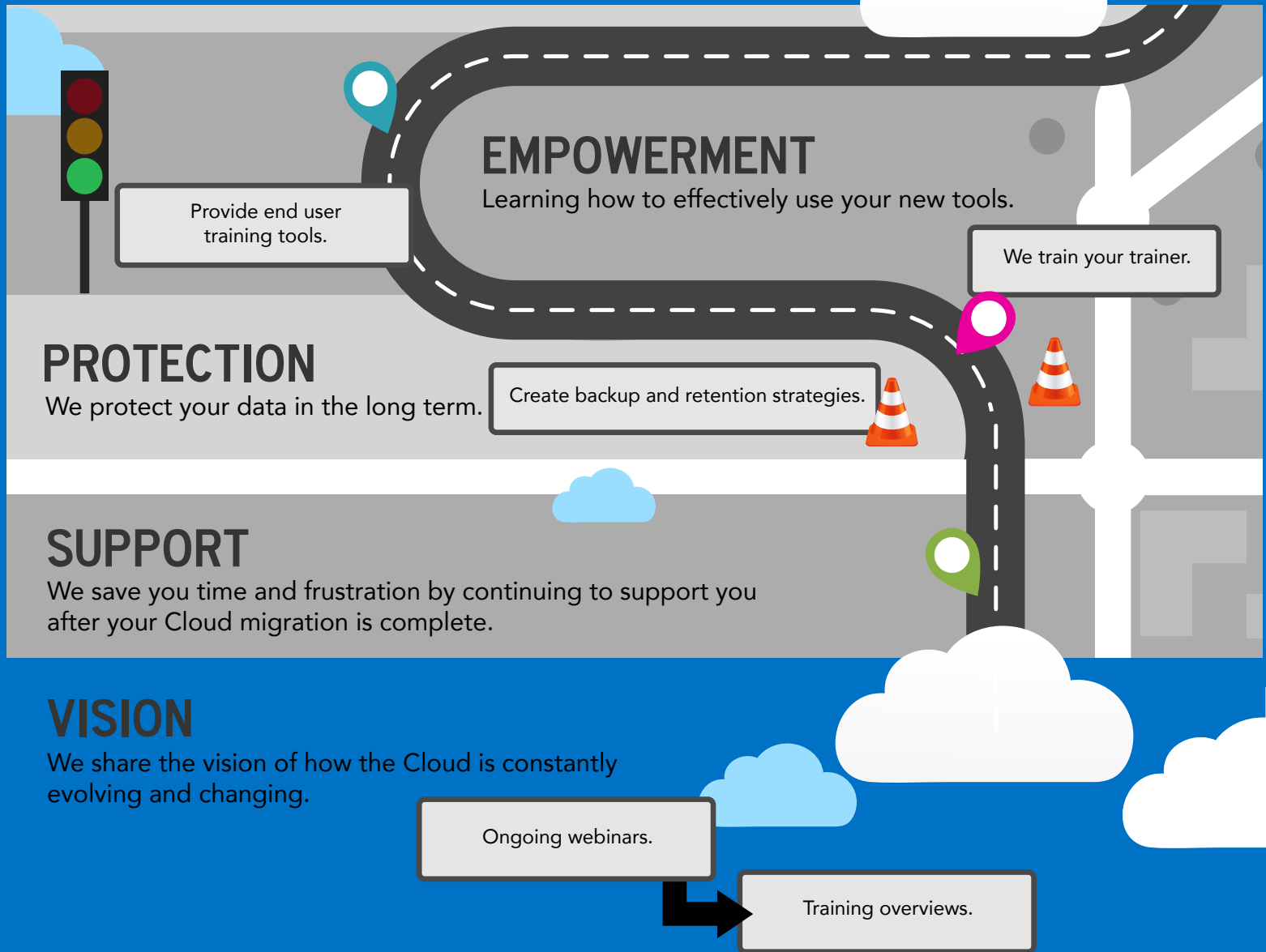
Build custom SharePoint sites.

Deploy Teams/Groups.

Use Microsoft's Enterprise Mobility Suite to layer over security and additional functionality.

Define policies for content in Groups, Video & OneDrive.





# BEGIN THE JOURNEY

Interlink will be your guide to success to the cloud.

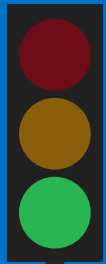
*Check if you're eligible for a:*

**CLOUDLINK 365 ASSESSMENT**

[www.interlink.com/cloudlink](http://www.interlink.com/cloudlink)







# THE JOURNEY BEGINS HERE

3 Ways • 6 Steps • 5 Deliverables

***Is your business ready for the cloud?***

*What is your real return on investment? Are there hidden roadblocks?*

**Interlink's CloudLink 365 Assessment will help you find out.**

Pioneered by Interlink Cloud Advisors, this assessment is designed to help organizations understand and take advantage of the cloud.

CloudLink 365 combines industry best practices and years of expertise to review your company **3 WAYS**, using **6 STEPS** to produce **5 DELIVERABLES**, which help you understand how the cloud can benefit your company.

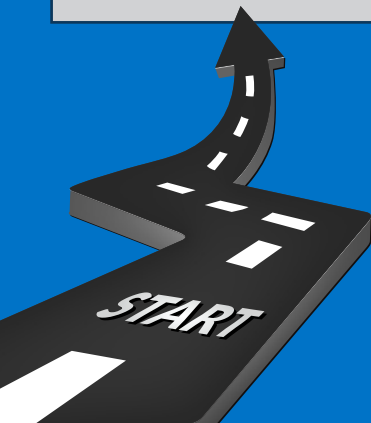
*You may qualify for the CloudLink 365 Assessment free of charge thanks to incentives provided by Microsoft.*



## CloudLink 365

Learn more & find out if you are eligible for a  
**FREE CloudLink 365 Assessment:**

[www.interlink.com/cloudlink](http://www.interlink.com/cloudlink)





Power BI



Azure

# COMBINING TWO GREAT SOLUTIONS TO UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR DATA

Getting from source data to actionable information can often be difficult, and having the data is not usually the issue. Accessing, parsing, analyzing, and converting the data into relevant information and delivering it to decision makers who need it is frequently the challenge.

### **Some common reasons why this can be the case:**

- ✓ *Source data often resides in multiple systems and applications and exists in a number of different formats*
- ✓ *Pulling this raw data directly from these sources often results in inaccurate reports and unreliable information*
- ✓ *Accessing the specific data needed can be laborious and time consuming*

Interlink solves these problems and converts your data into a single source of truth by combining the features and functionalities of two robust solutions:

- ✓ *Interlink Azure Cloud-connected Data Mart*
- ✓ *Microsoft's Power BI*

Bringing these two industry-leading solutions together helps you organize your data into a single source of information, access it faster, and helps ensure that the data is accurate before it's presented in Power BI reports.

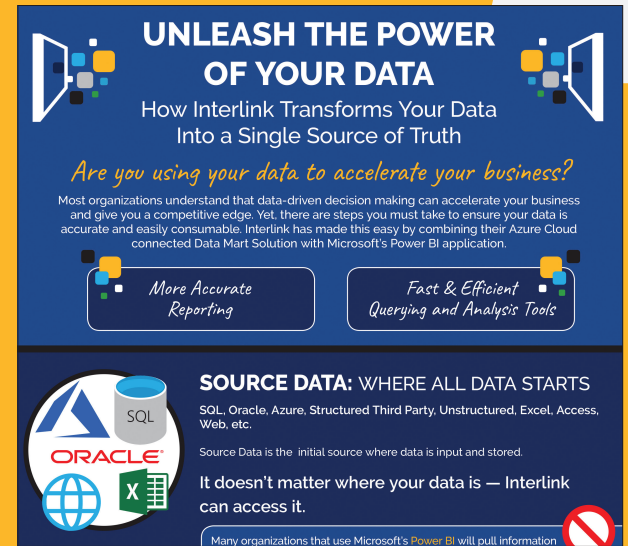
Leveraging Interlink's Azure Cloud-connected Data Mart cleans your data and certifies your data fields are consistent across all sources via normalization. This enables your team to be confident in the data. It also helps you better utilize Microsoft Power BI to make your data consumable in reports, dashboards, and graphical visualizations, without the need for further data manipulation. Thus empowering the end users to uncover trends, make predictions, and move from discussions and data to actionable decisions.

