

Migrating Your Data to Google Workspace

A Guide for
Enterprise CIOs



Migrating Your Data to Google Workspace: A Guide for Enterprise CIOs

Executive Summary

Faced with rising commercial suite licensing fees, vendor lock-ins, and ineffective AI copilots, forward-looking Chief Information Officers (CIOs) are increasingly considering Google Workspace to modernize their infrastructure in the short-term and optimize their technology stack for AI agents in the coming years. Switching to Workspace can result in meaningful business benefits, including up to [336% ROI](#), [50%](#) reduction in help desk tickets, and [30%](#) improved efficiency on collaborative activities.¹

This guide details the cloud-native migration approach in Workspace, which includes the new data import tool, migration planner, and a number of interoperability enhancements across Workspace apps. This approach eliminates third-party migration tools and hidden infrastructure fees, provides a zero-cost, high-velocity transition, and helps to maintain broad interoperability with Microsoft Office.

Five Key Recommendations for a Smooth Migration

Migration to any technology is a multifaceted process, but it doesn't have to be daunting. Organizations from small businesses to large enterprises with hundreds of thousands of employees around the globe choose to migrate to Workspace every year.

A successful migration requires a strategic approach that prioritizes understanding the technology environment and source data, minimizes potential risks, and recognizes that change management for employees is a crucial component to success. Every migration journey will be unique, and the timeline will vary depending on your organization's data volume and complexity.

When planning a migration, it's critical to begin with careful consideration of your current environment, specific needs, and circumstances. Here are five steps you can follow to begin this process, optionally alongside your Google Cloud account team and selected implementation partner.



1 Define Your Migration Strategy

When planning an enterprise migration, it's critical to align your IT team – and, optionally, your Google account team and implementation partner – on intended outcomes with defined goals and objectives. Some organizations may choose to adopt Workspace for select functions in coexistence with specific legacy tools and point solutions. Others may choose to migrate fully to Workspace. Google supports both models of migration; however, a full migration helps maximize the benefits and return on investment of Workspace.

You should also carefully evaluate what data needs to be available at the go-live date versus the data that can be migrated post-launch – or omitted entirely. Deferring non-critical data to a later time in the migration process helps the initial deployment and accelerates the overall migration timeline.

While there are many ways you can build your migration strategy to meet business goals, Google recommends a three-phase approach with core IT, early adopters, and global go-live as outlined in the [deployment guide for large organizations](#). This process typically takes 3-9 months, and it can be adapted to your organization's specific requirements and needs.

Google's Suggested Phased Migration Approach

The three phases of core deployment activities include:

Phase 1

Planning & Core IT

Deploy to core IT team only. This phase begins in collaboration with a partner to align deployment plans with Google's best practices and to create a success path for the overall project. This phase confirms and tests technical design, identifies integration points, and allows the team to become familiar with tools and technology.

Phase 2

Early Adopters

Deploy to 5-10% of total users. This phase validates the migration, tests the change management plan, and gathers feedback on training and communications so the plan can be adjusted as needed to best meet users' needs.

Phase 3

Global Go-Live

Deploy to all users. This phase brings the remainder of your organization on board, conducts extensive training and communications, and transitions to long-term adoption and transformation.

2 Plan and Mitigate Risks Proactively

Anticipating challenges before a migration keeps your project on schedule and minimizes operational disruption. Establish a comprehensive risk management strategy early by focusing on four key areas:

Data audit and governance:

Inventory legacy datasets to identify sensitive, stale, or redundant files. Define clear retention policies and remediation steps prior to transfer to avoid migrating unnecessary data.

Coexistence and identity management:

Configure dual-delivery mail routing, directory synchronization, and single sign-on (SSO) to maintain seamless communication between legacy systems and Workspace during the transition.

Change management and champion networks:

Build a network of department champions to drive adoption, deliver role-specific training, and establish transparent feedback channels to address end-user concerns early.

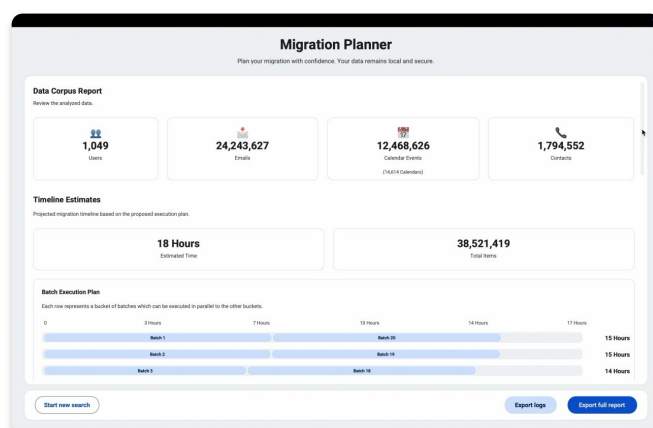
Validation and contingency planning:

Conduct pilot migrations with representative test batches to validate permission mappings, line-of-business integration points, and throughput before full cutover.



