A Business Case for Office 365.

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Introduction.

As Business Technology continues to evolve, the shift from traditional on-premise Microsoft Applications running on Servers and Desktops PCs to a cost-effective and highly efficient Cloud Software 'As a Service' model is an inevitable transition for Small to Medium enterprises that have realised the many Commercial and Financial advantages of adopting the Cloud.

Cloud revenue continues to rise.

Microsoft's Commercial, Financial and Technical expertise and experience has seen them become a market leader of Cloud Services. This article on Forbes suggests that Microsoft Cloud revenue could reach $7.5 billion by Q3 2018.

Microsoft Azure and Office 365 are at the forefront of Microsoft's Cloud Services revolution. At the time of writing, it is estimated that Microsoft Office 365 now has over 120 million Commercial monthly active users worldwide. Indeed, Microsoft is predicting that two-thirds of all Office users will be accessing their Office Applications via Office 365 by FY 2019.

Why is Office 365 so popular?

Office 365 Business offers a fully comprehensive range of Microsoft Office Applications, in addition to Microsoft Exchange Online and Unified Communications through Skype for Business, all for an affordable fixed 'per user' monthly subscription fee. Despite this, there are many Organisations that still haven't embraced Office 365 Business!

What is included in this document?

We present the many Commercial and Financial advantages that Organisations of all sizes will benefit from when they switch to Office 365 Business.

This document will prove beneficial to Office Managers, internal IT Managers, or anyone else that is looking to present a Business Case for adopting Office 365 Business directly to their Line Manager, Director or a board of Directors.

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What is Office 365 Business?

Microsoft Office 365 Business is a Cloud-based Microsoft subscription service that includes a full portfolio of Microsoft Office applications, in addition to email services (Hosted Exchange) online productivity services (like Hosted SharePoint) Cloud storage and Unified Communications (messaging, web conferencing, VoIP etc.)

What's included with Office 365 Business?

The Microsoft Office Applications that you've used on your PC and Mac in the past are all available through Office 365 Business. These apps can be used online through your Web browser and they can also be downloaded locally to use on your PC or Mac. There are also mobile App versions available to download for iOS, Windows mobile and Android.

Here's a list of Office 365 Business Apps and online services. Users can install these Apps on up to five PCs, Macs and mobile devices per licence:

Apps.

- ✓ Microsoft Word
- ✓ Microsoft Excel
- ✓ Microsoft PowerPoint
- ✓ Microsoft OneNote
- ✓ Microsoft Sway
- ✓ Microsoft Access (PC only, local only)

Online Services.

- ✓ Microsoft OneDrive for Business
- ✓ Skype for Business
- ✓ Microsoft SharePoint
- ✓ Microsoft teams
- ✓ Microsoft Exchange

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Different Office 365 price plans.

At the time of writing, there are three different subscription plans available for Office 365 Business:

- ✓ **Office 365 Business** – For Businesses that just need Office apps and online storage (not emails)
- ✓ **Office 365 Business Premium** – The most expensive subscription that includes all office apps, business email (Exchange) and online services
- ✓ **Office 365 Business Essentials** – The cheapest subscription that is for businesses that just require business emails and online services. No Office applications are included

Let's put your Office 365 Business case together.

The following pages contain a series of Commercial and Financial advantages of switching to Office 365 Business. We've also included some other interesting points that should be considered before making the switch.

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Improved Team Collaboration.

As a Cloud-based service, Office 365 Business is a highly efficient tool for your staff to collaborate on documents, files and projects.

Documentation.
Office 365 Business allows your staff to co-author Office documents in real-time and track any changes that are made by user. Collaborating on the same document within Office 365 is a far more efficient and productive way for your staff to work together because it mitigates the risk of error and duplication, whereas emailing document versions between staff for example can lead to confusion and mistakes that must be corrected - wasting everyone's valuable time and affecting business productivity.

In addition.
Sending attachments internally between staff will increase the size of your Exchange Email database and put added pressure on your Organisations Exchange Server.

Communication.
Staff can use Skype for Business HD video conferencing to collaborate on projects from different locations across the world, or in the same building! Video Conferencing sessions can be started within a document, or as a separate service.

In addition.
Your staff can also use Skype for Business messenger to start conversations, keep a breadcrumb record of conversations and share documents, files and media within the messenger window. You can also share your screen and give and take control.

