

Moving from GroupWise to Office 365: a Step-by-Step Guide



[GroupWise](#) once played a dominant role in providing collaborative messaging services. However, after nearly 40 years, the platform has fallen behind more modern systems. Moving from GroupWise to Office 365 allows organizations to take advantage of increased storage, anywhere/anytime availability, powerful collaboration features, and much more.

However, the migration process does present significant challenges, particularly for organizations that have used GroupWise for many years. For instance, large mailboxes, GroupWise personal archives, and poorly configured systems add layers of complexity.

The following steps help to ensure a successful migration. Additionally, working with a seasoned GroupWise migration partner provides access to the tools and expertise necessary to anticipate and address potential hurdles while optimizing the Microsoft environment for optimal productivity.

1. Perform a Thorough Project Assessment

Begin with a detailed project assessment. This will include determining the following:

- Information to migrate vs. information to delete or archive – For example, inactive accounts may need to move to an archive, while outdated or redundant data can be deleted. Keep in mind any [regulatory requirements](#) regarding data retention.

- Number of mailboxes to migrate and how much data they hold – Make note of any unusually large mailboxes or sensitive data that requires special handling.
- Number and location of GroupWise personal archives – For instance, users may have multiple personal archives stored on local devices. And unless individual users have performed proper maintenance on the archives, data may have become corrupted.
- Additional information to migrate – Keep in mind that the data to migrate also includes calendars, contacts, shared mailboxes, distribution lists, folder structures, permissions, and settings.
- Workflows and customizations to accommodate in the new system – To minimize disruption to the end users, ensure that they can complete their work efficiently from day one with the new system.
- Time and resources required for migration – Migration success will depend on including the right people on the migration team. In addition to IT staff and migration partners, this should include key stakeholders with knowledge of business needs and processes.



2. Collect the Data

First, take time to back up all data prior to migration and test the backup to confirm data can be restored if necessary. Once the backup has been completed, collect the data to migrate. This step can prove quite complex, depending on the location and condition of the [GroupWise personal archives](#). Moving archives to a central location for cataloging and processing can help.

Data collection offers an opportunity to perform essential cleanup to save headaches down the road. For instance, look for redundant, obsolete and trivial data that can be removed without hindering regulatory compliance. Additionally, some personal archives may require substantial remediation before migration.

3. Set Up the Target System

Before transitioning any data to Office 365, configure the new system. This will include provisioning users in Azure Active Directory. It will also include defining automated email and retention policies to facilitate regulatory compliance.

Working with a migration partner, like Messaging Architects, that has in-depth knowledge of Office 365 will help. A knowledgeable migration partner can help the organization fine-tune system settings and navigate the [differences between GroupWise and Office 365](#).

4. Provide End-user Training

Moving from GroupWise to Office 365 will mean changes for end users and may require that they learn new skills. Empower end users with both formal training and just-in-time hints regarding workflow changes and new features. When users know the differences to expect between GroupWise and Office, they will have a better experience.



5. User Acceptance Testing

Before migrating hundreds or thousands of mailboxes, conduct a mock migration for select individuals. Then have those users look at their Office 365 accounts to compare against GroupWise and ensure they see their messages, folders, contacts, and appointments.

This test run will help to iron out any issues. Carefully monitor the process and adjust the migration plan as necessary before proceeding with the full migration.

6. Ready, Set, Go!

If you have put in the work necessary to properly gather the data and prepare the target system, the cutover to the new system should be smooth. For instance, when you work with Messaging Architects, most of the migration work happens behind the scenes, providing full seamless collaboration between users on day one of Go Live.

7. Complete Essential Post-migration Tasks

The migration does not end when users begin to use the new system. Several post-migration tasks must be completed for a successful migration. For example, the migration team must validate the migration to ensure that data, settings, and features have migrated properly. Also, continually monitor performance, making adjustments as necessary.

Take the Pain Out of Moving from GroupWise to Office 365

A migration gone wrong can derail productivity, and GroupWise migrations offer plenty of challenges. Fortunately, the migration experts at Messaging Architects have completed hundreds of [GroupWise migrations](#) with a 100 percent success rate. With deep expertise in both GroupWise and Microsoft 365, we ease the pain of even the most complex migration issues.