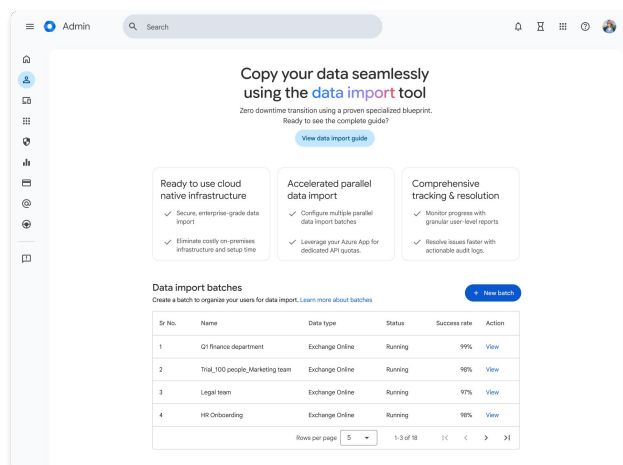
3 Prepare for Your Migration with the Migration Planner

Before you migrate, leverage the [Migration Planner](#) to conduct a deep analysis of your environment and establish a predictable migration timeline. It assesses data type, size, and complexity to anticipate challenges and optimize the migration approach. It can identify data distribution to uncover how the data is spread across the source system. Organizational data requirements may vary by department, and these needs should inform your migration timeline and strategy. Rather than relying on theoretical estimates, the tool delivers a granular, high-confidence ETA based on your organization's specific data corpus. This data-driven foundation allows your team to execute a phased, batch-optimized migration – incorporating rigorous testing and validation to ensure business continuity throughout the transition.



4 Migrate Your Data with Data Import

When your organization is ready to execute the migration, Workspace's cloud-native [data import](#) tool delivers transfers up to [5x faster](#) than legacy alternatives. Because this solution is integrated directly into the admin console, it facilitates an entirely cloud-to-cloud transfer, eliminating the need for local hardware, third-party software licenses, or dedicated migration infrastructure. This also makes it free to use. Furthermore, information is processed entirely in-memory on Google's hardened cloud infrastructure, effectively nullifying the risks associated with local disk staging, firewall management, and server patching.



Data import offers Microsoft 365 migration coverage, ensuring high data fidelity across Microsoft Exchange Online, OneDrive, SharePoint Online, and Teams (including 1:1, group, and channel chats).

5 Solidify the Move to Workspace with Expert Assistance and Resources

During your migration, you can access an array of migration tools and resources, trusted implementation partners, and support from Google to help ease the process from planning to execution.

Your Google Cloud Account Representative

As your first step, contact your [Google Cloud account representative](#), who works closely with our partner ecosystem and offers a variety of end-to-end services as you make the transition. These services include consulting, advisory, technical account management, change management, enablement and training, transformation labs, and more. Your account representative will work with you to engage the right partner for your migration needs.

Partners

Our extended network of managed services and implementation partners helps you choose a solution that's right for you, and leads the overall migration and deployment. Our partners accompany many organizations in their Workspace journey, bringing decades of experience supporting large customers with hundreds of thousands of employees.

Workspace has strategic partnerships with partners across all regions. Technology partners can assist in the data migration process and connect with your reseller partner. Collaborating with your account manager, your selected partner will work with you to create a detailed plan for each of the Google-recommended phases.

These phases could include discovery, strategy sessions, enablement, training, and demos from planning to deployment and beyond. The full list of partners can be found [here](#).

Professional Services

Additionally, your account representative can engage [Google Cloud Consulting services](#) to complement your service partner and safeguard the deployment journey with an additional layer of technical, change management, and governance support. This support may include access to expert advisors, best practices, and a liaison with the Workspace Product and Engineering team to ensure success of key implementation milestones. The full list of services offered by Google Cloud Consulting can be found [here](#).

We have curated resources to help guide you every step of the way, including:

[Data migration documentation](#) to access detailed documentation on our data migration tool and operational best practices.

[Tips for migrating to Workspace](#) so you can explore expert recommendations to optimize your transition.

[The Forrester Total Economic Impact™ of Google Workspace](#) study so you can learn more about how your organization can achieve a 336% ROI.