# 2 WAYS TO LEARN MORE...

**Video:** [interlink.com/data-management](http://interlink.com/data-management)



**Infographic:** [interlink.com/data-infographic](http://interlink.com/data-infographic)



Power BI



Azure

GET INTERLINK'S

## AZURE CLOUD-CONNECTED DATA MART SOLUTION

UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR DATA

Interlink employs the best practices around creating consumable data for your end users by building a safe, secure, and reliable data solution.



*Use your data to find trends and make predictions*



*Move from discussions to decisions when everyone is working from the same set of information*

Learn more at:

**[WWW.INTERLINK.COM/DATA-MART](http://WWW.INTERLINK.COM/DATA-MART)**



# AZURE PRICING

## *How to Get the Best Deal with Windows Server Hybrid Use Benefit, SQL Server Hybrid Use Benefit, and Reserved Instances*

*Azure pricing can be confusing. Paying for what you use is typically a great concept, but many companies are struggling to understand how to get their best deal when running Azure workloads. In this article, we'll discuss the three major ways to get a programmatic discount on Azure. These include Windows Server Hybrid Use, SQL Server Hybrid Use and Reserved Instances.*

*About a year ago, Microsoft announced a price cut on Azure which made the licensing pricing between the various licensing vehicles all similar. Then they also gave guidance to their sales teams not to discount Azure until the customer commitment was in the millions. So, it is critical to take advantage of these programmatic discounts to get the best deal possible.*

## WINDOWS SERVER HYBRID USE BENEFIT

Microsoft has a relatively unknown benefit called Hybrid Use Benefit (HUB). If you already own active Windows Servers with Software Assurance (SA), you can use that license to run workloads in Azure on Windows without paying for the Windows subscription costs in Azure. For those that license Windows Servers utilizing the Data Center version, you can continue to use that Windows Server to run on-premises workloads, as well as different workloads in Azure with the same license. This allows you to double the functionality of each Windows Server Data license. What you're basically getting is free licensing for Azure. The benefit was built so that you could move workloads to Azure and reuse the licensing, but the Data Center option has no restriction on the workload. So, the same license can properly cover two totally unrelated workloads, as long as, one is running in Azure and one is still on premises!

Functionally, this means that customers utilizing this benefit will pay the base compute rate (Linux rate) for their Azure virtual machines. Through leveraging HUB, some clients are seeing savings of up to 50% off their virtual machine costs.

### »» A FEW IMPORTANT FACTS

- Both versions of Windows Server—Standard and Datacenter—license with Software Assurance are eligible for the Hybrid Use Benefit
  - A Windows Server Standard Edition license cannot be used simultaneously in on-premises deployments while utilizing Hybrid Use Benefit in Azure
  - Windows Server Datacenter licenses can utilize the Hybrid Use Benefit and continue to be deployed in parallel on-premises
  - The HUB benefit is only available in Azure, not AWS or any other hosted offering
  - Customer can create new virtual machines with the benefit, migrate existing machines, or upload custom virtual machines
- Example:** A Windows Server Licensing with 16 Cores Covered with SA, you could run either two virtual machines with up to 8 cores or one virtual machine with up to 16 cores



# SQL SERVER HYBRID USE BENEFIT

Fundamentally, SQL Server HUB works in a similar way to the Windows Server benefit. Existing licensing still needs active Software Assurance. However, SQL does not have the long term dual usage rights like Windows Server Data Center Edition. With SQL, Microsoft allows customers to use both licenses both on premises and in the cloud for up to 180 days to facilitate migration. The cool part is that you can use both benefits—Windows Server and SQL Server at the same time. This saves you additional dollars.

## »» A FEW IMPORTANT FACTS

### For Azure SQL Database:

- *If you have Standard edition per core licenses with active Software Assurance, you can get 1 vCore in the General Purpose service tier for every 1 license core you own on-premises*
- *If you have Enterprise edition per core licenses with active Software Assurance, you can get 1 vCore in the Business Critical service tier for every 1 license core you own on-premises.*
- *If you have highly-virtualized Enterprise edition per core licenses with active Software Assurance, you can get 4 vCores in the General Purpose service tier for every 1 license core you own on-premises. This is a unique virtualization benefit available only on Azure SQL Database.*

### For SQL Server in Azure Virtual Machines

- *If you have Enterprise edition per core licenses with active Software Assurance, you can get 1 core of SQL Server Enterprise edition in Azure Virtual Machines for every 1 license core you own on-premises*
- *If you have Standard edition per core licenses with active Software Assurance, you can get 1 core of SQL Server Standard edition in Azure Virtual Machines for every 1 license core you own on-premises*

*If you don't have Software Assurance on your Windows or SQL Servers, but still want the best price for Windows and SQL running in Azure, talk to us about CSP Server subscriptions.*

# RESERVED INSTANCES

The idea of Reserved Instances (RI) is simple—the longer you commit to running a virtual machine (VM) in Azure, the better price you will get for the compute portion of that VM. Microsoft claims that Reserved Instances can save up to 72% over the Pay as You Go model when reserving for three years. A VM in Azure is comprised of three things—the operating system, any application software, and the compute. Hybrid Use for Windows covers the OS (if Windows), SQL Hybrid Use can cover the database, and Reserved Instances offers discount on the compute.

Often, the discount for your commitment is so great that it is less expensive to buy the Reserved Instance rather than running the VM for 3-6 months under the Pay as You Go model. So, even if you have a short-term need, you should consider Reserved Instances for cost savings. Plus, by locking in the virtual machine cost, that makes budgeting easier.

AWS has offered reserved instances for some time now, but is relatively new to Microsoft Azure, but when you combine RIs with HUB, that is where Microsoft separates itself.

## »» A FEW IMPORTANT FACTS

- *Reserved Instances are offered in 1 and 3-year terms, with 3 years offering a greater discount than a 1-year and a 1-year offering a greater discount than Pay As You go*
- *Billed upfront for the term of your Reserved Instance — 1 or 3 years, but they don't automatically co-term to your existing volume license agreement, so your RI's may extend past your expiration date*
- *You can also use a Reserved Instance as a way to get utilization out of your monetary commitment (if you have one on your Enterprise Agreement or Server and Cloud Enrollment Agreement) before it expires*
- *Reserved Instances can be exchanged for a different size VM, both up and down, and from region to region, so you will be refunded the unused time of the original RI and then charged for the new RI*
- *You can cancel a Reserved Instance with a 12% cancellation fee*
- *When combining Reserved Instances with Hybrid Use Benefit, you can save up to 80% over the Pay As You Go price*



# MAKE.LIFE

## Easier

### *with Interlink Exclusive Solutions*

## Onboarding Express

User creation just became easier thanks to Interlink's exclusive tool, Onboarding Express. Creating and licensing users is not difficult; yet, it can be time consuming and give your busy help desk team one more thing that needs to be completed as soon as possible. With Interlink's Onboarding Express solution, user creation in Office 365 is automated. It works by pulling new user data from your existing HR system, ERP System, or even a spreadsheet. It then goes through a provisioning process to create new users within Active Directory, build a mailbox in Exchange/Exchange Online, and apply the appropriate license.

### **ONBOARDING EXPRESS HAS FOUR MAJOR BENEFITS:**

- 1) Saves time.
- 2) Eliminates mistakes.
- 3) Secures all the data in one place.
- 4) Allows your staff to spend their time on more valuable projects.

This tool works for you on your timeline, not the other way around.

With Onboarding Express you can schedule user creation to be done whenever you want, instead of wasting up to an hour setting up each new user. This becomes more cost efficient as well. There's no waiting around on the IT staff to get a new employee productive. Onboarding Express takes care of the grunt work, so you don't have to. Automating the creation and licensing of users takes up valuable time but also eliminates mistakes. It reduces duplicated effort or mistakes that are inevitably made when manually entering data. All this data will also be kept securely in one place, so you'll be unifying the user data information across all platforms. With all these assets working together, your new employees will get their credentials faster and your IT teams stay focused on critical business issues.