Teamwork.
Microsoft Teams is a dedicated hub for teamwork that's included with Office 365 Business Premium and Essential editions. With Teams, you'll be able to organise your team and your work around common milestones. Teams also features enhanced communication tools – including Live broadcasts for big meetings, Web Conferencing for conducting online meetings with people inside or outside your Organisation, Audio Conferencing and integrated chat functionality.

In addition.
Your staff can also co-author and share Office 365 Business Apps within Microsoft Teams, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and SharePoint.

The above benefits will not only improve your team collaboration, but they will also help to reduce your annual communications costs and greatly increase your operational efficiency.

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Increased Operational Availability.

Office 365 Business comes with a financially backed 99.9% guaranteed uptime Service Level Agreement. An SLA that almost guarantees 100% uptime gives business owners and key decision makers the upmost confidence in Office 365 as a platform.

Fewer performance issues means less downtime, increased productivity and profitability.

Automatic Version Updates and Maintenance.

With Office 365 Business, ALL Office Applications and Productivity Tools will be automatically updated to the latest version. Office applications will also be automatically updated monthly with the latest security updates, new features and the latest product versions.

In addition.
The pressure on your internal IT function is alleviated because they will no longer need to manually test and deploy updates Company-wide, unless they choose to do so (Office 365 updates can be manually scheduled).

Another advantage of a subscription-based service model.
There is an added risk of compatibility and configuration issues when uninstalling and updating desktop-based Office Applications. If not addressed correctly, these issues can affect your business productivity and profitability. As a subscription-based Software 'as a service', Office 365 Business is effectively a 'self-contained' service that won't break, as long as your Internet connection is consistent!

With a traditional software licencing model, if you wanted to keep your Office application versions up to date then you'd have to purchase new software licences at every new product lifecycle. This upgrade is VERY costly in terms of both licencing and labour costs when compared to a subscription-based service.

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Lightning-fast Search Functionality.

Office 365's lightning-fast indexing allows you to search for files, folders and other stored information from within your Office 365 Business account incredibly quickly. All documents are securely stored in the in the Cloud, which means that you can find exactly what you're looking for from within the Office 365 search browser. You can even get away with making spelling mistakes!

Search functionality alone isn't enough to present a business case for Office 365, but it's still a very helpful additional feature and one of many that come together to make for a better user experience!

GDPR Compliance.

It is essential for all European Businesses to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations. As part of your compliance, it's essential to ensure that any 3rd party data processors you are using to store and transmit personally identifiable information of EU residents will conform to the technical and Organisational requirements of the GDPR.

In March 2017, Microsoft included contractual commitments to be GDPR compliant in their Customer Licencing Agreements by the GDPR live date in May 2018. Microsofts contractual commitments provide guarantees that you will be able to demonstrate your compliance with the GDPR, detect and report personal data breaches and respond to any requests to correct, amend or delete any personally identifiable information.

Did you know?
Microsoft was the first Cloud Services provider to achieve ISO 27018 Cloud Privacy standard compliance. At the time of writing, Microsoft has 53 major Certifications and attestations, which is more than any other public Cloud Services provider.

Your GDPR Compliance is not just down to Microsoft.
It is YOUR Company's responsibility to ensure you remain compliant with the GDPR at all times. Using GDPR compliance Cloud Services is just one of many steps in your journey to becoming GDPR compliant, but there are many other processes that practices that need to be implemented and followed.

Lastly.
Microsoft has given Office 365 users the ability to track and change the locations of their data centres. Visit the 'Where is my data' map to find where your Customer data is being stored.

Microsoft is not only committed to providing GDPR compliant Cloud services, but they also provide several tools and guidance that will to help your business to remain compliant.

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Additional Layers of Security.

In the current climate, Cyber Security is at the top of every business owner's IT priority list. Implementing effective Network Security throughout your Organisation is a necessity but is also a costly and resource intensive exercise. As standard, Office 365 Business features numerous layers of physical, logical and data layers of security that will greatly enhance your Business Network Security protection.

Here's a breakdown of Office 365s five layers of security:

Physical Security.

- ✓ Office 365 resides within 24-hour monitored datacentres owned and maintained by Microsoft
- ✓ Multi-factor authentication, including biometric scanning
- ✓ All faulty drives and hardware are demagnetised and destroyed
- ✓ The internal datacentre network is segregated from the external network

Logical Security.