Maintaining Momentum: How Interoperability Keeps Teams Productive After Migration

Following a secure and efficient data migration, the next strategic priority is preserving user productivity. A primary concern during digital transformation is minimizing friction and avoiding disruption to established workflows. Workspace addresses this with enhanced interoperability with Microsoft Office and other existing software investments. This allows you to modernize your cloud infrastructure without requiring employees to abandon familiar tools or alter core business processes.

This coexistence framework supports all enterprise teams, including specialized departments such as Legal and Finance, that manage complex documents and extensive datasets. Workspace bridges the gap between legacy tools and modern cloud-native collaboration by supporting existing document formats while integrating advanced AI, ensuring both immediate workflow stability and long-term innovation.

A primary challenge during this transition is the potential for productivity loss caused by file conversion friction or formatting discrepancies. Workspace resolves this through Office Editing Mode, which empowers teams to review, edit, and co-author native Microsoft Office files (.docx, .xlsx, .pptx) simply by opening them from within Gmail and Drive. This seamless integration eliminates the need for separate Office licenses and manual file conversions, ensuring collaborators can get more done without changing how they work.

For teams managing high-stakes content – such as legal and finance – Workspace offers precision where it matters most. Seamless interoperability in Google Docs ensures that advanced document formatting requirements, including captions, cross-references, small caps, and redlining, are fully supported during collaboration with external partners.

The screenshot displays a Google Docs interface with a document titled "Consulting Services Agreement". The document contains a table with the following data:

ID	Service / Task Description	Deliverable	Due Date	Estimated Hours
S-01	Initial Business Process Audit and Analysis	Detailed Audit Report with recommendations	Nov 15, 2025	40
S-02	Technology Integration Planning	Implementation Strategy Document (Phase 1)	Dec 15, 2025	60
S-03	Stakeholder Training & Support	Two (2) full-day training sessions	Jan 10, 2026	20
S-04	Project Closure and Handover	Final Project Summary & Documentation	Jan 31, 2026	15

Below the table, the caption reads: "Table 1. Services and Deliverables".

The sidebar panel on the right shows the "Caption" settings for the table. The "Caption text" is "Services and Deliverables". The "Caption label type" is set to "Table". The "Include label in the caption" checkbox is checked. The "Numbering" is set to "1,2,3,4...". The "Position" is set to "Below item".

Furthermore, data-heavy operations are significantly optimized. Google Sheets now opens datasets with 1M+ cells up to 30% faster and executes complex data analysis 60% faster², providing the performance required for massive-scale business intelligence.

The screenshot shows the ServiceNow Incidents table. The 'Export' menu is open, showing options: Excel (.xlsx), CSV, JSON, PDF, and Google Sheets. The table contains 41 rows of incident data.

Number	Opened	Short description	Priority	State	Category	Assignment group	Assigned to	Updated	Updated by
INC0009009	2018-08-30 01:06:16	Unable to access the shared folder	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:48	snstestuser
INC0009005	2018-08-31 21:35:21	Email server is down.	5 - Planning	New	Software	(empty)	(empty)	2025-05-01 11:27:46	system
INC0009001	2018-09-11 20:56:26	Unable to post content on a Wiki page	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:45	snstestuser
INC0008112	2019-07-29 11:48:43	Assessment : ATF Assessor	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:43	snstestuser
INC0008111	2019-07-22 14:04:57	ATF : Test1	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:46	snstestuser
INC0008001	2021-01-15 13:04:14	ATF:TEST2	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:42	snstestuser
INC0007002	2018-10-16 22:47:51	Need access to the common drive.	4 - Low	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:47	snstestuser
INC0007001	2018-10-16 22:47:10	Employee payroll application server is down.	1 - Critical	New	Hardware	Openspace	(empty)	2025-05-01 11:27:48	system
INC0001990	2020-06-07 09:02:25	Unable to access the personal details section in payroll portal	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:45	snstestuser
INC0000601	2025-04-23 02:42:59	The USB port on my PC stopped working	5 - Planning	Resolved	Hardware	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:44	snstestuser
INC0000059	2016-08-10 09:14:29	Unable to access team file share	3 - Moderate	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2025-04-29 15:27:43	snstestuser
INC0000058	2016-08-10 09:37:45	Performance problems with email	5 - Planning	New	Inquiry / Help	(empty)	(empty)	2016-08-10 09:37:45	admin

Beyond document and data management, this interoperability also extends to communication and decision-making. Google Meet Hardware interoperability provides one-touch connectivity to Microsoft Teams and Zoom, while native workflow approvals allow critical decisions to be finalized without ever leaving your existing workflow.

Interoperability also extends to how your organization interacts with your broader data ecosystem. For example, by enabling employees to self-serve information from business systems like Oracle, ServiceNow, Bloomberg, and Workday directly within Google Sheets, you can eliminate the reliance on manual IT exports and repetitive administrative tasks. This reduces context-switching, empowers non-technical users to generate their own insights, and ensures your team remains focused on the strategic work that drives the business forward.