*Contact us today to discuss how we can integrate directly into your systems and how we can help make your business just a little more efficient.*



## Email Encryption for Office 365

Office 365 E3 and E5 plans include outbound email encryption. This feature is critical because it protects your intellectual property by not allowing it to sit in other people's inboxes and potentially be available to their delegates or company admins. Plus, sending an encrypted email reinforces the confidentiality of the information. However, Microsoft doesn't make it easy for your end users. They require the use of a keyword in the subject line in order to trigger the encryption. No matter which word you pick, your end users will struggle to remember it. Thus, negating any benefit the business might get from owning this feature. Some companies will go out and purchase a third-party email encryption service in order to make it easier on their end user by providing them with a ribbon button. So, what if your end users had a button that used the Office 365 native service? Well, you're in luck! Interlink has developed such a button and it offers security, simplicity and savings...and we can't find anything else on the market like it.

For a low one-time cost, the button can be added to Exchange and Office 365 deployments. It goes right into the Outlook ribbon as a plug-in and shows up in both the main ribbon and in any new email being written.

***Contact us to learn how we can help you add this extra layer of security to your organization's critical communications.***







# Microsoft Teams

## Changing the Shape of the Modern Workplace

*Interlink Guides a Global Asphalt Construction Company in their Migration to Microsoft Teams*

### INDUSTRY:

Asphalt Construction & Materials, Environmental Services, Chemical & Fuels

### IT USERS:

4,000+

### SOLUTION OVERVIEW:

- Planning and adoption assistance for Microsoft Teams
- Microsoft Teams Deployment
- User Adoption
- Skype for Business Retirement

### PRODUCTS & SERVICES:

- Adoption & Change Management Workshops
- Planning Sessions, Deployment Services
- Product Training
- Discovery Sessions
- Data Assessment, Security & Governance

Communication and collaboration are revolutionizing the way people work. When changing the communication channels within an organization, the organization itself will have to change — that is how important collaboration has become in today's modern workplace. The workplace today is more global, uses more contractors and freelancers, supports workers on the go, and has more remote workers. To keep up with these trends, in 2017 Microsoft introduced Microsoft Teams.

There's a major shift coming up for companies using Skype for Business, and whether they're ready or not, Microsoft Teams will be taking over. Microsoft has officially announced the retirement of Skype for Business Online. After July 31st, 2021 the service will no longer be accessible and from now until that date Microsoft will focus on adding new features only to Teams. Upgrading from Skype for Business to Teams is more than just a technical migration — it's a complete transformation in how users communicate. Many organizations make the mistake of thinking that collaboration is all about playing well with others and keeping them in the loop. It's way more than just that — it's a creative process. There are a few different steps in order to collectively shape the road towards a new future.

That's why one of Interlink's clients, a global construction and materials business, came to Interlink looking for Teams migration guidance. With Skype for Business retiring, they knew they needed to make the move sooner rather than later. They agreed to share their story and thoughts here, but as an organization have a policy against third-party publicity, so we cannot use their name.

"We came to Interlink because we had a history of successful services with them, starting in 2015. Their guidance and experience always prove to be valuable," says the company's Director of Strategic Technology.

For this client specifically, Teams was a big move. The entire company employs more than 5,000 people across 3 of their core industries: Transportation Materials, Environmental Services, Specialty Chemicals, and Fuel Products. Users are located in more than 170 locations and continued as expected to grow. With a company this size, seamless collaboration is crucial to their successful business model.

## CONSIDERATIONS

There are a lot of pieces to consider when migrating to Teams — strategizing change, planning, the technical implementation, and end-user adoption. Interlink can help with every step of this migration process and works to find the ideal upgrade approach. Interlink is able to assist clients in the technical aspects of the upgrade as well as the planning beforehand, and encourage end-user adoption through training and Teams Customer Immersion Experiences (CIE).

*"We came to Interlink because we had a history of successful services with them, starting in 2015. Their guidance and experience always prove to be valuable."*

~ Director of Strategic Technology

For this client, Interlink was involved from beginning to end of the migration — starting with planning and strategizing sessions, to data assessments, the actual Teams deployment and lastly end user training and adoption workshops.

"For this project, we were seeking Interlink's guidance and experience. We needed guidance to ensure we properly retired Skype; migrated data to Teams; and setup governance and security within Teams. We needed to leverage Interlink's experience to prepare training, live demos and strategies to succeed with adoption," he says.

## PLANNING & STRATEGIZING

Teams introduces more capabilities than Skype in a brand-new client, so it's important to ensure proper security, governance and end-user adoption into Teams planning.

"Office 365 is our primary collaboration suite of tools. Teams replaces Skype but also added new collaboration options," explains the company's Director of Strategic Technology. "Our cost is not reduced but Teams removes any business pressure on the IT Team to adopt similar tools like Slack or Google Hangouts."





Microsoft Teams may look like a simple chat client but there are many aspects across data, communication, and collaboration capabilities that can produce a fair amount of data. The data generated within Microsoft Teams can provide a ton of value — but for a legal, security, and compliance aspect it's important to spend some time planning the deployment to meet these specific needs.

Once this client expressed interest in deploying Teams, Interlink engaged in a Teams Deployment Planning Workshop to help them develop a clear vision of specific organizational needs as they relate to Microsoft Teams. Interlink acted as a mentor through this process to determine the best path for their Teams deployment. An Interlink consultant was on-site with the client for the user-facing workshops, enabling them to work with to work with IT, stakeholders and other business user groups on a plan for user engagement, governance, and training in addition to content management. The deployment planning write ups will be executed remotely. Following the onsite engagement, the client was then provided with documents detailing the topics below for a deployment plan and road map.

- ▶ Vision
- ▶ Considerations
- ▶ Decisions impacting deployment plan
- ▶ Backup and Recovery
- ▶ Site Architecture and Content Deployment as it relates to their current SharePoint Sites vs Sites associated with Microsoft Teams and Groups
- ▶ Governance recommendations and Best Practices; including guidelines around when to use Teams, Groups, or Sharepoint

*“Interlink worked with Microsoft on our behalf to develop a PowerShell script to clear the Teams and browser cache, which resolved any issues for effected users.”*

