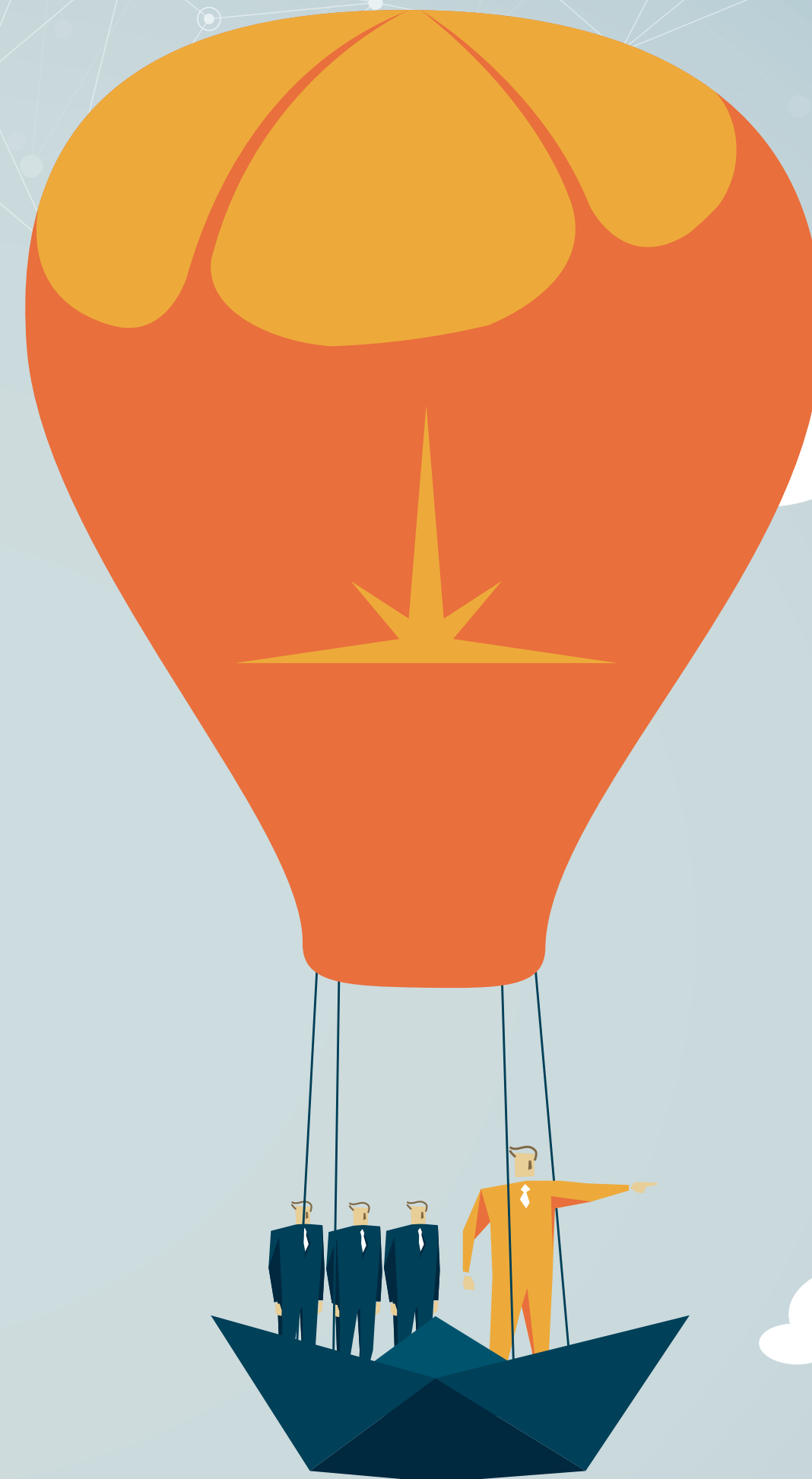




Mergers and Acquisitions: Plotting A Course For Success





Start with why

Merging or acquiring a company is a strategic win for growing organizations. It's a step towards new opportunities, innovation, and accelerated growth – bolstering brand equity and a stronger position in the marketplace.

Eye On The Endgame

Integrating two entities with as little disruption as possible can be a significant challenge. To ensure that the important work of your bigger, broader organizations can continue, there are several priorities for technology leaders to consider:

- Reduce the complexity of what can be an overwhelming process.
- Streamline integration of systems, databases, applications.
- Reduce risk, staying ahead of emerging security threats.
- Enhance collaboration within your expanded teams.
- Empower remote workers to do their best work, securely.

