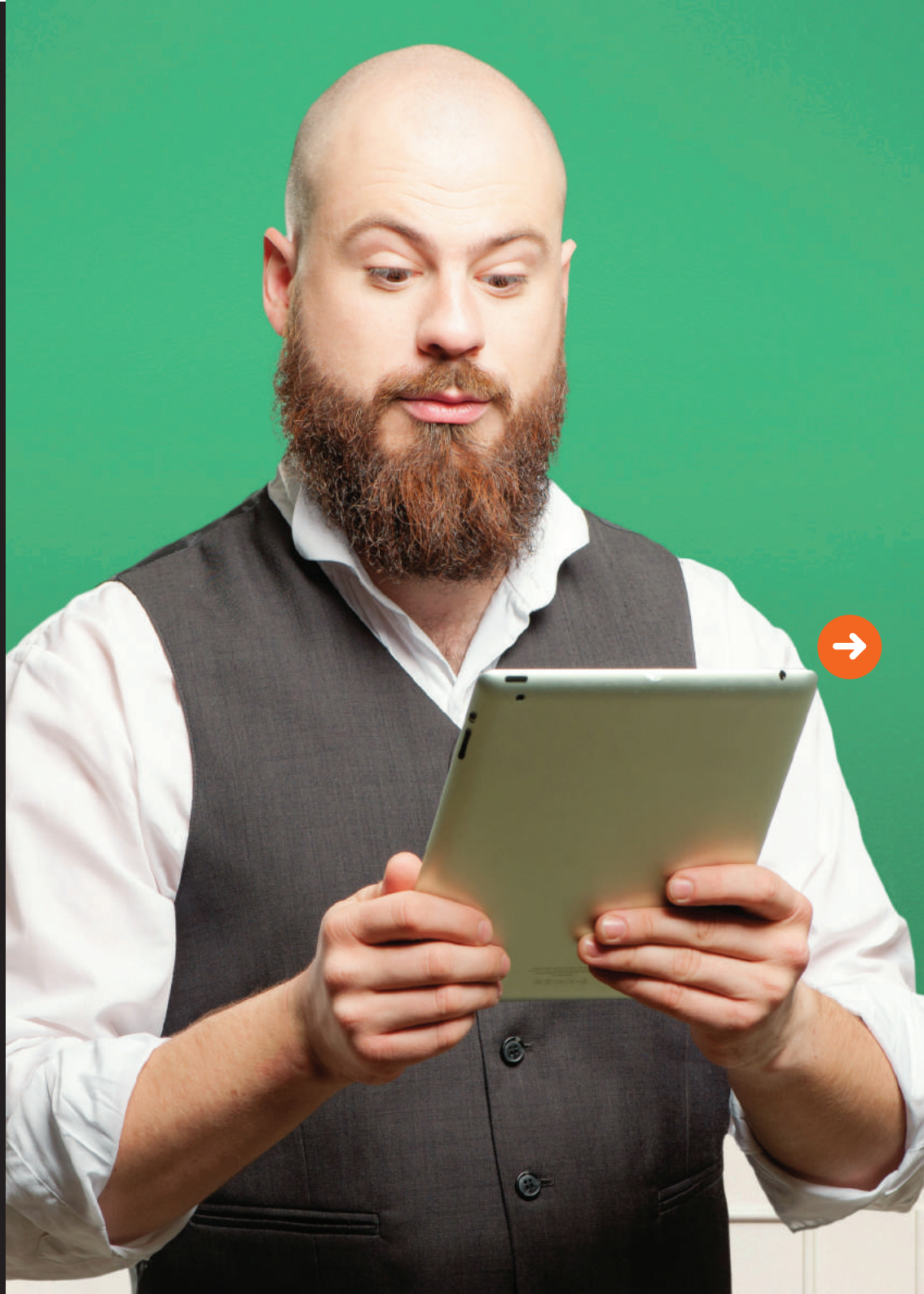
Transformation with Skype for Business

Six steps to deployment success

orange™ Business Services



Six steps to deployment success

Transforming your communication and collaboration services with Skype for Business.

In our Skype for Buisness how-to guide, we cover deployment and transition. Our previous guides helped you build a business case and choose the technology. Now we turn to transforming your current communication and collaboration services with a full Office 365 Skype for Business Online solution.

At a global scale this transformation can be a complex task and requires careful long-term planning. As previously discussed, it's essential to involve users from the outset and ensure that the infrastructure is able to deliver the requisite quality of service. In this how-to guide we will focus on how to deliver a successful Office 365 Skype for Business deployment.

In the following pages we describe six steps to make a seamless switch to Skype for Business. Some of these phases will overlap and in some cases can be omitted, but they are a blueprint for success in this complex undertaking.

"At a global scale this transformation can be a complex task and requires careful long-term planning."

1. Prepare your infrastructure

Ensure that your infrastructure is prepared for the additional demands of Skype for Business.

Before embarking on any unified communications project, it's essential to ensure that your infrastructure is ready for the additional demands of Skype for Business. This helps preserve the quality of user experience as more applications and services are added to Skype for Business during the full deployment.