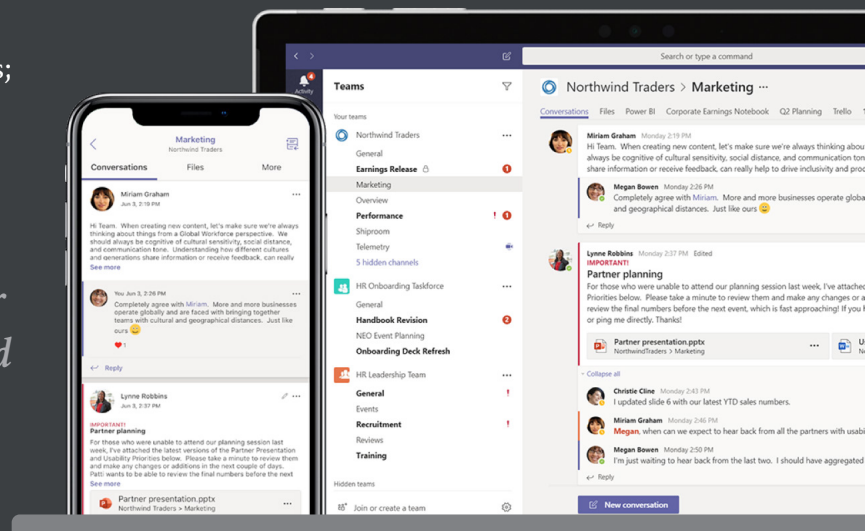
Director of Strategic Technology

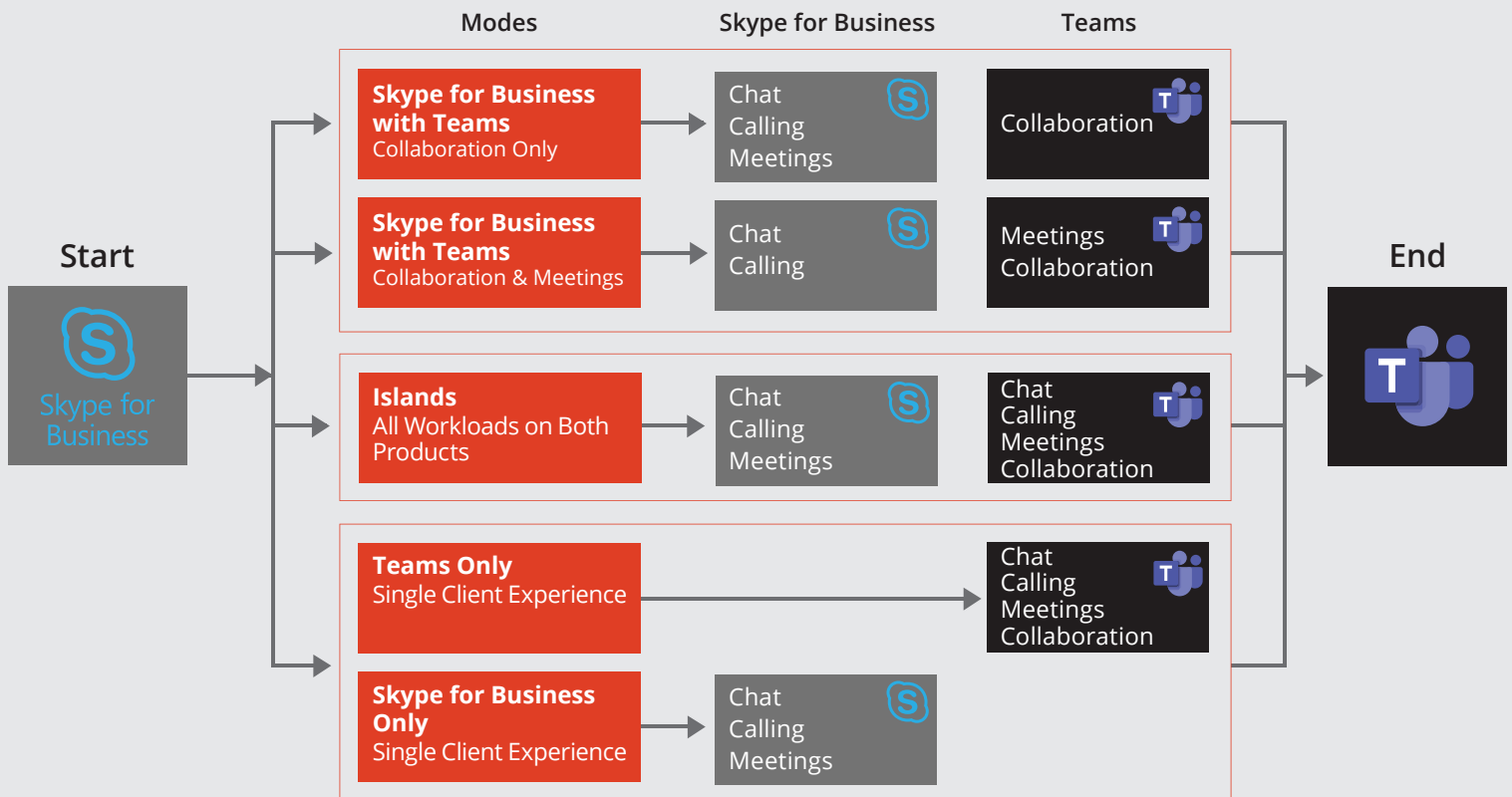
## ALIGNING THE PIECES

After Interlink and their client spent time focusing on planning, the next step was to deploy Teams in their organization. When first implementing Microsoft Teams into any business, there are multiple options for deployment (see chart on next page). With an intention to make the transition easier, Microsoft has options to gradually introduce Teams and its features to the rest of an organization. Interlink presented each of these options to the client.

After careful considerations and weighing the pros and cons of each option with Interlink, the client decided to first start in Islands Mode. Islands Mode enables users to run both the Skype for Business and Teams client side by side. Users choose which client to use for chat or meetings. At the time, the client hoped this would be the ideal option to ease the transition for the rest of their organization.

“The largest issues we experienced derived from running our Office 365 tenant in ‘mixed mode’ prior to a full conversion to Teams only. Our Teams pilot users and other early adopters saw issues collaborating with Skype users and other recently converted Teams users. Interlink worked with Microsoft on our behalf to develop a PowerShell script to clear the Teams and browser cache, which resolved the issue for effected users,” says the company’s Director of Strategic Technology.





## From Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams Migration Options



Interlink worked with the client to also implement Teams governance with updates to the Teams configuration. This was largely based on the best practices and decisions made during the planning engagement. The main points for implementation were:

- ▶ Deploying Teams for the IT Department (Shared Services)
- ▶ Creating a Team deployed for each group within IT
  - » IT Team (ITSS)
  - » DR Site
  - » Service Desk
  - » DBA
  - » Network Applications
- ▶ Transitioning legacy IT SharePoint sites into Microsoft Teams
- ▶ Building Teams for each business unit
- ▶ Completing the deployment to all users

## ADOPTION & CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The next following step for this client was engaging Interlink to help drive the adoption of the Teams application. This step is crucial to a successful implementation and should be an ongoing process. A main aspect of project failures is due to poor change management planning and little to no end-user adoption — when employees don't understand new technology or why it is being imposed, they tend to reject it. Creating desire through adoption training and planning can help employees to understand how these Teams can help them in their daily workday and make things easier — therefore, the organization can make the most out of its investment.

Interlink began the adoption process by facilitating sessions designed to create excitement and engagement amongst the end user base prior to the deployment. Interlink executed a Teams Roadshow that included multi-day, multi-sessions to provide more options for users to be able to attend, both virtually and on-site at the client's innovation center. The Teams Roadshow involved two pieces — preparation and delivery.





### ROADSHOW PREPARATION

- ▶ Meeting with the client's team to review internal governance, security and rollout plans for Teams
- ▶ Providing feedback on rollout plan for Teams and incorporate rollout plan concepts into roadshow content
- ▶ Performing onsite practice sessions at the client's location to refine content and delivery to meet the client's goals

### ROADSHOW DELIVERY

- ▶ Performing two days onsite with two sessions per day
- ▶ Teaching Sessions completed in 1 hour, allowing for an additional hour and a half for questions and discussion
- ▶ Sessions were recorded and uploaded to Office 365 Stream for future use and onboarding

The Roadshow enabled employees to experience the value of the Teams and how it will impact their daily work schedules. Interlink helped the client discover the most important or valuable capabilities specific to their organization, and then illustrated the different ways to use the new capabilities — specifically how it can streamline processes, make work more productive, easier and/or efficient. Interlink worked with the client for months after the deployment with multiple adoption workshops. This way the client could continue to define “new champions” within new lines of business. Teams Champions are educated and skilled users that know the benefits of Teams and can act as a resource and advocate for the rest of the organization. With an organization this size, continued workshops and training are an important part of the Teams implementation. The client is starting a new adoption training cycle beginning in 2020 to broaden engagement from different user bases.

## INTERLINK'S CONTINUED SUPPORT

After the primary project with multiple pieces, this client chose to sign on with Interlink as a Managed Service Client. Specifically, this client uses Interlink for Office 365 Enhanced Tenant Admin Support, which includes Teams, SharePoint and all Office 365 application. With this support, Interlink helps the client with continuous support in enhancing, maintaining, and providing guidance for what is deployed within their Office 365 tenant. This agreement provides a ton of value for the client.

- ▶ Roadmap development for future growth and expansion of SharePoint use
- ▶ Rely on experienced, Microsoft certified professionals for 24/7 support
- ▶ Broad skill sets are available to cover anything from design to site architecture to custom development
- ▶ Interlink Best practices utilized from an experienced firm that sees multiple environments
- ▶ Leverage monitoring to proactively resolves issues before they cause down time
- ▶ Escalate Microsoft issues to the top support talent at Microsoft quickly

## THE INTERLINK ADVANTAGE

The client continues to find new use cases for Teams every day. They continue to leverage Interlink for guidance and planning. Teams is an ever-evolving tool and the client allows their users to uncover their own use cases in how they optimize Teams and feel comfortable with it. Their team is always bringing in new ideas on how Teams can further benefit their organization as a whole.

*“The successful work by Interlink is one reason we now have an Office 365 managed services agreement in place with them.”*

Director of Strategic Technology



## CONTACT US TODAY...

to learn more on how Interlink can assist your organization with Microsoft Teams Planning, Deployment, or Adoption.





# SECURE ENVIRONMENT ROADMAP

*Hackers are always finding new ways to attack organizations. The path to secure your business data can frequently be unclear and never ending. In today's environment, it is imperative to understand what security measures you are currently taking to prevent attacks on your systems and to know what you should be doing to decrease your vulnerability. With so many different options being flooded in the market, it can be hard to know what products can help you with what.*



Interlink Cloud Advisors solicited input from their clients on what security tools they had deployed and in what order. From that data, we developed a summary of the layered security offerings that are available to you from Microsoft. From basic security to advanced protection, you can now understand the layers necessary to ensure that your environment stays safe. We encourage our clients to always be adding new levels of protection to keep ahead of threats.