- ✓ Port scanning, perimeter vulnerability scanning and intrusion detection are in place to identify and prevent malicious access
- ✓ Servers only run processes that are whitelisted, mitigating risk from malicious code
- ✓ Microsoft has dedicated threat management teams that proactively look to anticipate and prevent malicious access
- ✓ Office 365 features 'Lockbox' – a strictly supervised escalation process that gives you the ability to approve or deny access by a Microsoft engineer to perform service operations

Data Security.

- ✓ Encryption at rest and in transit (SSL/TLS encryption) protects your data when on Microsoft servers and when in transit
- ✓ Advanced Threat Protection will help protect your mailboxes, files, online storage, and applications against new, sophisticated attacks in real time.
- ✓ Exchange Online protection will provide advanced security against Spam and Malware instances

User controls.

- ✓ Send encrypted emails to anyone with Office 365 Message encryption
- ✓ Give your internal IT function the ability to apply appropriate policies to protect business sensitive data with Azure Rights Management

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Admin controls.

- ✓ Office 365 Business has built in Anti-virus and Antispam protection, in addition to advanced threat protection
- ✓ Multi-factor Authentication – providing an added layer of access protection to the service
- ✓ Data Loss Prevention – prevent sensitive data from leaking outside/inside your Organisation
- ✓ Mobile Device Management (MDM) capabilities
- ✓ Mobile Application Management - provides granular controls to secure data contained within your Office 365 apps

Source – Microsoft Office 365.

By replacing your on-premise Applications and Systems with Office 365, your business can greatly reduce its Annual IT Security subscription spend and alleviate the pressure on your internal IT function by passing the responsibility of Network Security onto the vendor.

Scalability.

As a Cloud-based software 'as a service' platform, Office 365 is inherently scalable to your business requirements 'on-the-fly'. With Office 365 Business, you can add and remove users and change your current subscription plan at any time.

Once traditional retail or OEM Software Application licenses are purchased, they cannot be returned or refunded, whereas Office 365 Business is a subscription-based service. With Office 365 Business, you only pay for what you use.

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Microsoft Exchange Online.

Office 365 Business Premium and essentials packages include Microsoft Exchange Online, which does exactly what it says on the tin!

The number of Organisations that are moving their Business emails to the Cloud is growing at an exponential rate - and with good reason. Exchange Online provides ALL the features and functionality that you'd find on your on-premise Exchange server, without the financial overheads or laborious maintenance schedules.

Here's a quick breakdown of the many features of Exchange Online:

✓ **Enhanced security and reliability** – Anti-spam filtering and Anti-malware protects your Company mailboxes. In addition, Hosted Exchange also features clever data loss prevention capabilities that are designed to prevent users from mistakenly sending sensitive information to unauthorised people.

✓ **Added control** – Exchange Admin centre allows you to organise your Company email accounts, groups, group policies, admin roles and MUCH more through an intuitive online user interface.

✓ **Mobile device policies** – With mobile device policies, you can create approved mobile device lists, remove data from lost phones and even enforce a PIN lock from the Exchange Admin centre.

✓ **Automatic patching** – As with all Office 365 products, Hosted Exchange features automatic patching, eliminating any previous time and effort that your IT function had to spend on maintaining your on-premise Exchange Server.

✓ **Anywhere access to Outlook** – Your staff will have access to their emails, contacts and calendars through the web-based Outlook interface.

Exchange Online is included with Office 365 Business Premium and Essentials packages. The 'per user' monthly subscription cost starts from £3.80 per user per month. Exchange Online becomes the logical choice for your business when you compare the subscription cost to the ongoing costs of running, maintaining and upgrading your on-premise Exchange Server.

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Integration with Azure Active Directory.

Office 365 Business can be used with Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) which is Microsoft's Cloud Based user identity and authentication service. Azure AD can replace your on-premise Active Directory (AD) environment, allowing you to fully manage your user credentials and permissions from the Cloud.

Azure AD is also a good (and obvious) choice if you don't have any existing Active Directory in place, or if you want to avoid integrating Office 365 with your on-premise AD because of its complexity.

NOTE - Choosing between your on-premise Active Directory or Azure AD should be a decision that's made early in your Office 365 implementation lifecycle because switching this configuration later can be challenging.

If you choose to fully adopt Office 365 and switch to Azure Active Directory, then you could potentially retire your on-premise Microsoft servers because they will no longer be required. Any ongoing server and maintenance costs will be eliminated and your annual energy costs and carbon footprint will be greatly reduced!

