

Outsourcing:
**Creating
a business
that's always
switched on.**

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What is this switched on business?

Like most business principles, this one starts out simple: if you're always switched on, your people are able to share critical information and respond to business needs anywhere, anytime.

And if you have Microsoft Hosted Exchange technology, you have the best tool on the market to make it happen. Not only can you access email securely and reliably with Exchange, you can collaborate, share files, contacts, and calendars wherever you are.

Done, you might say. All good, you might add. So...why do you need a whole guide to keeping your business switched on?

Up to 75% of a company's intellectual property resides in email and other messaging applications

- Symantec and Gartner study
(www.itworld.com/Webcasts/bytopic/3/index.html)

The switched on paradox

As critical as on-the-go connectivity is, you can't afford to let it monopolise your attention and resources. Generally speaking, communication technology is not a revenue producer; it's an infrastructure essential.

Now, you want the most productive infrastructure possible. And you have to stay switched on. But to stay profitable, you have to minimise the cost of doing business while focusing on your core competencies and objectives. How can you have it all?

That's where your switched on guide comes in.

Make the most of a good Exchange

Hosting your Exchange server with the right provider – the outsourcing bit – is the single most efficient, productive and cost-effective way to create a truly switched on business.

We won't ask you to simply trust us on this one. The next few pages will detail the why, what and how of outsourcing advantages.

Already outsourcing your Exchange? Fast-track to page 4.

(Or review the outsourcing power principles first, and feel superior for anticipating them.)

The four power principles of outsourcing

Transfer administration complexity. Increase security and compliance. Reduce cost. Ensure reliability and recovery. These are the power principles that drive the decision to outsource any collaboration technology. The Microsoft Exchange server is the platform most widely deployed today, so the case for outsourcing it to the right hosting provider has been thoroughly assessed. Read on to see what makes Hosted Exchange essential for a switched on business.

Reduce cost

Any business class solution of this kind will have plenty of costs to reduce:

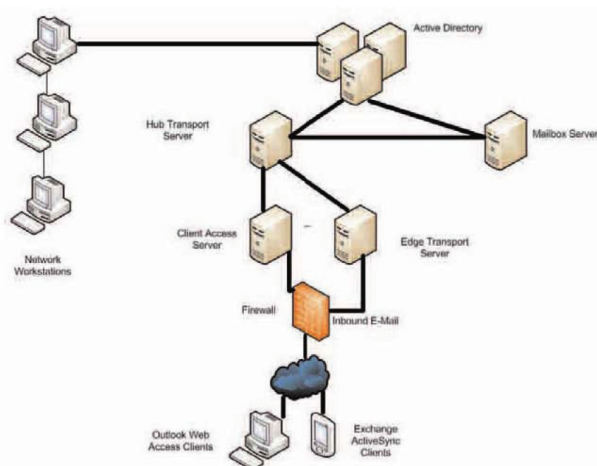
- Initial hardware acquisition costs for each server
- Windows and Exchange Server licenses paid to Microsoft
- Antivirus software, anti spam software, and client access licenses (such as those recommended for Exchange Microsoft Outlook or Entourage)
- Overtime for the administrative staff, especially if you want 24x7 switched on reliability
- Training updates as new service packs are released
- Spare parts
- Other maintenance expenses

As you can see, it's not just the start-up costs that make in-house deployment prohibitively expensive. In fact, the long-term costs associated with server maintenance usually far outweigh the initial acquisition costs over the life of the server.

Outsourcing your mailboxes to the right hosting provider not only allows you to avoid Exchange start-up costs, you'll see long-term costs decrease as well. How? Because your provider will typically divide server resources among multiple clients. This means that you and several companies will share the expense of the hardware and software as well as the monitoring and maintenance costs instead of you paying for all of it.

Transfer administration complexity

Fairly or not, the Microsoft Exchange server has a reputation for being one of the most complex products that Microsoft has ever created. See that diagram? That's a relatively simple Exchange deployment. (We are not making this up.)



This configuration does not provide for clustering or for any other redundancy that would keep the Exchange organisation functioning should a server failure occur. It also assumes that all of the end user mailboxes can fit on a single mailbox server. Likewise, the unified messaging components have been omitted for simplicity's sake.

So even a 'simple' Exchange deployment is complicated. And with complexity comes cost. First you have to train your administrative staff to design, deploy and maintain an effective Exchange organisation. It's expensive and time-consuming. The worst part? The training quickly becomes obsolete. As new service packs are released, administrators need updated training to deal with the new features and management utilities. They'll also need additional training whenever Windows Server is updated.