*Building a secure environment can be extremely complex. It can be difficult to even know where to start. We surveyed our clients and asked what tools they had deployed and in what order.*

## + Basics 101

**1 in 131** of all emails contain malware<sup>1</sup>

Antivirus	Windows Defender – AV
Up-to-Date Firewall with Monitoring	3rd party
Password Policies	3rd party, AD enforced
Automated Patching	SCCM, Intune or WSUS
Deep Email Scanning	Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection
Safe Link Rewrite	Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection
Deprovisioning of Terminated Users	Policies
Mobile Device Management	Intune
Multi-Factor Authentication & Conditional Access	Azure AD Premium Plan 1
End User Training	BrainStorm

## + Basics 201

**63%** of all network intrusions & data breaches are due to compromised user credentials<sup>2</sup>

Security Reporting for Cloud Logins	Azure AD Premium Plan 1
Single Sign on for All Applications	Azure AD Premium Plan 1
Outbound Email Encryption	Office 365 E3
Data Loss Prevention Scanning	Office 365 E3
Encrypted Hard Disks	Bitlocker (Win Professional & Enterprise)

## + Intermediate 301

**230K** new malware samples are produced every day<sup>3</sup>

Secure External Sharing with Auditing (encrypted)	Azure Information Protection Plan 1
File Encryption & Rights Management	Office 365 E3 & Azure Information Protection Plan 1
Regular Elevated Permissions Auditing	Azure AD Premium Plan 2
Cloud Activity Monitoring & Alerting	Cloud App Security
Intrusion Detection inside the network with Monitoring	Advanced Threat Analysis & Azure ATP
Incident Response Procedures	Office 365 Threat Intelligence ATA
Security Auditing	Penetration Testing/3rd Party
Automatic File Encryption	Azure Information Protection Plan 2
Protect 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Web Services	Cloud App Security
End User Threat Testing	Office 365 Threat Intelligence

## + Advanced 401

Desktop Intrusion Monitoring	Windows Defender ATP (E5)
Application Development Security Auditing	3rd Party
Threat Activity Monitoring & Alerting	Office 365 Threat Intelligence
Server Protection & JIT Server Admin	Azure Security Center
Data Classification	Azure Information Protection Plan 2
Identify Shadow IT	Cloud App Security

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4465128/One-131-emails-contains-virus-hackers-target-inbox.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.calyptix.com/top-threats/top-causes-of-data-breaches-by-industry-2018-verizon-dbir/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://purplesec.us/resources/cyber-security-statistics/>

# IMPROVING SECURITY WITH OFFICE 365 E5

*Microsoft continues to innovate around Office 365, and the Office E5 bundle is no exception.*

*There are three major areas of functionality in the Office E5 bundle:*

- 1) **Telephony** — *The ability to have Teams serve as your complete phone system and provide dial in conferencing*
- 2) **Business Intelligence** — *Power BI - Microsoft's powerful Business Intelligence solution is included*
- 3) **Security** — *Read on to learn more about the security features*

*This article overviews five of the top security features that help ensure that safety and integrity of your systems.*

# FIVE IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDS IN OFFICE 365 E5

## › ONE

### OFFICE 365 CLOUD APP SECURITY

Provides insight into suspicious activity enabling you to investigate and take remedial action in potential risk areas. This feature sends triggered alerts for atypical activities, provides visibility into how your organization's data is being accessed and used, and allows for the suspension of user accounts showing suspicious activity.

## › TWO

### OFFICE 365 ADVANCED THREAT PROTECTION

Helps protect your organization from attacks by scanning email attachments for potential malware. It also scans web addresses in email messages and Office documents to provide time-of-click verification, identifies and blocks malicious files in online libraries, checks email messages for unauthorized spoofing, and detects when someone attempts to impersonate your users and your organization's customer domains.

## › THREE

### OFFICE 365 CUSTOMER LOCKBOX

Helps you control how a Microsoft support engineer accesses your data during a support call that investigates service issues. The feature allows you to approve or reject access requests. It also provides dual-factor authentication for administrators and users and enables access for a specified period of time.

## › FOUR

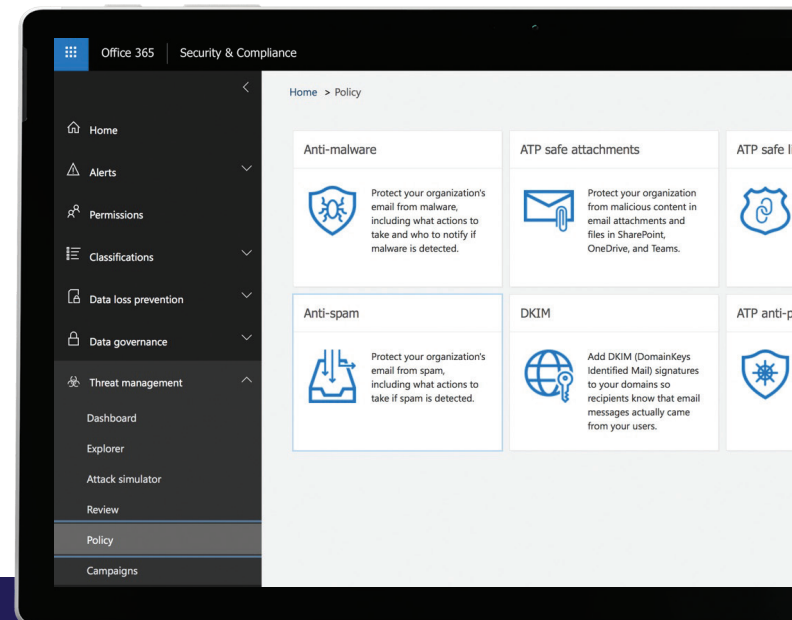
### THREAT INTELLIGENCE

Helps administrators protect their organization's users by making it easier to identify, monitor and understand attacks. Threat Intelligence monitors signals and gathers data from multiple sources—such as user activity, authentication, email, compromised PCs, and security incidents. This information can be used to address attacks quickly while also helping prevent future attacks.

## › FIVE

### ADVANCED DATA GOVERNANCE WITH LABELS

Helps you control the various types of content that require different actions to be taken on them to comply with industry regulations and internal policies. Labels enable you to classify data across your organization for governance and enforce retention rules based on those classifications.



*If you need further help or guidance to ensure security within your organization, you can schedule a free Office Security Assessment today. Interlink offers the guidance and expertise of our team to help ensure your organization can remain productive and secure.*



# Microsoft ENTERPRISE MOBILITY + SECURITY E5

## *Empowering Mobility with Increased Security & Protection*

*Today's workforce is on the move more than ever before. Remote workers, global companies and around-the-clock work demands mean people are always connected. Providing the necessary mobility and access to applications, files and project information is critical. In addition to having a high availability demand, sensitive information like employee info, contracts and plans, client data, financial information, and intellectual property must be protected by a tightly controlled layer of security. Microsoft Enterprise Mobility + Security (EMS) in Microsoft's E5 plan provides access to this sensitive data and also strengthens the protection around it.*

# EMS E5 KEY CAPABILITIES

*The following build upon the functionality of the EMS E3 bundle*

## IDENTITY PROTECTION & PRIVILEGED IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

Azure Active Directory Plan 2, the advanced package found in EMS E5 (which can be purchased as part of Microsoft 365 E5) includes critical capabilities that defend against identity theft and provide usage data for administrative actions.

**Identity Protection:** Enables detection of potential vulnerabilities affecting an organization's user identities and combines them into a risk score for both the user and the session. It looks at factors like anonymous clients, the device being unmanaged, malware detection, the sensitivity of the data being accessed, and more. Then automatic responses can be enabled. Actions like denying access, limiting access, forcing a password reset, or invoking multifactor authentication are all possible.

**Privileged Identity Management (PIM):** Administrator accounts are the most valuable to hackers while they have the most access. Admin credentials are frequently given out for a specific need, but rarely taken back when the need is complete, which leaves open many accounts for hackers to target. With PIM, a company can drastically limit the footprint of open administrator credentials.

