Accenture is transforming its business to be digital, both in how it serves clients and in how it operates. One area of transformation is empowering employees to become “digital workers.” Accenture is moving away from the traditional PC-centric ways of working to the more mobile/social-centric way. For Accenture’s IT organization, the focus is on enabling employees with mobile apps and cloud-based capabilities that provide expanded options to work from anywhere on any device with consistent functionality and experiences.

Accenture IT’s strategy has moved away from traditional ways of deploying capabilities to a more Agile approach. This approach allows IT to move more quickly to new platforms, capabilities and features as they become available, giving Accenture people the option to adopt them at the pace they are most comfortable with. Getting to this point, however, has been a multiyear journey, a journey Accenture shares here.
SOLUTION

In 2010, when cloud-based offerings for the enterprise were emerging, Accenture IT made the decision to migrate the company’s critical collaboration capabilities to the cloud. IT selected Microsoft for the ability to partner with a proven, world-class provider, obtain a complete managed service and gain a commitment to minimize impact to end users. The primary focus was on realizing cost savings. The move also offered superior performance and functionality, including leveraging Microsoft’s scale to improve security.

Yet, the effort was trailblazing—and highly complex. It would be Accenture’s largest collaboration capabilities migration ever undertaken. The migration of the shared sites alone involved more than 40 terabytes of data, which had to be synchronized while in motion. In addition to addressing these major technical complexities, the IT teams needed to maintain a smooth integration of services during the transition from on premise to cloud platforms.

Accenture was the first large enterprise migration at the time. The moves, which had their risks, were carried out with limited disruption to critical business activities. “No migration on this scale is ever perfect, but every disruption in the quality of service undermines your reputation among internal customers,” Brad Nyers, Infrastructure Services Strategy Lead notes. “We took a methodical, phase-by-phase migration path with clear criteria for progress.” The successful execution of such a massive change effort also required strong project management skills and the creation of at-scale migration tools and processes, as well as overcoming technology integration challenges between cloud and on-premise environments.

By the end of 2012, Accenture IT had moved more than 250,000 Accenture mailboxes on Microsoft Exchange and nearly 11,300 Microsoft SharePoint sites to a Microsoft Office 365 dedicated tenant cloud service. An Accenture IT-developed business case evaluated the costs of keeping the status quo on premise versus as a cloud-based software-as-a-service (SaaS). Accenture determined that there was a positive business case, and subsequently deployed Office 365.

“An interesting point to be aware of when moving to the cloud, is that people often assume a company’s job is done once you’ve migrated,” says Tom Bruss, Director, Workplace Technology & Collaboration. “But it’s not. Since our migration in 2012, we have continued to optimize Accenture’s cloud environment with a steady pace of improvement initiatives.” In more recent years, IT turned its focus to achieving Accenture-wide scale and speed as well as new security features. Initiatives included the optimization of Accenture’s network for Office 365, moving Exchange and SharePoint to Microsoft’s “vNext” cloud environment, and rolling out new features of OneDrive for Business, Data Loss Prevention (DLP) and Multi-factor Authentication (MFA).

In moving to vNext, Accenture went from dedicated to multi-tenant code base with dedicated infrastructure. The business benefit is the ability to deliver new Office capabilities to Accenture people at speed. Accenture employees now use Skype for Business and are transitioning to Windows 10. They also use Yammer, and are piloting Delve/Graph and other emerging capabilities. As part of Accenture’s Office 365 subscription, new capabilities pop up as they ready. These capabilities support Accenture’s digital worker vision of providing capabilities that are integrated and seamless, increase productivity and enable employees to work from anywhere, anytime. They are providing a foundation for the way people will work in the future.

A key enabler of Accenture’s digital worker vision is OneDrive for Business, rolled out to Accenture employees in 2016. It offers a new way of working, including moving all of an enterprise’s documents to OneDrive. NextGen Sync client allows employees to selectively “sync” active documents so they are available offline. With OneDrive, Accenture employees can access files regardless of the device they are using. Access is available through company-
provided PCs and IT-managed tablets and mobile phones. An important aspect to the OneDrive initiative was implementing secure cloud storage based on OneDrive to enable easy access to data from multiple devices, helping to reduce the risk of data loss and theft, and enabling secure file sharing with clients.

While Microsoft runs Accenture's Office 365 infrastructure, establishing a shared support model with clear delineation of responsibilities was critical to running a successful service. For Accenture, this meant establishing an understanding of how its support teams and the Microsoft support teams would interact on a daily, weekly and change management basis and integrating ticketing systems. An internal support team is still required to manage service, regression test upcoming changes and maintain any remaining on-premise infrastructure.

RESULTS
Accenture's multiyear journey to Office 365 began with successfully moving the company's on-premise collaboration infrastructure to the cloud. It was a cost play, resulting in 25 percent savings on Exchange and SharePoint costs and delivered a return on investment in one year. Year over year, operating costs reductions continue at 25 percent.

The journey has since evolved to supporting Accenture's digital worker vision by providing new capabilities that enable Accenture employees to quickly embrace the latest capabilities for working digitally and productively. For example, employees can deploy Office 365 capabilities using a “fast lane/commuter lane” approach. This includes Accenture's deployment of Windows 10 that is on track to upgrading nearly 400,000 Accenture people by August 2017. New Office 365 capabilities will enable employees to work in new and leading ways, such as increasingly working in a browser with content that is mostly in the cloud and being able to collaborate simultaneously on documents in the cloud. Additionally, efforts are ongoing in implementing advanced threat protection.

And Accenture is doing all of this at huge scale. As of March 2017, Accenture had around 417,000 mailboxes on vNext, 13,000 SharePoint sites consuming 140 TB of data. For OneDrive, approximately 437,000 users have been enabled, around 330,000 of them are enabled with Sync client. Accenture has around 344 million files stored, consuming 941 TB of storage. All Accenture users are enabled for Office by default.

Looking ahead, Accenture IT's focus is turning to further enabling Accenture's digital worker vision by enhancing productivity by continuing to deploy new capabilities as they are made available. Current and future capabilities will help teams to stay organized and up to date, better manage user in boxes, and present information in useful ways, and much more.

ABOUT ACCENTURE
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