Complexity also increases costs because hosting Exchange securely and reliably requires a number of servers. Our diagram, which displays several servers, represents an Exchange deployment that is secure, but not actually reliable. It needs even more servers to ensure the reliability fundamental to a switched on business.

Increase security and compliance

To be secure, an Exchange deployment typically requires several different servers that must all work together, as in the previous diagram. To help reduce complexity, smaller organisations may consolidate the entire Exchange organisation deployment into a single server. But a single server deployment is extremely risky from a security and reliability standpoint. Single server deployments are also prone to performance problems, lack of redundancy in case of failure, and scalability issues.

Also, many companies are subject to various government regulations regarding the security, management, and retention of email. Complying with these regulations is as tedious as it is expensive. Furthermore, company executives and IT professionals may be subject to criminal penalties, including prison time, for non-compliance. Depending on the specific regulations that apply to your company, you can outsource your Exchange deployment to shift some of the compliance burden while also reducing costs.

Ensure reliability and recovery

Ensuring server reliability and data recovery are huge responsibilities, though no one pats you on the back when you get them right. That's simply expected.

But can you guarantee 24/7 availability in-house? The right hosting provider will do just that, in a written Service Level Agreement (SLA). How do they manage it? Hosting providers typically use server clusters and other forms of redundant hardware to ensure that the hosted Exchange deployment is nearly always available.

Hosting providers are also usually better equipped than an in-house operation to recover from a disaster. Most companies back up their Exchange servers, but few companies have the human and hardware resources to thoroughly test their backups on a regular basis. Most hosting providers not only test their backups, they even guarantee how quickly data can be restored should one of your users accidentally delete something.

Even if you meticulously backup your servers and test the backups on a regular basis, it may be worth

switching to a Hosted Exchange environment to shift recovery responsibility. What would happen if your company's in-house Exchange server were to fail, your people were unable to restore a backup because of some unforeseen problem – and they lost the entire company's email? A hosting provider bound by an SLA and responsible for ensuring that the data is backed up correctly has ultimate incentive to make sure this doesn't happen.

10 questions to ask your hosting provider

So now you know how outsourcing your Exchange technology actually puts you more in control of your switched on solution. The big question is no longer how or why, but who? And the answer depends on some (more) very important questions.

'Wait,' you might wearily say. 'It's a technical thing. How different is one hosting provider from another, really? Show me the money and I'll decide.'

Unfortunately, there are some big pitfalls to look out for in choosing a hosting provider. A great bargain may, on closer inspection, reveal serious omissions in basic service. Some providers lack a redundant infrastructure or robust backups (required for reliability and recovery). Others may tack on various extra fees for service, or to use unscrupulous tactics to prevent you from cancelling a contract.

Ready to shop? Test providers on all the crucial points with the following top 10 questions on pages 4-6. Or, if you're already outsourcing, test your current hosting provider and compare against the Rackspace difference. And if you're still not convinced, check out the ten reasons to switch on to Rackspace on page 7.

1. Does the hosting company provide a fully managed solution?

In a fully managed hosting environment, the hosting provider takes care of all of the server maintenance: they back up the data, apply security patches, and handle any other maintenance and support issues that may arise.

Many non-managed hosts simply allow you to rent a server in their data centre, and the management and maintenance of that server is up to you. As you've probably realised, this is a very important question because if you get stuck doing your own maintenance and support, it defeats the purpose of outsourcing Exchange in the first place.

The Rackspace difference: We do it all.

2. How is my data being protected?

Any reputable hosting provider should take the appropriate measures to make sure their servers are secure. Even so, it is worth asking your potential or current hosting company what steps they take to do so. Don't be surprised though, if the hosting company refuses to answer this question. Many hosting companies are reluctant to provide specific information about their security measures.

Even if you can't get information about the hosting company's security standards, it is important to ask about their spam and virus prevention policy. Most, but not all, hosting companies provide a spam filtering and virus protection solution. There are usually two virus protection options: the standard solution (for basic performance) or the premium solution (guarantees the service and the filtering). However, you might have to pay extra for the premium solution.

Hosting providers' spam filtering policies vary much more widely. Some companies attempt to filter only the most obvious spam, while others leave spam control to the end users out of fear of accidentally filtering legitimate messages. If your provider does filter spam for you, make sure they also allow you to adjust the filtering settings and retrieve messages that were filtered accidentally.

The Rackspace difference: Premium service for every customer, no extra charge.

3. What is your data recovery policy?

Inevitably, someone in your company (you know who they are) will delete a message they really need. If you are hosting your own Exchange server, you can recover messages as needed according to your own data retention policies. When your Exchange mailboxes are outsourced, you are at the hosting provider's mercy for data recovery. It is therefore very important to find out what their recovery policy is.