Anytime, Anywhere Access to your Work.

Office 365 can be accessed anytime and anywhere from almost any Computer device with Internet access. These devices include smartphones and tablet devices via the Office 365 mobile Apps or your mobile browser. Computers that don't have Office 365 Apps installed locally can also access these Apps through a Web browser.

You'll be able to access any documents, files and folders that are stored in your office 365 libraries. You'll also have access to your emails via the Outlook App or Outlook Web Browser.

In addition.
Anytime anywhere access makes Office 365 an attractive proposition for Organisations with remote workers, or external sales teams that need access to Company files and documents to collaborate on projects and sales opportunities.

Business owners, Company Directors and employees that need always-on access to their work and emails can do so from their mobile devices at any time.

Office 365 makes it easier for Organisations to introduce a safe, secure and effective to introduce remote working. Allowing your staff to work remotely for one or more days a week has been proven to increase productivity, reduce travel expenses and improve staff morale, which can ultimately lead to better profitability.

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Office 365 Education is FREE to Qualifying Schools.

Yes, you read that correctly. Office 365 Education is completely free to eligible teachers and students. IT Professionals can also sign up their entire School to use Office 365 at no charge. All you need to do is verify that you are an academic institution (If you require assistance with this then don't hesitate to contact us).

Office 365 education subscription options.

At the time of writing, there are currently three different Office 365 Education subscriptions available:

Office 365 A1.

This is the completely free version of Office 365 that includes the following Apps and services:

- Microsoft Exchange with Online Outlook (with a per user mailbox size of up to 50GB)
- Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote
- OneDrive (with unlimited Cloud storage)
- SharePoint

- Skype for Business
- Teams (classroom learning hub)
- Sway
- Forms
- Stream
- Flow
- Power Apps
- School Data Sync

Office 365 A3.

Office 365 A3 is a paid service that includes all the features of Office 365 A1, in addition to Microsoft Publisher (PC Only), Microsoft Access (PC only) and Microsoft Bookings.

Office 365 A5.

Office 365 A5 is also a paid service that includes all the features of Office 365 A3, in addition to Microsoft Power VI.

You can find a more comprehensive breakdown of Office 365 Education on the official Microsoft Official Office 365 Education webpage.

The financial advantages of obtaining a free Office 365 subscription for your School are obvious. Although there is a charge for the Office 365 A3 and A5 subscriptions, the free Office 365 A1 subscription will cover most Schools teaching and learning requirements.

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Familiarity.

 Switching to Office 365 will not impact your business productivity because most of your employees will already be familiar with most Microsoft Office applications, especially if they are office-based. In addition, if you are using familiar Office applications then it's highly unlikely that you'll need to invest in any introductory training for your staff.

Final Thoughts.

We hope that the above article provides a great starting point for IT Professionals, Office Managers and any other individuals that wish to put forward a compelling case for Office 365 Business.

The benefits of moving from CapEx to OpEx.

As technology continues to shift from on-premise to the Cloud, so has the way that Organisations pay for their IT Systems and infrastructure.

In the past, paying for your IT Infrastructure was always an upfront capital expense (CapEx), but thanks to pay-as-you-go Cloud-based computing solutions 'as a service', IT is now evolving into an operational expense (OpEx).

The switch from CapEx to OpEx means that Businesses no longer need to make a substantial upfront investment in their IT Systems because Cyclic infrastructure costs are being replaced with subscription-based 'predictable' monthly service fees.

This approach has made it far easier for Small Businesses to apply and maintain an up-to-date IT Systems like Office 365 Business that require minimal support and maintenance, all for an affordable monthly fee.

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About OhSo Technical.

OhSo Technical is a Professional IT Services Organisation that is based in Highams Park, London. We provide a comprehensive range of IT Support Services and Technology Solutions to Small Businesses that wish to use technology as a platform to drive their business growth.

As a Microsoft Cloud partner, OhSo Technical provides Office 365 Consultancy and deployment services to Organisations that need a helping hand in making a smooth transition from on-premise to Office 365 Business.

Visit our Office 365 Consultancy webpage to find out more, or call 020 3963 5533 for a no-obligation chat about your requirements.

Correction requests.

If you feel that any information in this document is inaccurate or outdated, then please email your feedback to hello@ohsoit.co.uk. We thank you in advance for your input!

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