Merging organizations impacts every aspect of a business, from aligning organizational teams and operations to soft skills, culture, and change management.

Secure, expeditious integration of data, applications and infrastructure is more than mission-critical, it can make the difference between a good corporate decision and a bad one.

"A failed integration is universally recognized as one of the biggest value destroyers in the world of M&A."



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It's Complicated

The complexities inherent in merging business acquisitions or combining multiple enterprises into a single organization can present similar challenges.

Acquirers are often faced with widely disparate platforms, technologies, and applications.

Known security vulnerabilities represent potential threats, which may be compounded by latent unknown issues. Those risks increase exponentially when you include multiple physical locations and remote workers.

Working with a team that has 'been there before' helps eliminate the complexities that may be overlooked by an inexperienced IT team that is trying to anticipate where potential pitfalls may lie.



Due Diligence

Business imperatives often drive M&A initiatives, however taking a deep dive under the hood in the technology space often happens after the decision to merge is made.

While it is a natural tendency to jump right in and start migrating data, integrating directories or moving content between environments; without due diligence, it's a doomed strategy.

A thorough discovery process is an essential first step to a smooth integration. A deep understanding of the existing infrastructures, business processes, hardware/software disparity, business critical applications, roles, and responsibilities are critical to producing an effective integration plan. It's the unique components which exist in each environment which can sometimes present the most difficult challenges.

An illustration featuring a man in a blue suit and white shirt standing in a yellow hot air balloon basket. He is holding a telescope to his eye, looking down at a large, complex maze on the ground. The maze is composed of dark blue walls and white paths. The background is a light blue sky with a network of white dots and lines at the top, suggesting a digital or technological theme. A yellow speech bubble is positioned to the right of the balloon.

**A lack of
up-front discovery
leads to being inundated
with issues and challenges
that could have been
easily avoided.**

Eating the Elephant

A phased approach can ensure all facets of the engagement are strategically designed and customized to address each unique infrastructure integration challenge.

Once discovery is complete, an infrastructure design is created to identify the components required and a migration process which includes a detailed project plan for merging the two environments.

These will vary based on the complexity of the infrastructure and may include directory, free/busy during coexistence, mail routing, custom applications, voice integration, etc.

There may also be different platforms of operations, physical records that needed to be digitized, security gaps with PII and employee remote access. Each area requires thorough analysis and careful planning for smooth integration.

A phased approach allows the team to overcome the hurdles involved in working through the complex scenarios involved in the merging of the environments with minimal disruption.



Align Priorities

A major pharmaceutical firm already had a large IT staff with experience merging with other environments.

This team was busy supporting the existing IT infrastructure/initiatives and needed additional resources and expertise to optimize and accelerate the M&A integration/migration process with minimal disruption.



Having a partner that acts as an extension of your team lets you build on your proprietary knowledge and tap their resources, experience and expertise to ensure smooth execution while your team stays focused on your key business priorities.

Execution Excellence

Once the plan is locked down, development begins. This may involve applications that need to be modified prior to transition, migration tool testing and validation against a pilot group, or scripts which may need to be created or modified to streamline the migration process or lessen the user impact during a migration/transition.

Each development cycle needs thorough testing prior to execution. Asking employees to be 'guinea pigs' for new tools and processes is a sure way to increase stress and frustration in their already disruptive world of change.

Seemingly small issues can present major business disruptions when impacting a large user population post-migration (i.e. messages non-delivering, calendar items not working, missing data post migration).

These challenges could be avoided with adequate development and testing prior to migration.



An illustration featuring a dark blue hand holding a yellow pencil with a white eraser. The pencil is pointing towards a complex, dark blue maze on a light blue background. A speech bubble originates from the pencil's tip. In the top left corner, there is a network diagram with white dots and lines. A thick white diagonal line crosses the lower right portion of the image.

"Migrate faster" is a mantra for successful M&A integrations. The longer an environment is in a co-existence state the more opportunity there is for business disruption.

Avoid Project Fatigue

The longer the merging organizations are in co-existence mode the more painful it will be for everyone involved.

Once the migration plan is approved, communicating the roadmap to both leadership and employees is essential. Outline major steps and their impact on processes, roles and responsibilities.

It's essential to implement the migration process as rapidly as possible while still meeting the business needs of the organizations involved.