Specifically, you should ask how quickly data can be recovered and whether there is a fee for the recovery. If you have not signed a contract that specifically guarantees long-term data archival, then it is also important to ask how long the backups are retained. This is an important consideration, because if you need to restore something that was deleted a month ago, but your hosting service only retains backups for two weeks, then your data may be lost forever.

The Rackspace difference: Rapid recovery, guaranteed.

4. What are the costs?

Most hosting providers base their price on the number of 'seats' or 'mailboxes' being hosted.

Although this pricing structure seems simple enough, it is important to remember that many hosting providers use a sliding price scale.

For example, if you purchase additional mailboxes, you may qualify for a volume discount. However, some companies actually charge more per mailbox as the number of hosted mailboxes increases, because you are consuming more server resources. Find out upfront how the price will with the number of hosted mailboxes.

The Rackspace difference: Volume discount.

5. What if I exceed the space quota?

Most hosting contracts stipulate a maximum size for a user's mailbox. But there's always a chance some of your people will need more space, so do ask at the start what happens if some users outgrow the maximum.

Some hosting companies may implement a quota that prevents the maximum mailbox size from being exceeded (disabling the functionality to send and/or receive), while other hosting companies may charge you a fee for exceeding the allotted disk space. In all likelihood, at least a few users will eventually need additional disk space, so it is good to know upfront how this need will be met.

The Rackspace difference: Mailboxes in all sizes, and no nasty surprises if they fill up..

6. Do I get my data back if I cancel service?

Aside from pricing, the single most important question to ask a hosting provider is what will happen to your data if you should cancel the service. Although not a common practice, there have been reports of hosting contracts stipulating that your data becomes the hosting company's property. That means if you cancel your hosting contract, the hosting provider is free to delete your data, and they are under no obligation to give you any future access to the data. It is therefore essential to confirm that you retain ownership of your data, and that the hosting company will assist you in migrating the data to your servers, or to another hosting provider's servers, should the need arise.

The Rackspace difference: Your data is yours, always and forever. Of course we'll help you move it, if you really want to do that. But we're pretty sure you won't.

7. How many times have you been down in the last year?

Although not always a tangible cost, downtime is typically very expensive. It has a direct impact on employee productivity, and fixing the problem requires the administrative staff to temporarily neglect other tasks. Additionally, there may be a direct loss of revenue because users are unable to receive time-sensitive email messages. The repair may also incur more tangible costs such as server parts or support calls. The most serious aspect of a server failure though is the potential for data loss. Depending on the type of failure, the chances of recovering mail server data are directly related to the IT staff's skills and to their diligence in backing up the mail server, and routinely testing the backups.

Outsourcing your mail server does not automatically eliminate the potential for downtime or data loss. Hosting companies can have server failures just like anyone else. It is therefore critical to insist that the hosting provider give you a service level agreement (SLA).

The Rackspace difference: 100% application uptime plus disaster recovery backups every 30 minutes.

8. What is the Service Level Agreement?

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a contractual obligation for the hosting company to provide a certain level of reliability. The higher the percentage, the more reliable the service should be. Generally, you should accept a service level agreement of no less than 99.9% availability; however, some hosting companies are able to provide 99.99% or even 100% availability.

In addition to asking about the service level agreement, it is also important to ask about your remedies: what happens if the hosting company's service isn't as reliable as they claim. Most reputable hosting companies will offer you either a full or a partial refund for any time in which the hosting service was unavailable. Be sure to read the fine print. In some cases your service may have to be down for a full day before you are eligible for any type of compensation.

The Rackspace difference: Industry-leading SLA with a 100% application uptime guarantee – refunds provided for any downtime experienced.

9. How will the migration process work?

If you're a shiny new start-up company with no data to migrate, this not a big concern for you. But if you currently host your own Exchange environment or want to switch providers, you will need to know how to migrate your existing data to the new servers. Most reputable hosting companies will assist you with the migration process. It is also worth asking how long the transition process will take, what items (calendar, tasks, notes, public folders) will be migrated, and whether or not e-mail will be accessible during the transition.

The Rackspace difference: A step-by-step guide, and we're with you all the way.

10. Are there any additional fees?

Just as you need to be familiar with the hosting provider's pricing structure, it is also important to ask about any additional fees that the hosting company may charge. Some hosting companies have been known to charge setup fees or an annual maintenance fee. It is also fairly common for hosting providers companies to charge a fee for restoring deleted mailboxes or messages.

The Rackspace difference: No hidden costs, totally up front about fees.

