Opportunity
As a company that applies technology innovations for its clients, Accenture is driving its own internal agenda to make itself a more digital enterprise across a number of dimensions. One of these is to digitally enable Accenture people with the ability to work productively and collaborate across the globe. A major component of this program is equipping employees with the latest Microsoft tools through the deployment of Microsoft Windows 10.

Driving this digital agenda is Accenture’s internal IT organization. In addition to better enabling employees, IT together with Accenture leaders wanted to capitalize on the benefits offered by Windows 10 along with Microsoft Office 2016 and Microsoft OneDrive for Business. This combination offered significant business value in new capabilities, enhanced security, as-a-service model as well as supported Accenture’s “cloud-first” strategy. Both business and IT leadership wanted to seize the benefits of upgrading as quickly as possible—for nearly 400,000 employees.

Solution
In September 2015, a global Windows 10 project team, consisting of individuals from the internal IT organization and Accenture’s Consulting workforce, began the upgrade project. The project team’s high-level approach was to first test all business applications and validate that they were capable of running on Windows 10 and second proceed with deployment to employees.

From the start, speed to outcome was key. To accelerate business application testing, the project team leveraged a methodology it has used in the past to quickly assess applications. Nearly all of Accenture’s applications are browser based and platform independent, which eliminated a huge testing effort. “We had a much smaller testing list because the browser compatibility was guaranteed in Internet Explorer 11 (IE11) on Windows 10,” says Brad Nyers, Infrastructure Services Strategy Lead. “So we were able to move our business applications with no impact and move to production ready in a very short window.” During this time, the Windows 10 project team also examined Accenture’s security tools in the context of Office, and performed a technical business pilot.

Eight months later, by April 2016, initial deployment of PCs loaded with Windows 10 began. The project team set up a “two-lane” deployment approach. The first was to deploy all new PCs with Windows 10 and give a manual upgrade option for early adopters. The second lane, which began in August 2016, addressed existing PCs running Windows 7 and enabling employees to use an In-Place Upgrade tool and process that uses OneDrive for file distribution to perform the upgrade to Windows 10.
This innovative In-Place Upgrade tool, developed by the Windows 10 project team, has been key to enabling deployments at scale and pace. The tool validates whether an employee’s computer meets the necessary criteria, such as having sufficient disk space and the proper versions of security software, to receive Windows 10. If no, the user receives information on how to remediate the situation. If yes, the user receives communication by e-mail that their PC is ready and they receive the Windows 10 upgrade file, which they can execute at their convenience. This approach is fast and eliminates the need to come into an Accenture office to have the upgrade performed by internal IT.

Throughout the Windows 10 Upgrade project rigorous project management, robust methodology and priority setting were important factors to achieving results at speed and scale. “At Accenture, we do a fantastic job at setting priorities and getting everyone engaged and to execute as a priority,” notes Nyers. “We set targets, we measure them and we achieve them. This aspect of a program is just as important as having great technology solutions.”

Employees continue to execute in-place upgrades to Windows 10 at a regular cadence, with Accenture on track to complete upgrades by August 2017, with a few exception areas. Accenture has embraced the Windows 10-as-a-Service (WaaS), and is deploying Windows 10 in Current Branch for Business (CBB). This model means Accenture will have the latest Windows 10 operating system at all times, and not be concerned about falling out of support nor have to fund future large programs to stay current.

Results
The plan is to upgrade nearly 400,000 Accenture people to Windows 10 by August 2017. Accomplishing this in a span of two years will reinforce Accenture’s technology and execution leadership—and will provide a robust foundation in digitally enabling Accenture people. Accenture is currently the largest deployment of Windows 10 as well as the largest consumer of OneDrive for Business.

Migrating from Office 2013 to Office 2016 is providing a refreshed set of features to employees and will provide a foundation for supporting new ways in which Accenture people will work in the future. “Our people want the latest technology and are quick to embrace it,” says Tony Leraris, Infrastructure Services for Accenture Lead. “With the Windows 10 program, we are delivering what they need and delivering it faster than ever, and in turn enhancing overall productivity.”

From a business standpoint, Accenture is benefiting in a number of ways. One is through simplified imaging. New machines no longer require imaging, as the OEM operating system is used, the image is converted to Enterprise edition, and security tools are layered on. Moreover, these tools provide enhanced security. A second is the as-a-service model, which will eliminate the need to perform operating system update projects. And yet a third benefit is use of the cloud for Windows 10, the In-Place Upgrade tool and Office 2016, and OneDrive for Business. Lastly, Secure Boot and Device Guard provide enhanced security.

“Accenture’s relationship with Microsoft has been a long and collaborative one,” comments Andrew Wilson, Chief Information Officer. “Our teams are in regular communication with each other on how to drive better technology and business value from Microsoft’s products and services, including Windows 10, Office 2016 and OneDrive for Business.”

About Accenture
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