- ✓ Request just in time access to admin roles—especially for those that just need temporary access like outside consultants or help desk personnel working a weekend
- ✓ Real time alerts about changes in administrator privileges
- ✓ Admin group account auditing
- ✓ Stores a history of administrator activation actions

## ENHANCED AZURE INFORMATION PROTECTION (AIP)

Azure Information Protection Premium Plan 2 (AIP P2) builds upon the Premium Plan 1 (P1) offering included in

EMS E3 which helps classify, encrypt, and protect documents and emails. The AIP P1 plan requires a manual intervention—a user or an admin need to identify a file or group of files and then request the AIP software to encrypt and protect them using a defined Rights Management template. The AIP P2 essentially requires every user of AIP P2 to classify each document that the user creates into a set of categories. The categories can be defined by the enterprise. Typically, they include options like Personal, Public, Internal, and Confidential. Documents can also be automatically encrypted when the software finds specific content. For example, when a Social Security number is detected, the software can force a designation of Confidential on the document, thus limiting and controlling access automatically.

## CLOUD APP SECURITY (CAS)

CAS provides visibility into an organization's cloud applications and services, while providing sophisticated analytics to identify and combat cyberthreats, it also enables control of how a business sends its data between the apps it utilizes. Cloud App Security for Office 365, which is included in the Office 365 E5 package, watches for and alerts on behaviors that are occurring in Office 365. Things like large downloads of files, service accounts making changes from an external IP address, a user's email being forwarded outside of the organization, and admin credential being granted. All these behaviors can signal a bad actor has taken over an account.

The full version of Cloud App Security as part of EMS E5 then adds these same alerting features to non-Microsoft based cloud services like Salesforce, Amazon Web Services, and Box. Plus, if you aren't sure which services your end users are actually using, CAS also includes the ability to scan for and report on web services usage. Thus allowing IT to discover and help control the sprawl of the company's critical data.

*Interlink Cloud Advisors was one of the first Gold Partners in the world certified for EMS and understands how to leverage these powerful technologies to better protect end users' identities, watch for issues in a cloud-based environment and secure the data being shared within it. [Contact us](#) for a security assessment to help identify which layers of protection your organization needs most.*





# *Head to the Azure Cloud* **WITH THESE THREE POPULAR WORKLOADS**

**I**t's nearly impossible to read an article or view a video centered on IT planning without a discussion of the cloud. Every day more organizations are looking to the cloud for their computing needs. According to a Keystone research study, data will grow to 44 zettabytes (ZB) in 2020, which is quadruple of what it was two years ago. Therefore, 80% of organizations are now adopting cloud-first strategies.

Increasingly, companies looking to the cloud are turning to Microsoft Azure. Nearly 9 out of 10 Fortune 500 companies use Microsoft Cloud and there are currently 750 million Azure Active Directory users. There have been 120 billion hits to websites run on the Azure Web App Service.



# WHY THE CLOUD?

*IT leaders now recognize the many advantages of moving workload to the cloud.*

## COST SAVINGS

You no longer have to purchase and maintain expensive server/san hardware or hypervisor licenses. Facility costs like increased space, cooling, and power disappear.

There is less spending on core network or backup solutions like offsite rotation. Microsoft also allows licensing to be reused in the cloud for Windows and SQL with their Hybrid Use Benefit.

## SCALABILITY

Cloud resources enables you to scale up and down with varying workloads. There is no need to buy hardware to meet peak demand only to have excess computing power sitting idle during down times. Plus, there is no significant time lag between when compute power is needed and when it can be supplied.

## FLEXIBILITY

Leveraging Microsoft's technology lets you implement a hybrid strategy to deploy VMs both on premises and in the cloud.

## SECURITY AND REDUNDANCY

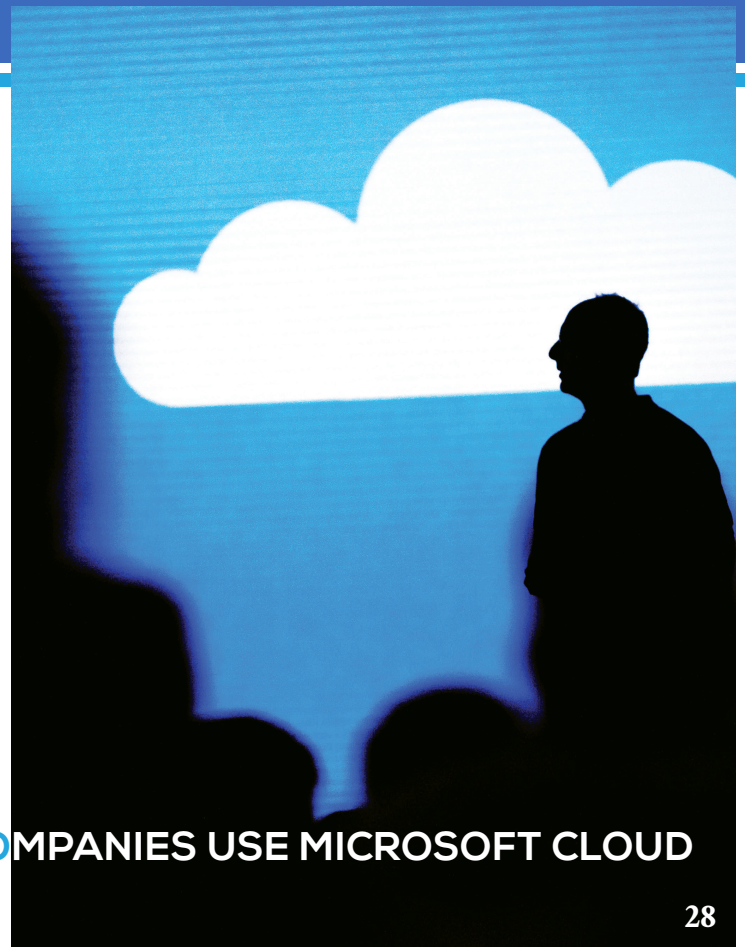
Azure provides the option for disaster recovery, redundancy, and the comprehensive Microsoft security safeguards and certifications.

Moving to the Azure Cloud provides you with a trusted, innovative solution built on industry-leading standards and a global, customized deployment. Thanks to Microsoft's commitment to renewable energy, an Azure Cloud solution also moves you closer to a greener, sustainable datacenter.

*Are you convinced?* If so, the biggest question may be, where do you start?

"It's often difficult to evaluate which workloads you should move, their dependencies, and how to price out workloads for Azure," said Matt Scherocman, President of Interlink Cloud Advisors. "We make the process simple and understandable."

**NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10 FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES USE MICROSOFT CLOUD**



# THREE POPULAR WORKLOADS

*to consider as you embark on your journey to the cloud*

## DISASTER RECOVERY (DR)

“The most common scenario we’re seeing for Azure is disaster recovery,” says Mike Wilson, Vice President and Managing Consultant at Interlink. “For organizations with a single data center that haven’t planned for disaster recovery, Azure Site Recovery is a very easy and cost-effective way to get data off premises and have a secondary data center where you can bring those workloads up in the event of a failure.”

Wilson points out that there are many other providers that offer DR but in those cases, you are paying for some fraction of the resources for replicating from on premises to the third party. With Azure, the Microsoft scale is so high that they don’t have to reserve resources for you in the event of downtime so all you pay for is the service to replicate the software and the storage to host your data. Compute and memory are only charged if you need to fail over. The other advantage with Azure is that you can replicate physical servers and Hyper-V and VMware virtual machines with minimal prep.

“You’re just replicating virtual machines to other virtual machines which provides a lot of flexibility,” says Wilson. “Azure Site Recovery will convert the virtual machine to the appropriate hypervisor during the replication process.”

“Most organizations have some backup plan so they can recover in the event of an outage,” Wilson continues. “But the question is how quickly? If you have your data center in your building and something happens like a flood or massive power outage and you’re going to be down for a few days it’s great that you have your data offsite, but where do you bring the data back online? How fast can you come up with servers and hardware and networks? Leveraging Azure solves that problem.”



*For organizations with a single data center that haven’t planned for disaster recovery, Azure Site Recovery is a very easy and cost-effective way to get data off premises and have a secondary data center.*

## EXTERNAL FACING APPLICATIONS

Companies often have applications that they use to reach outside the organization like corporate web sites, applications targeted at the general public, and eCommerce sites.

