



## The Top 5 Hybrid Office 365 Management and Administration Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Tips to Get the Most from Office 365 and Your Hybrid Environment without Compromising Organizational Security and Creating Compliance Risk or Jeopardizing the Sanity of the IT Team

Almost **70% of Enterprise Organizations** have deployed or are planning to deploy Hybrid

Microsoft Survey

### Introduction

Office 365 is a capable and functional platform. It offers a robust set of features to satisfy a range of corporate requirements for email, voice, desktop productivity and collaboration that has proven to be highly successful, as demonstrated by the significant growth in users of the platform, with well over 155 million subscribers and counting according to Microsoft.

Studies show that a majority of enterprises and organizations will run a Hybrid environment of MS Exchange and Office 365 as they migrate to the cloud.

A recent Cayosoft study with Osterman Research shows that almost 1 in 5 organizations plan to run this configuration for the long-term.

While Hybrid messaging and collaboration with MS Office 365 offers compelling benefits, many organizations are not prepared for the new complexities of management and administration.

Others are currently in Hybrid mode and experiencing significant issues and exposing their organizations to compliance and security risks that they did not anticipate.

#### **In this new White Paper, you will discover:**

- Why you need an Office 365 license management strategy and how to effectively manage it
- How to gain more visibility in Exchange on-premises and Office 365 through one pane of glass
- How to automate end user provisioning across the hybrid environment without spending all your time writing scripts in PowerShell
- How to better support users and reduce the new help desk and administration burden
- Why legacy tools are ill-equipped for the complexities of hybrid environments

A Hybrid environment can offer a staged approach to moving to Office 365, but it has other advantages.

### **Gaining Access to Office 365 and Other Benefits of Hybrid Environments**

A hybrid environment is a powerful way to connect all of a company's employees in a single consolidated email system, Microsoft Exchange Online users and on-premises users will be able to freely share their calendar data.

Features such as MailTips, out-of-office messages, and other collaborative tools will connect both on-premise and cloud-based users, treating them as a part of the same organization and facilitating productivity. Further, on-premises Exchange users will be able to take advantage of features such as cloud-based message archiving.

In a hybrid system, administrators do not have to manually reconfigure Microsoft Outlook profiles or [resynchronize .OST files](#) when they move mailboxes for users. Relocating user mailboxes to cloud-based mailbox servers (and maintaining important data on-premise) can reduce overall costs.

Finally, foreign companies or companies in industries that are highly regulated may find a need for an Exchange hybrid environment, as they may be required to host some of their data on-premise for the purposes of security. Using premises and Office 365 may be an easy solution to achieve regulatory compliance.

For many organizations, an Exchange hybrid environment will offer a "best of both worlds" solution that provides the benefits of both on-premises Exchange servers and a cloud-based solution.

### Hybrid Office 365 Offers New Management and Administration Challenges

As a system with increased complexity, an Exchange hybrid environment may make troubleshooting more difficult. Incorrect or [misleading error messages](#) may complicate help desk issues and the system as a whole may be more difficult to maintain than each system individually.

If email is configured to go through Office 365 and into on-prem mailbox servers (or vice versa), it can be difficult to determine where mail flow errors occurred, especially when managing features like send on behalf.

Administration of an Office 365 hybrid environment, in general, will be more involved as there will be two disparate environments that must be managed in a coordinated way. Occasionally, data may fall out of sync between the on-premises and cloud solution, which may lead to issues regarding productivity, communication, and collaboration.

Administrators of an Exchange hybrid environment may find that complex scripts may be needed to perform even basic tasks like renaming a user. Additionally, tasks such as running license reconciliation reports may be difficult or virtually impossible.

All of these issues relate to the increased complexity of the system and, for the most part, they are not reason enough for an organization to avoid a hybrid environment if it's beneficial to them.

## The Top 5 Hybrid Administration Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Let's introduce some key pitfalls IT departments face when moving to a Hybrid configuration.

### 5 Not Having an Office 365 License Management Strategy

With on-premises applications like Office licensing was a fairly straightforward task. With Office 365 and Hybrid environments the complexity (and potentially costs) increases dramatically. Not only do you need to choose your Office 365 plan but now you need to manage those users, and which features they access.