10 reasons to switch on to Rackspace

Choosing to host your Exchange is good. Rackspace Hosted Exchange is as good as it gets. Our people and technology are always switched on – that's how we can guarantee your business will be, too.

1. Fanatical Support®

Only the Rackspace Hosted Exchange solution delivers Fanatical Support, our award-winning customer service. Rackspace staff are passionate about pleasing customers and will go that extra mile to make you happy and solve any issues as quickly as possible.

For instance, we don't have voice-automated systems. Your call will be answered by a real, qualified person within five seconds and they'll start helping you straightaway - 24/7/365.

2. Zero downtime

The Rackspace Hosted Exchange solution is founded on our Zero Downtime Network, so you know that the network is one of the most reliable in the world – guaranteed. Our Hosted Exchange infrastructure is located in one of our seven world-class data centres secured by 24/7 surveillance, biometric scanning and keycards in a fully redundant environment.

3. Dedicated Support Team

As a Rackspace Managed Exchange customer you will have a dedicated Account Manager who is accountable for making sure that all of your infrastructure needs are met. Working alongside your Account Manager are Support Technicians, Senior Systems Engineers and a dedicated Exchange Engineering Team. Your Rackspace support team knows your configuration, your business and your goals. Their combined experience delivers unrivalled expertise as they work together to give you peace of mind.

4. Microsoft expertise

Naturally, Rackspace is one of the select Microsoft partners, Gold certified and licensed to run Hosted Exchange. We are also a member of Microsoft's elite Technology Adoption Programme (TAP), which includes their JDP (Joint Development Programme), EAP (Early Adopter Programme), and the RDP (Rapid Deployment Programme).

This means we gain access to emerging Microsoft products and technologies while they are still in development, so we can work with clients on platform upgrades and technology testing months before public release.

Rackspace is Microsoft Gold Certified and has been named hosting partner of the year three times.

5. High availability Infrastructure

Rackspace owns and manages a fully redundant High Availability (HA) Exchange Infrastructure that ensure access to your business-critical email at all times. Our Managed Exchange infrastructure is a fully redundant, load balanced and clustered environment with a SAN backend, powered by NetApp. The Hosted Exchange Infrastructure is designed and built to minimise the impact of any component failure, so your email will be there when you need it!

6. Delivering on SLAs

Our commitment to customer service is what allows us to deliver on our industry-leading SLAs with a 100% application uptime guarantee. If you experience any Managed Exchange application downtime, we promise to:

(i) refund ten percent (10%) of the monthly fee for the Managed Exchange service for each 30 (thirty) minutes of consecutive downtime, up to one hundred percent (100%) of the monthly fee

or

(ii) refund a pro-rated portion of the monthly recurring fee based on the actual number of minutes in the calendar month if the service is not down for more than 30 (thirty) consecutive minutes.

7. Premium anti-virus and anti-spam

Every Rackspace Hosted Exchange customer receives our premium spam filtering and antivirus solution as standard (no extra charge), eliminating 99% of unwanted email before it ever reaches your inbox. The solution utilises proprietary detection systems, four virus scanning engines, and over 60 filtering techniques, plus front wave protection to rid inbound and outbound email of spam, worms, viruses and other protocol-based vulnerabilities.

8. Backup strategy and data recovery

Rackspace undertakes daily disaster recovery backups for all mailboxes and public folders. More importantly, we guarantee that we'll rapidly recover lost data - any message lost in the last 14 days is retrieved immediately and any mailbox (including messages) lost in the last 30 days is recovered within six hours.

9. Simple online management tool

Our innovative web-based control panel lets administrators directly access their Hosted Exchange environment without any in-depth technical knowledge. Since it's built using .Net you can easily administer your domain and perform tasks like email routing, aliases, groups, users, mailbox storage, forwarding, passwords and client configuration. End users can access their email settings for mobile devices, view mailbox usage and reset their own passwords.

10. Flexible contracts

Rackspace offers flexible contract options, starting with a month-to-month option. This flexibility allows you to scale and add to your solution over time or phase commitment according to demand.

**There's only one way
to guarantee you're
always switched on.**

**Call Rackspace today
on 0800 988 0100.**

www.rackspace.co.uk

“Rackspace has demonstrated its talent and expertise year after year, raising the bar in the design and deployment of customer solutions built on Microsoft technologies. Rackspace has been successful... by pairing an important service with Fanatical Support to provide companies with a superior service delivery model.”

John Zanni, director of Worldwide Hosting at Microsoft Corp.

There's only one way to guarantee you're always switched on.

Call Rackspace today on 0800 988 0100 or visit us at www.rackspace.co.uk.

