

Improving user productivity and slashing IT workload through Active Directory migration



Law firm consolidates two large AD domains in just six months with Quest solutions and professional services.

Employees: **1,200**

Industry: **Law**

Maintaining multiple AD domains impacts productivity, security and costs.

A new law firm was formed through the merger of two large practices, each with its own complex digital ecosystem. Accordingly, immediate priorities for the IT team were to enable all employees of the newborn firm to be able to communicate effectively, and to present a unified presence to the external world. With help from the Quest Professional Services Organization (PSO), they were able to quickly achieve those goals.

Behind the scenes, however, the firm still had two separate Active Directory domains, which gave rise to a host of challenges for the business. “Security was a pretty big headache,” notes the enterprise server architect. “We had to maintain multiple admin accounts in order to give our support teams access to the different domains, which involved managing all their permissions and passwords. And, obviously, support teams would change, and different users would need different access at times. As a result, properly controlling access across the different environments was difficult and time consuming.”

Challenges

A large international law firm was created through the merger of two law practices, each with its own IT ecosystem. To enable better utilization of IT resources, simplify administration and control costs, the firm needed to consolidate its two Active Directory (AD) domains into a single new domain.

Solution

Because of the complexity and critical nature of the project, the firm wanted best-in-class solutions and experienced experts. Using Migrator Pro for Active Directory and Migrator Pro for Exchange, the Quest Professional Services (PSO) team and partner Kraft Kennedy delivered secure and seamless migrations of all 4,000 AD users and 13,000 Exchange mailboxes in just six months.

Benefits

- Consolidated two large AD domains into a greenfield domain in just six months
- Minimized business disruptions with a seamless experience for users
- Facilitated user productivity and satisfaction by simplifying business workflows
- Reduced IT team workload, security risks and costs

“Maintaining two domains also sometimes led to access issues for users, which meant more maintenance overhead for IT teams,” adds the senior server infrastructure manager. “You need a trust in place between the domains, and you have to keep the trust as limited as possible while still making sure users are able to do their job. That can give rise to issues like users not being able to access a resource they need because it’s in the other domain, which the IT team must address promptly. But troubleshooting can be difficult because when an issue arises, you never quite know: Is it the trust that’s not quite right or is it something else?”

Consolidating AD domains after a merger demands top tools and expertise.

The law firm recognized that migrating to a single domain was vital to improving user access to important resources, simplifying administration and controlling costs. Accordingly, the IT team began preparing for a huge consolidation project.

First, the IT team merged the two source Azure tenants using On Demand Migration from Quest. Then they turned their attention to the two on-premises AD environments. They determined the best approach was to consolidate the users and mailboxes into a unified greenfield AD domain.

The IT team was already familiar with Quest and impressed with Quest solutions. In addition to using On Demand Migration for the tenant consolidation, they had experience with several other Quest tools. “For example, I had used Spotlight for monitoring SQL Server, and our IT team in the US had used Quest migration solutions for some of their smaller acquisitions,” recalls the senior server infrastructure manager.

For this project, BCLP selected Migrator Pro for Active Directory and Migrator Pro for Exchange. “A comprehensive demo convinced us of the power and flexibility of the tools,” says the senior server infrastructure manager. “And the Quest team’s expertise and willingness to gain a thorough

understanding of our environment gave us confidence in partnering with them. We also engaged Quest partner Kraft Kennedy for our EMEA and APAC migrations.”

A true partnership yields impressive results.

Together, the teams were able to migrate the law firm’s 4,000 AD users and 13,000 Exchange mailboxes in just six months. The effort was a true partnership. “Our experience with Quest was very, very positive,” says the enterprise server architect. “Our source environments were quite complex, so there were multiple scripts that needed to be run to make the correct changes on our servers and handle all our various applications. We were able to learn the products and write the runbook for the Professional Services team to follow. Quest PSO got to know our environments inside out and helped tweak the runbook so that the migrations proceeded seamlessly.”

This collaborative approach continued through the migrations. “The lead Quest engineer was very proactive in troubleshooting issues,” adds the enterprise server architect. “He didn’t just say, ‘There’s a problem; can you guys fix it?’ It was, ‘We’ve hit an issue here; I’ve done some investigation and here’s what I think might be going on.’ Then we’d discuss it and work together to find the best solution and the best time to fix it.”

Equally important, the migrations were comprehensive and secure. “Together, we were able to move all the source user accounts and mailboxes into the new domain, retaining all their relevant security settings, data, history and so forth,” says the enterprise server architect. “Our legacy environments were mainly Exchange 2016, so we created an Exchange 2016 environment and migrated accounts over to that. We will migrate to Exchange Online further down the line.”

A seamless migration yields positive feedback from both leadership and business users.

The migration was a resounding success in the eyes of both business users and leaders. “The feedback from our users was that it all went pretty seamlessly,” the senior server infrastructure manager reports. “I can count on one hand the number of times we had to roll back any migrations once we’d nailed down the process.”

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*Senior Server Infrastructure Manager,
International Law Firm*

The team was also able to take advantage of the migration to move users to a different management platform. “As users were migrated to the new domain, they either received a new laptop or had their current laptop wiped and reconfigured,” adds the senior server infrastructure manager. “While that additional step caused them to lose access for a period of time, both the business users and the leadership team were very pleased with how the project went and the benefits it has enabled.”

In a migration partner, flexibility is as important as experience.

While the deep expertise of the Quest PSO staff was invaluable to the success of the project, the law firm was equally impressed by their professionalism and flexibility. “The IT pros from our law firm who were working on the migration also had to keep up with all their regular tasks and were working on multiple projects at the same time, so they could not be fully

committed to the project seven hours a day, five days a week,” notes the senior server infrastructure manager. “The Quest PSO team members were very accommodating about the pace we needed to go at.”

“The Quest team was also great about accommodating the time zone difference,” adds the enterprise server architect. “I think the key Quest person was based in India but he worked EMEA hours so he could do the US migrations during their business hours. In fact, all the Quest people were quite willing to work a little bit later to get the job done and maximize the opportunity to share knowledge.”

Extensive preparation and testing are the keys to migration success.

Looking back on the migration, the IT team at the law firm has the following advice to offer to other organizations. “Don’t be scared about migrating accounts and mailboxes,” says the senior server infrastructure manager. “I think some of our senior leadership were worried about all the things that could go wrong in our project and how it might leave everyone at the firm unable to do anything. But with lots of careful preparation and testing, and the right tools and partners, it went quite seamlessly.”

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Plus, there was a bonus benefit to the project. “Working on the migrations certainly developed our knowledge of all the systems that we work with to a quite advanced level that wasn’t there before,” notes the enterprise server architect. “All of us who worked with the Quest PSO team were able to grow our skills, which was incredibly rewarding for us. In short, our AD and Exchange consolidation project was a very positive experience, and we’d be more than happy to engage with Quest in the future.”

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PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Products

- [Migrator Pro for Active Directory](#)
- [Migrator Pro for Exchange](#)

Solutions

- [Microsoft Platform Management](#)
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