In addition, with hybrid environments some users will be using certain applications exclusively on-premises. And, according to Osterman Research many organizations are using lower level Office 365 plans but supplementing their functionality with third party apps.

Having a strategy to manage this increased licensing complexity is a good first step. Manual license assignment is complicated and error prone, license changes can be even more painful. Assigning the wrong license or not revoking an unused license can cost as much as \$350 extra per user per year.

Many organizations are using tools like the Cayosoft Administration Suite to automate, manage, and report on Office 365 licensing and usage. With automated license assignment, organizational data such as department, location or even job title can be used to determine how licenses are distributed.

### 4 Failing to Address the Overall Management Burden

The first thing to address is increased complexity because linking your existing environment to a cloud-based environment adds complexity. With more complexity, comes challenges as problems arise.

Microsoft's primary objective with Office 365 is to keep the environment secure and functional. As a result, administrators have a console which is slightly different than the on-premises, and low-level server management is not available, making troubleshooting more difficult.

Patch management can be more complex because on-premises IT takes care of it while Microsoft handles it in the cloud. Mismatches can occur and you can end up in a situation where Office 365 is handling things differently than your on-premises environment.

Microsoft's Directory Sync from AD on-premises to Azure AD is helpful tool but it does not sync all changes and can prevent others. A simple user name change, while pretty straightforward in AD, does not get replicated directly to the cloud and requires multiple steps and higher access privileges in Azure Active Directory than normally assigned to the Help Desk.

Needless to say there a dozen more examples of potential pitfalls that can trigger an escalation from the Help Desk to the IT Administrator which can overwhelm their ability to effectively manage the system.

Having a comprehensive hybrid management approach that may include hybrid management tools can help ease the overall management burden and keep operating costs lower.

Hybrid management tools will also provide systemwide monitoring, auditing, and reporting which can be especially important for security conscious organizations and those under compliance regulations like SOX.

### 3 Manually Provisioning New Users

Many organizations move to hybrid environments with the thought that they will manually provision new users.

Automatically creating accounts from HR, ERP, SIS Data directly cuts out time consuming delays and the mistakes that are the results of manual, error-prone operations.

In Hybrid environments this becomes ever more critical because on-boarding accounts is more than twice as complex as on-premises alone.

Provisioning will likely touch on-premises AD, Exchange, Azure AD, and Office 365.

Solutions to help automatically provision new users like the Cayosoft Administration suite can be affordable, quick to deploy initially, and can be supported by existing staff.

### 2 Not Having a Scalable Identity and Access Management Strategy

Many organizations fail to account for the complexities and nuances of identity and access management as they plan for their migration to a Hybrid environment. Others are running in hybrid and are forced into time-consuming workarounds, manual scripting, and are in some cases creating security and compliance risks.

- Day-to-day administrators and Help Desk users will need to deal with Hybrid and end-user Self-Service capabilities that reduce service desk workloads while simultaneously improving the end user's experience.
- A simple user name change in AD does not get replicated directly and requires multiple steps and higher access privileges in Azure Active Directory than normally assigned to the Help Desk. A strategy of using Least Privileged Delegation with a tool like Cayosoft can avoid burdening IT administrators with low level changes without compromising your security and compliance standards.
- Self-Service from a third-party platform like Cayosoft empowers users to change passwords, reset forgotten passwords, unlock accounts, manage groups and distribution lists, or subordinates themselves, without costly delays or expensive calls to the help desk.
- A scalable identify and access management process will be a win for users as well as the organization.

### 1 Struggling with Legacy Management Tools

There are a lot of management tools out there that claim to offer all-in-one hybrid management capabilities. As we have discussed elsewhere in this paper, each hybrid environment can be unique and running systems simultaneously dramatically increases complexity and overall management burden if not properly managed.

