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# Migrating a High-Risk Exchange Server to the Cloud

June 5, 2013 | [Email and Collaboration](#)



Exchange email servers are the *sine qua non* of modern business. Downtimes can result in thousands of dollars in losses in productivity, sales, or just reputation. Hardware failure is inevitable at some point in all physical servers regardless of warranty. Aging equipment – we define this as equipment 3 or more years old – requires more maintenance and also is at an increased risk of failure. The benefits of hosted Exchange are tangible and immediate within this context. Read why many business are proactively migrating their [Exchange email servers](#) to the cloud.

### On Premise High-Risk Exchange Servers

On premise servers require big recurring investments. Whether it's the latest server OS, Exchange version, new hardware, or new virtualization system, keeping up with the costs is painful. Newer Exchange features sets have not always been compelling enough to justify investment in upgrades. Many businesses have chosen to simply delay the investments and try to make do with what they have for as long as possible, believing this maximizes their return on any initial investments they made. Trying to keep equipment running for 7+ years and staying on older versions of

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Exchange is not uncommon. This has placed many internally run Exchange servers at **high-risk** for failure.

Many businesses also don't take into account the indirect and direct costs associated with running high-risk Exchange servers. They mistakenly believe that if they're using a salaried IT employee and buying cheap or secondhand equipment to mitigate hardware failure, they're saving money. This is actually an incorrect assumption as frequently the direct labor costs alone can be far more than is perceived. Even a few days spent managing an Exchange system per year translate to potentially thousands of dollars spent in labor. Additionally, believing that the performance of older equipment is sufficient, businesses don't take into account the hidden costs associated with performance drops. When thousands of messages are sent every day and many users are frequently accessing old hardware, the seconds add up to significant lost productivity.

When Exchange systems fail, downtime can result in thousands of dollars of lost productivity. For companies that rely on sales, missing one email could result in revenue loss. Customers that receive bounce back emails will be left with a poor impression of the business, potentially resulting in reputation devaluation. The bottom line for businesses is their financials are directly tied to the uptime of their Exchange systems.

### Hosted Exchange Benefits

The immediately tangible benefits [of switching to hosted Exchange](#) can be understood in terms of performance and cost savings. Performance increases arise from state-of-the-art servers and automated patch management. Cost savings come from a reduced need to budget for hardware maintenance, software, and dedicated personnel. Overhead related to email servers can also be reduced by eliminating the need to maintain hardware and the real estate to properly house and protect your server investment.

[Hosted Exchange service-level agreements \(SLAs\)](#) often guarantee up to 99.999% uptime resulting in no more than eight minutes of downtime, planned or unplanned, in a calendar year. This uptime guarantee ensures no bottom line impact from a system failure. High uptime SLAs are only achievable with a staff of highly skilled, dedicated professionals that are available around the clock. Such numbers are nearly impossible to secure with the budget constraints of a small or medium business. With hosted Exchange, you can reduce the strain on your IT team and eliminate the expensive need for on-call employees that can handle disaster recovery of a locally hosted Exchange configuration.

Hosted IT infrastructure is far more secure because it eliminates attack risks such as unpatched or outdated software. With hosted Exchange, you can streamline your IT budget to focus on expansion and new projects, rather than the cost sink of ongoing maintenance.

Once a high-risk Exchange server is transferred to the cloud, the anxiety of potential mail server failures is a thing of the past. Connectivity with cloud-based storage can reduce the need to curate emails to save space, and Exchange's built-in integration with SharePoint, Lync, and the Microsoft suite can lead to greater flexibility, collaboration, and productivity.

### Ease of Migration

Due to poor past experiences with on premise upgrades of Exchange, many businesses may expect the migration process to be costly and

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involve downtime. Other businesses may be unsure of what migration really entails, but believe that the transition is going to be painful. These misconceptions lead to delaying the move of a high-risk server until the “right” time. The right time may be too late to prevent a disaster.

Fortunately, with the right onboarding service, migration can be painless, inexpensive, and also result in **zero** downtime. Overtaxed IT administrators will pleasantly find that all of the heavy lifting is done for them by professionals who specialize in performing migrations. Business decision makers will find that the breakeven point in savings will occur after only one or two months post migration.

Doing a high-risk migration correctly involves a number of steps:

1. Evaluating the current on premise server
2. Generating a detailed migration plan
3. Getting sign off on the plan with all stakeholders
4. Creating user accounts
5. Setting up the data migration
6. Migration of the data
7. End user configuration
8. Cutting over the DNS
9. Final sweep of mail missed during cutover
10. Completion and follow up

Read our whitepaper to learn more about the [Exchange migration process](#) and contact us to setup an initial consultation.

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