Customer Success Stories



Colgate-Palmolive migrates 28,000 users to Workspace in 6 months

“Google Workspace stood out because it’s truly an integrated toolset, with single sign-on and one directory. Google Workspace is built for the cloud, with no on-premises legacy. We felt that Google would continue to be the biggest innovator in cloud collaboration and a partner we could grow with,” says Mitch Cohen, director of collaboration, at global consumer products company [Colgate-Palmolive](#). In just 3 months, more than 94% of users were actively using Google Drive, and over 57,000 hours of Google Meet sessions were conducted in just 1 month. Now, everyone from the C-suite to the mailroom at Colgate has a Google Workspace account and uses it daily.



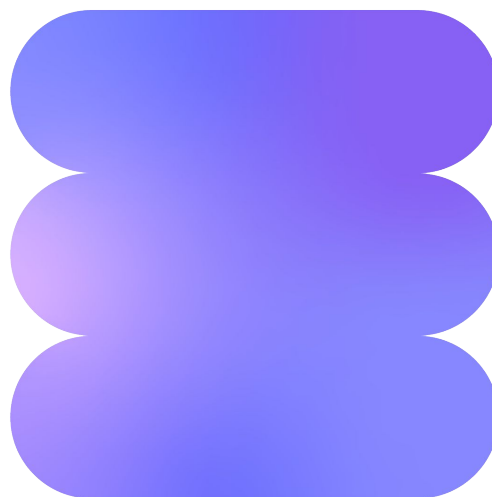
Brazilian government institution migrates 3.5 million+ files to Workspace in 2 months

In Brazil, the Ministério Público do Estado do Amapá (MP-AP) is the Public Prosecutor’s Office for the State of Amapá. It is an institution governed by Brazil’s Federal Constitution and committed to defending the law, democracy, and the interests of individuals and society as a whole. In [2 months, it migrated](#) 4TB of data spanning more than 3.5 million institutional files. Now, MP-AP has 99.9% service uptime and a 90% adoption rate of Google Workspace among employees. It has gained more flexibility for remote workers, easier document sharing among teams and external entities, and greater governance over data stored by the agency.



Equifax drives cultural transformation after migrating 21,000 employees to Workspace

As 1 of 3 credit reporting agencies in the U.S., Equifax helps millions of consumers and businesses each year to reach their financial goals. Equifax drove cultural transformation across its business by adopting Google Workspace. It migrated the data of about 21,000 users before deploying Workspace for employees across 20 countries. By using technology as a lever, Equifax helped its workforce foster a culture of [collaboration and community](#), resulting in nearly 100,000 Google Chat messages each day. The simplicity and security of Workspace, and the ability to work on documents from anywhere, has helped Equifax streamline communication and collaboration.



Customer Success Stories



LifeCell executes a full-fledged migration for 1,200+ employees in under 3 months to enhance efficiencies

Founded in 2004, LifeCell is India's largest stem cell and tissue storage bank. It is a main provider of genetic screening tests and a leading player in cell and tissue-based therapeutics. LifeCell executed a [full-fledged Google Workspace migration in under 3 months](#) for 1,200+ employees, which transformed collaborative capabilities with granular privacy settings. Google Workspace has also helped the organization enhance workflow efficiencies from top management to frontline staff by reducing spam attacks to zero.



Within 4 months, Humana migrates 13,000 users to Workspace, cuts IT costs, and tightens security

The easy-to-use collaboration tools in Google Workspace have improved morale and efficiency among 13,000 field and in-office team members at Humana, a leader in care provision services in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The IT team is now confident that time-tested Workspace security features are keeping sensitive customer data safe, and Humana expects the [migration to Workspace](#) to reduce tech support requests by at least 50%. Humana migrated 22TB of data, including 55 million emails, 5.5 million documents, and 4.5 million calendar items. "I'm 100% confident that the Humana team is happier and more productive with Google Workspace than they were with our previous platform, and together with ChromeOS it will make our data more secure than ever before," says Adam Nerell, CIO, Humana.

Workspace empowers enterprise organizations with AI-powered productivity and collaboration tools, running in a secure, compliant, and reliable cloud environment. With a structured approach, proven tools, and expert support, migration is a manageable process. Let Workspace help unlock the full potential of your workforce.

Get Started Today

When you are ready to modernize your infrastructure and drive seamless collaboration across your enterprise, we invite you to explore our comprehensive [migration resources](#) to orchestrate your transition. Alternatively, you can [contact our sales team](#) to discuss your organization's specific strategic requirements or start a [free trial](#) to experience the Google Workspace ecosystem firsthand.