

A TYPICAL *Google* WORKSPACE TO *Microsoft*

365 MIGRATION

What a good migration really looks like, and why it's never just about moving data.

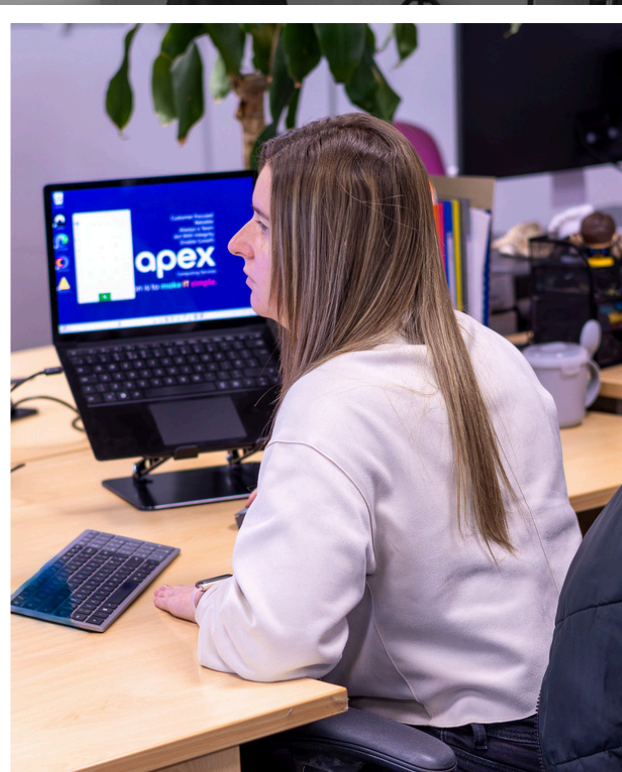
From the outside, a Google Workspace to Microsoft 365 migration can sound fairly straightforward. Mail moves across. Files move across. Users log into a new platform and carry on. In reality, migrations are rarely that simple, and they are almost never just technical exercises.

A good migration isn't simple about copying data from one place to another. It's about moving a business from one way of working into another without losing clarity, control, or confidence along the way. Microsoft's own migration guidance reflects that split quite clearly: email, calendars, and contacts are handled through Exchange Online migration methods, while Google Drive content is typically moved into OneDrive and SharePoint through Migration Manager. In other words, even Microsoft treats the migration as multiple connected workstreams rather than one single button press.

That matters because what usually makes a migration difficult isn't the copying itself. It's everything wrapped around it.

- Who owns the data?
- Where should shared files live once they arrive?
- What happens to permissions that made sense in Google but no longer fit the Microsoft structure?
- Which habits need to change, and which ones will quietly try to survive under a new badge?

Those are the questions that decide whether the move feels clean or chaotic. The technology can get the content across, but it can't (on its own) redesign the way work happens.



A typical migration therefore starts much earlier than most people expect. From mailbox migration, its current prerequisites include creating subdomains for mail routing and provisioning users in Microsoft 365 before the migration begins. For Google Drive migration, Microsoft's current Migration Manager workflow starts with connecting to Google, scanning and assessing source drives, reviewing destination paths, mapping identities, and only then moving on to migration and monitoring. That sequence is important because it shows the real shape of the work: preparation first, movement second.

That preparation stage is often where the most valuable thinking happens. It's where a business decides whether it's simply recreating its old digital estate in a new platform or taking the opportunity to improve it. Shared drives that grew organically over time often need more than a like-for-like move. Some content belongs in departmental SharePoint libraries. Some belongs in Teams channels. Some belongs in personal OneDrive storage. And some no longer needs to be moved at all. That's why scanning, assessment, and destination review matter so much. Microsoft's standard Google Drive migration process explicitly includes reviewing destination paths and mapping identities so metadata and permissions land in the right place.

For most SMEs, the challenge isn't simply getting data from Google into Microsoft 365. It's making sure the move feels controlled, well-managed, and worthwhile from the first planning meeting through to the final cutover.

That's where working with an MSP can make a significant difference.

A migration touches far more than email and files. It affects how users access information, where shared documents live, how permissions are handled, how teams collaborate, and how confident people feel in the new environment once it goes live. Without the right support, even a technically successful migration can still leave a business with confusion, duplicated content, inconsistent ways of working, or a structure that never quite fits how the organisation actually operates.

That's why many businesses choose to work with a partner like Apex rather than trying to manage the transition alone. The value isn't just in carrying out the move itself, but in planning it properly, reducing disruption, and helping the business land in a Microsoft 365 environment that is clearer, more secure, and easier to use than the one it left behind. That means reviewing what needs to move, deciding what should be restructured rather than simply replicated, preparing users for the change, and making sure the new setup supports the way the business works day to day.

A smoother migration is rarely the result of luck. It comes from having the right guidance, the right sequencing, and the right support around the project from start to finish. For SMEs, that often makes the difference between a migration that simply changes platform and one that genuinely improves the workplace.

But the job was never about just moving data. Devices also needed to be enrolled into Microsoft, user profiles and had to be configured, and staff needed access to Outlook, OneDrive and the documents they relied on day to day. Training on Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive formed part of the rollout too, alongside clear communication throughout the project. In practice, this is what a good migration looks like: not a bulk transfer from one platform to another, but a structured, supported move into a better way of working.

Planning a move from Google Workspace to Microsoft 365?

Apex can support your business through a structured Google to Microsoft 365 migration project, helping you move data, configure the new environment properly, prepare users for change, and upskill your team to ensure smooth day-to-day work post-migration. From planning and migrating through to setup and support, the focus is on making the transition as smooth, well-managed and low-disruption as possible.

Here's what that looks like in action...

For one Apex customer, the move from Google Workspace to Microsoft 365 didn't begin with a migration tool. It began with scoping. Before anything was moved, we ensured we understood what the customer actually had in Google, what needed to come across, and what the new Microsoft environment needed to look like once the project was complete.

That included Gmail, calendars and Google Drive data, as well as early conversations about structure, access and collaboration. It also meant being clear about limitations from the outset, including the fact that historic chat data couldn't be migrated through the available tools.

From there, the project was planned in stages with our dedicated team. We carried out an initial migration first, checked that the data had landed correctly, and then used incremental migrations to keep everything aligned ahead of the final go-live. Once the customer was ready, the final cutover was completed overnight to minimise disruption.