“The scalability of Azure is a major advantage for these applications,” says Wilson. “You may want to be able to start small and then spin up resources when you need them. It can also help you get resources into a specific geography that you might not be able to otherwise. If you have a corporate office in India, for example, you can host Azure resources in India because Microsoft has several data centers there. You can take advantage of the global scale of the Azure network, while still being able to provide administration resources from the US.”



Ecommerce applications are particularly effective on Azure since you have the flexibility to scale up for busy shopping seasons and then pull back resources once the peak activity has passed. The Internet of Things (IoT) is also an ideal application for Azure Cloud. These applications generate a considerable amount of data where the required storage and processing power can be difficult or unrealistic to provision ahead of time.

One specific application that illustrates the power of Azure involves a company that manufactures the soap used in hospitals. They are running a service on Azure that uploads data from individual handwashing stations in hospitals that indicate areas where staff need to wash their hands more frequently, thereby leading to reduced incidents of infection. It can also help them better plan production and distribution of their product.

## DATA CENTER OUTSOURCING

Many companies are also moving to complete data center outsourcing — getting out of the hardware business on premises and running all computing activity on virtual machines in the cloud.

“The key to data center outsourcing is understanding where the ROI is going to come from and how to prove it,” says Wilson. “Keeping your own data center means constantly replacing old hardware with new. Our customers are breaking that cycle by moving workloads up as part of their hardware refresh cycle. Azure is a perfect fit for hybrid functionality — using some on-premises workload and some in the cloud. Those cloud workloads present the perfect opportunity to eliminate another large capital expense and a chance to operationalize your IT by moving into the cloud.

“You then have the advantages of being able to repurpose the IT staff to focus higher up the value chain on applications rather than maintaining hardware,” Wilson says. “You also

gain a lot of resiliency that would be difficult or costly to provide in an on premises environment by moving things into Azure. Each instance of storage in Azure is replicated three times within a single datacenter and even a simple virtual machine benefits from the redundancy built into Azure behind the scenes. Operationalizing your expense also helps you track costs better because you can look at a particular virtual machine and know exactly how much it will cost to run in Azure.”

## DON'T GO IT ALONE

Moving to the cloud provides obvious benefits, but making the move can be confusing and complex. The good news is that you don't have to face the difficult task by yourself. Interlink can be by your side and help you make the right decisions that can allow you to take advantage of everything the Azure Cloud offers.

“You need to understand how to make the move the right way,” stresses Wilson. “There are so many options and it's very easy for spending to get out of control if you don't know what you are doing. It's easy to decide Azure is too expensive if you don't take advantage of cost savings options like reserved instances and hybrid use benefit.”

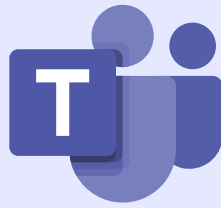
“We help you do the proper preplanning and make sure you understand how to design your cloud infrastructure correctly and set controls for the spend limits on things and how to buy correctly from Microsoft to get discounts,” Wilson sums up. “That's a big part of a successful Azure implementation. Making these decisions is not necessarily part of your core business so your best bet is to partner with someone like Interlink who does this on a regular basis.”

***“You need to understand how to make the move the right way. There are so many options and it's very easy for spending to get out of control if you don't know what you are doing.”***

Mike Wilson, VP & Managing Consultant  
Interlink Cloud Advisors

***For more on things to consider before moving your workloads to Azure, check out our Path to Azure Datacenter Planning infographic.***

[www.interlink.com/images/Resources/Infographics/Path-to-Azure-Datacenter-Planning-Infographic-Interlink.pdf](http://www.interlink.com/images/Resources/Infographics/Path-to-Azure-Datacenter-Planning-Infographic-Interlink.pdf)



# LOOKING TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION?

## *Microsoft Teams is the Solution*

### CONNECT. COMMUNICATE. COLLABORATE.

That's what it comes down to in today's hectic working environment with more mobile workers and remote teams. You need to get more done and you have less time in which to do it. Increasingly, you need the cooperation and input from fellow employees who could be located anywhere in the world. Getting together can be difficult in a tangled environment of disparate applications, platforms, and communication options.

Microsoft simplifies the chaos with Teams, the collaboration solution that consolidates applications and communications in one place.

#### *Teams makes it easy to:*

**CONNECT** via voice, video, or chat with any device from anywhere.

**COMMUNICATE** in meetings, web conferences, group huddles, and individual chats. Use channels to focus conversation into specific topics for better knowledge management.

**COLLABORATE** virtually or face-to-face and enhance productivity with the tools you use every day including Office 365, Twitter, Evernote, Salesforce and others. Upload and share files with your team or meeting attendees, edit and adapt on the fly, and accomplish more in less time.

Solving business problems can be hard enough without being able to access the data and expertise you need. Every department in your organization faces the same dilemma when trying to optimize communication and collaboration among team members. Break down workplace silos and get things done faster with Teams, the streamlined collaboration environment that drives productivity and enhances communication.



*For more on how Microsoft Teams can help your business be more successful, check out Interlink Cloud Advisors infographic **Why Microsoft Teams is the Perfect Hub for Teamwork.***

**WWW.INTERLINK.COM/TEAMS-INFOGRAPHIC**





# TEAMS IS FOR...



## MARKETING TEAMS

*Research, campaign coordination, tasks, & timelines*



## PROJECT MANAGERS

*Streamline timelines and communication, get feedback & coordinate tasks*



## SALES TEAMS

*Lead notifications, research & deal mentions*



## CUSTOMER SUPPORT

*Quickly research answers & chat instantly*



TEAMS IS AVAILABLE FOR PC, MAC, OR MOBILE DEVICES.

## ARE YOU READY TO CONNECT & CREATE IN BRAND NEW WAYS ON A CENTRAL HUB?

*Interlink offers multiple ways to prep your organization for Teams, including helping you determine which tool should be used when, how to drive adoption across your organization, and how to simplify deployment.*

LEARN MORE AT:

[WWW.INTERLINK.COM/TEAMS-WORKSHOP](http://WWW.INTERLINK.COM/TEAMS-WORKSHOP)



# HOW TO PROTECT YOUR DATA AND STOP SHADOW IT

*Everyone has more work these days. And everyone wants to get it done as easily and efficiently as possible...*

Unfortunately, the shortcuts users take — like setting up shadow IT and reusing corporate credentials — can put data at risk. If you're unfamiliar with the term "shadow IT," it describes unsupported IT systems, solutions, hardware, and software that is not approved by an organization or their IT department.





Employees increasingly need to share data with customers and suppliers. Cloud service providers offer several solutions to these problems, from basic file-sharing services to collaboration platforms—and users are quick to take advantage of them. According to one survey, more than 80% of employees use non-approved Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) applications to do their jobs. Because of this shadow IT, corporate data is being stored all across the Internet.

To make matters worse, many employees use the same credentials for both their work accounts and various cloud-based services. These user credentials have become a prime target for hackers. The reason is simple: Legitimate credentials with @yourcompanyname allow hackers to access corporate data, often without being detected. When hackers steal these credentials from a third-party site, they automatically have access to the corporate network.

The good news is, you can easily reduce the risk of compromised credentials and prevent shadow IT. Begin by utilizing single sign-on (SSO) to better protect users' digital identities and reduce the number of passwords users need to remember. Then provide users with sanctioned and protected methods of sharing and block access to other third-party sites. These measures will ensure that users can easily access the resources and services they need to get their work done.

However, companies also need visibility and controls to further reduce the risk of data loss. Most companies can't see unusual behavior, as when a user logs in from a risky IP address or when credentials are being used to log in from disparate geographic locations. A tool like Microsoft's CloudApp Security can help. CloudApp Security allows you to build firm policies around data sharing, and provides reporting and auditing capabilities to determine how users' credentials are being used. CloudApp works with a variety of products and extends well beyond Microsoft.

*If you'd like to dive deeper into CloudApp Security, make sure to check out our webinar on "How to Stay Secure & Productive with Microsoft's Enterprise Mobility + Security Suite" that goes deeper and demos CloudApp Security and other Office 365 security products.*

► [View it now](#)



# EASING THE PAIN OF M&A *with an Office 365 IT Strategy*



INTERVIEW WITH MATT SCHEROCMAN



## Duro Bag's Story

**D**uro Bag was once a small, family-owned paper bag manufacturing business with traditional IT needs. After being acquired by a Private Equity firm, a new entity was created called Novolex. After a flurry of acquisitions, Duro quickly became a part of the largest paper bag producer in the world with nearly 2,000 employees and billions of dollars in revenue. The CIO and Director of IT suddenly found themselves in charge of the IT

infrastructure for an organization that was no longer a small manufacturing company, but instead a billion-dollar enterprise with multiple subsidiaries, and more coming on board.