Minimizing Disruption

Bringing 1000+ users online simultaneously is challenging, but add shift workers, distributed work force and you up the complexity immediately.

All mergers exhibit complexity.

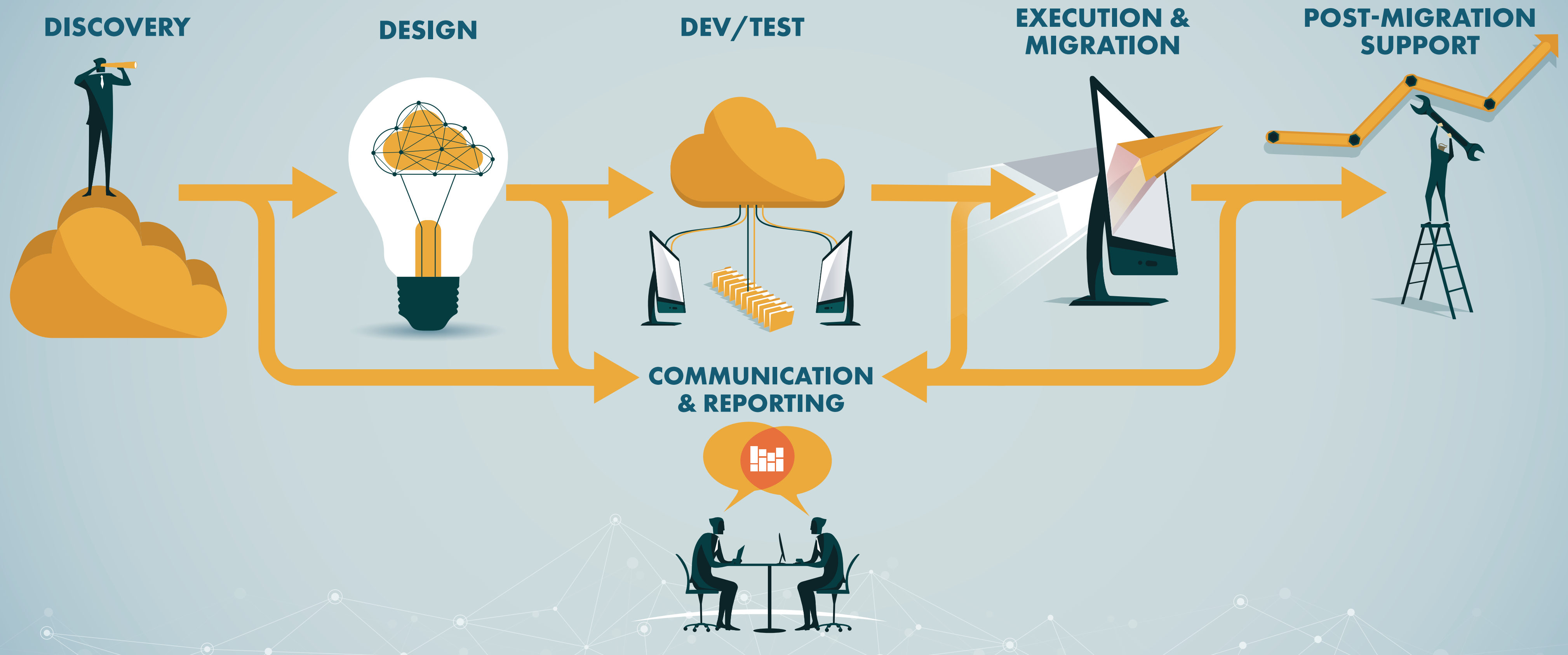
From the addition of a small 70 user organization to an environment with hundreds of thousands of users to a merger with tens of thousands of users on both sides, each scenario presents challenges and complexity.

Planning and a phased approach is needed to ensure the most seamless migration process with limited negative impact to the businesses involved.



When experience counts

For over 25 years Horizons has been helping companies execute complex infrastructure integrations. As a Microsoft Gold Certified partner, we have pioneered best practices and methodologies that are the foundation of Horizons Consulting's Migration Design Framework.



Our ongoing mission is to reduce risk, enhance employee collaboration and empower remote workers as they become contributors to their unified company's success.

Meeting M&A challenges and opportunities head on.

Your company's vision for growth, innovation, and long-term success calls for a proven technology partner with the expertise to tackle your complex ideas and technical challenges.

We are that partner!
Let's connect and explore options.
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