- IT should not be spending all its time managing the management tools so logging into multiple solutions to accomplish a single management action is adding to complexity rather than reducing it.
- A related mistake is using an MS Office 365 only management platform to try to manage a hybrid environment.
- In addition, the company behind the hybrid management platform should have expertise in this type of environment, not just individually Office 365 or Microsoft's on-premises offerings and AD.
- Before choosing an AD/Office 365 Hybrid Management solution be sure to make sure it is fully supported and backed by experts in Hybrid deployments.

**60% of Hybrid Office 365 organizations need to simplify daily management of Office 365 tasks**

Cayosoft Survey



### What to Look for in a Hybrid Management Platform

Much of the complexity of managing a hybrid environment can be removed with a third-party administration tool.

A powerful management suite can improve the security posture and reduce compliance risks.

In our view, IT departments should not spend all their time managing the management tools, which can occur if organizations are using legacy tools or multiple solutions to manage their Hybrid Office 365 environment.

#### Here are some key features to look for in a hybrid management platform.

- One comprehensive management suite and portal which works with on-premises, Office 365, and Hybrid environments. Ideally the suite has the flexibility to be implemented using either your own server or in the cloud.
- Simplify common management tasks for both administrators and the Help Desk and eliminate scripting and syncing issues.
- Automate and simplify user and group management with compliance controls such as for SOX, PCI, and HIPAA.
- Comprehensive Office 365 license management and reporting. This includes automating license assignment by group or user and monitoring license use by user.
- Capability to scale the management solution across different administrator levels and the help desk as well as multiple locations and geographies and to support tens of thousands of users.
- Support from a vendor who is both experienced in AD and Office 365 management and specializes in hybrid environments as each hybrid implementation is unique.

In short, a leading hybrid management suite can help organizations improve security, enhance compliance, and gain efficiencies in administration and management.

Organizations have enough complexity managing their hybrid environment, they don't need to complicate it with patchwork solutions or trying to manually administer the systems.



The best way to manage the Hybrid Microsoft Enterprise

## **Gaining Compliance, Enhancing Security, and Easing the Administrative Burden**

For those who maintain both on-premises and cloud-based workers and offices, or those who need to maintain on-prem services for legal and regulatory reasons, a hybrid Office 365 environment can offer a compelling platform.

Hybrid Office 365 offers significant benefits but does increase the complexity of your network both in terms of setup and administration as you are managing AD and Azure AD and the interaction between two systems.

The increased hybrid administrative burden can wipe out the operational benefit of moving email and collaboration services to the cloud.

As discussed, there's a lot to consider when managing a Microsoft hybrid exchange deployment but many of these issues can be addressed with the right management tool.

The Cayosoft Administrator suite has been designed from the ground-up with the hybrid environment in mind and can help ease the administrative burden, enhance security, and help maintain compliance.

If you're interested in learning more — or need some help to make your deployment a reality — [reach out to us](#).

As a Microsoft partner with over a decade of experience, we have the knowledge and expertise needed to help make the most of your Hybrid environment.



The best way to manage the Hybrid Microsoft Enterprise

## About Cayosoft

Simple and affordable, Cayosoft Administrator Suite is the #1 Solution to Connect & Simplify Administration across On-premises, Cloud or Hybrid Microsoft Systems. Cayosoft's unique hybrid-ready architecture gives administrators out-of-the-box rules to define the organizational wide policies to automate Office 365, Exchange On-Premises or Active Directory Administration.

## FREE 25 Day Evaluation of Cayosoft Administrator

Cayosoft Administrator delivers the enterprise capabilities listed here. You can try Cayosoft Administrator absolutely free for 25 days to see if the solution meets.

[25 DAY FREE EVALUATION](#)

## Cayosoft Administrator Solutions

- Hybrid User Account Provisioning
- Automatic Group Management
- Office 365 License Administration & Optimization
- On-going Administration & Maintenance
- Real-time Visibility & Reporting
- Works with Active Directory, Exchange, Lync, Office 365 and Windows Server

For more information visit:

<https://www.cayosoft.com/active-directory-management-hybrid-tools/>

We are here to help answer any questions you may have so please contact us using one of the following methods:

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The best way to manage the Hybrid Microsoft Enterprise

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