"There is no way they had enough excess capacity in the original company to merge all the acquired IT systems together," said Matt Scherocman, President of Interlink Cloud Advisors. "They had to go to the cloud because they couldn't

possibly move fast enough to build servers and infrastructure, to be able to consolidate the firm's IT systems."

By now, most business leaders recognize the benefits of the cloud — flexibility, scalability, reduced capital expense, increased security — but cloud technology, particularly Microsoft Azure and Office 365, is playing an increasingly crucial role in the mergers and acquisition (M&A) space.



**"WE'RE SEEING A LOT OF M&A ACTIVITY TODAY, ESPECIALLY WITH PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTORS PURCHASING SMALLER COMPANIES."**

*~ Matt Scherocman, President of Interlink Cloud Advisors*

## MERGER MANIA

"We're seeing a lot of M&A activity today, especially with private equity investors purchasing smaller companies," says Scherocman. "Private equity companies are usually looking at a five-year ownership cycle. They'll acquire similar companies at a fast pace, leverage synergies quickly, and then look for new owners who want to continue the growth journey."

Takeover activity in 2017 showed strong momentum with almost 1.3 trillion, well above the average of \$1.2 trillion. Deal volume was also above average with more than over 22,000 deals announced. The frenzy promises to continue as firms look to grow by consolidating sectors and taking advantage of attractive interest rates. With 20% of those mergers targeting technology acquisition, it's no surprise today's M&A landscape is driven in a major part by IT.<sup>1</sup>

Bringing two organizations together presents a host of issues in operations, sales & marketing, finance, and HR. But, one of the most critical components to successfully integrating a new acquisition involves IT. Technology integration challenges can expand exponentially. A single error in strategy or tactics can cascade through multiple instances, and significantly increase costs and create delays.

## WHY OFFICE 365 FOR M&A

Microsoft Office 365 offers a suite of applications that gives users the productivity and collaboration tools they need during and after a merger or acquisition. Delivered as a cloud service, you can rapidly modify Office 365 to meet your particular M&A challenges.

"M&A can be difficult and confusing when it comes to merging systems," says Scherocman. "Using Microsoft cloud-based technologies not only helps you solve those problems, but also provides an opportunity to take advantage of cloud resources to address many of your other IT challenges at the same time."

Office 365 is an efficient way to bring employees up to speed and scale your technology investments to match your needs. With Office 365 you never have to worry about adding servers or storage to account for the additional requirements of the merged organization. Microsoft manages the infrastructure, freeing you up to manage other key aspects of the consolidation. Most importantly, you only pay for what you use.

<sup>1</sup> Deloitte 2018 M&A Trends Report for US Industry



**"IF YOU'RE AN IT ORGANIZATION  
GOING THROUGH AN M&A, STEP  
ONE IS TO GO GET HELP."**

### GET AN EXPERT PARTNER

Following a merger or acquisition, you need to act quickly to identify IT goals, develop an integration plan, and combine the data of the separate entities. You also need to target ways to build value today through IT, while simultaneously planning to meet the goals of tomorrow.

Scherocman stated, "Most private equity acquisitions are justified on an accelerated time horizon — typically five years." That's a short timeline in business. The investors are moving really fast, and when you're moving fast, you better have a good plan to get your IT stuff together."

Accomplishing that while in the middle of the upheaval that is a typical M&A scenario is nearly impossible. Partnering with a qualified integrator is the best way to meet the rapidly changing needs.

"If you're an IT organization going through an M&A, step one is to go get help," says Scherocman. "Step two is to get help from somebody who does this type of work all the time. You don't want someone learning on your dime. You want it done right. The cost to get help is cheap compared to botching it all up."

### THE INTERLINK ADVANTAGE

The Interlink M&A strategy identifies the optimal cloud solutions for integrating the IT infrastructure, processes, and environment of the merging entities.

"Every system integrator does M&A work," says Scherocman. "But Interlink is the only one I know of that is doing so much of this work, that we've developed our own methodology and expertise around it. Our tested, Acquisitionlink assessment methodology helps you determine if the company you are acquiring is cloud ready, or what it would take to get them there. We evaluate the true cost of upgrading IT assets while defining the cost and time savings you'll realize once you migrate to the cloud."

#### ***The benefits of partnering with Interlink include:***

- Helping you avoid common, but costly, IT mistakes
- Creating a Microsoft cloud environment that can scale on-demand
- Identifying ways IT can streamline, simplify, and automate business processes
- Building an infrastructure that is ready to handle future mergers or acquisitions
- Boosting productivity, collaboration, and sharing through Office 365



**"GOING THROUGH AN M&A CAN BE PAINFUL FOR AN IT GROUP, BUT WE'VE FOUND THE CLOUD TO BE A GREAT POINT OF CONSOLIDATION FOR OUR CUSTOMERS BECAUSE OF THE FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY. WORKING WITH THE RIGHT PARTNER AND LEVERAGING MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP YOU OVERCOME THE MANY CHALLENGES YOU'LL FACE."**

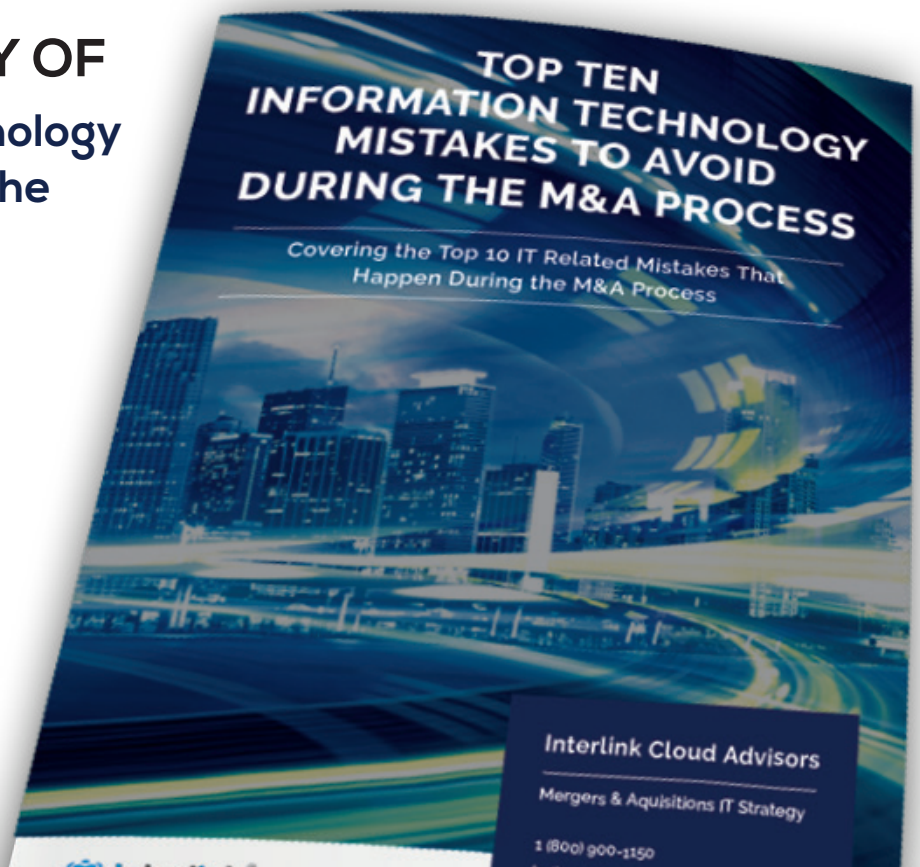
*~ Matt Scherocman, President of Interlink Cloud Advisors*

## *Want to learn more?*

### **GET YOUR FREE COPY OF Top Ten Information Technology Mistakes to Avoid During the M&A Process**

Covering the top ten IT related mistakes most likely to happen during the M&A process. Find out which mistakes you should avoid and how you can replace them with best-practice solutions.

Download now to get one step closer to being in a better position to successfully guide your organization through a merger or acquisition.



## **DOWNLOAD THE eBook:**

*[www.interlink.com/m&a/ebook](http://www.interlink.com/m&a/ebook)*



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