Infrastructure issues manifest themselves primarily in real-time applications such as voice and video conferencing. They will be very obvious to users and include poor sound or picture quality and dropped calls. Typical problems include over-utilized WAN links, poor IP routing in the network, firewalls that are not configured for real-time equipment and unsuitable end-user equipment.

The preparation exercise will include network capacity planning and analysis. This will determine what changes or upgrades you will need to make to the infrastructure before full deployment.

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2. Deploy foundational services and conferencing

Foundational services prepare your users for the full Skype enterprise service.

To ease user adoption of Skype for Business and to meet user requirements for modern collaboration tools, we recommend deploying foundational services first. These include presence and instant messaging, person-to-person calling and desktop sharing. If the network assessment finds the infrastructure is resilient enough at this stage, then it's also possible to deploy person-to-person desktop video calling.

After this, look to migrate conferencing services over to Skype for Business. This is a key element in achieving the business case, as it allows you to eliminate the spending you currently make on audio conferencing services.

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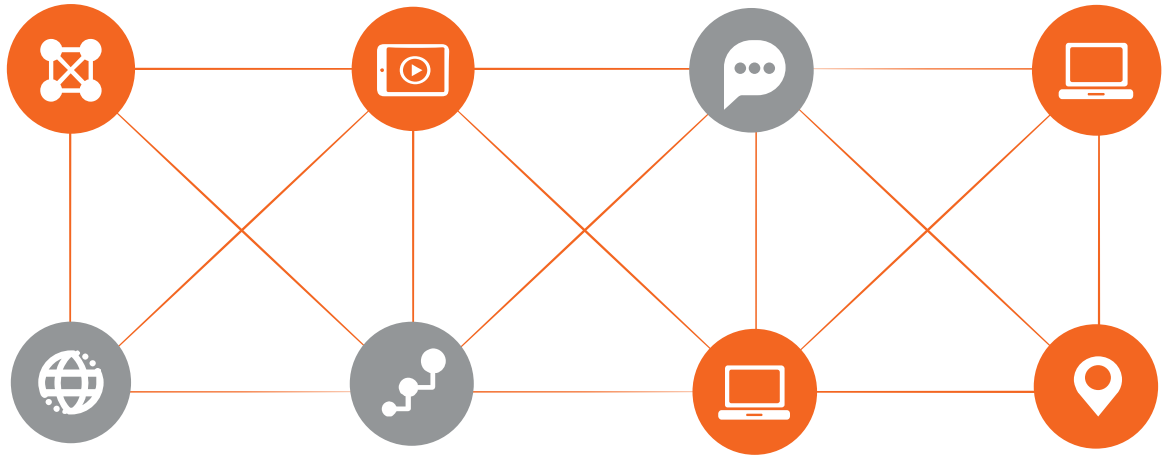
3. Design full Skype for Business cloud voice solution

Set up the corporate dial plan, security, voice traffic optimization and policy.

The next phase is to design and test a technological model for full Skype for Business cloud voice deployment. This is the standard process for a PBX replacement project and includes designing the corporate dial plan and working out voice traffic routing to avoid high call costs. The solution design also needs to cover security requirements and policy, such what type of calls users are allowed to make. For example, internal-only, international or premium rate numbers. At the end of this phase it is recommended to test the model with a short proof-of-concept project.

“The next phase is to design and test a technological model for full Skype for Business cloud voice deployment voice deployment.”



4. Pilot solution with active users

Involve users from the outset by using a pilot.

As we have outlined in our previous how-to guides, user acceptance is crucial to the success of any Skype for Business project. Users need to be involved from the outset to ensure that their needs are being met with the solution. A pilot is a great opportunity to give users hands-on experience of Skype and collect their feedback to refine and improve the solution. Therefore the pilot must include a full cross-section of users, including managers, office workers, remote workers and others, in addition to those in IT.

“The pilot must include a full-cross section of active users, not just those from IT.”

5. Use an industrialized transition model

Deploy the solution as quickly as possible throughout the organization.

Once the solution has been finalized and fully tested with the pilot, it's essential to deploy the solution as quickly as possible throughout the organization. If you don't do this then you will end up with a disparate user base, which puts support under strain, damages user experience and fails to realize the business case.

The key to condensing the transition is to create an industrialized transition model that is repeatable worldwide. On a technical level, it needs to incorporate on-the-ground support to deploy vital local equipment, such as gateways and Cloud Connector Edition Appliances needed for PSTN connectivity to enable Cloud PBX users to make/receive calls outside of Skype for Business Online that increase site resilience. Knowledge of different countries' regulations and import law is also essential. Just as important is the communication with end-users at each site. This includes training, handover to the new solution and support after deployment to solve any issues. Time spent here will repay your efforts many times over in terms of end-user adoption.

6. Ongoing operation and expansion

Plan for future service upgrades and enhancements.

Once the solution is deployed, the final phase is to deal with its ongoing operation. Crucially this includes dealing with new releases and the enhancement of the service. Any new releases will need to be reviewed in terms of how they impact on your infrastructure and business case. This requires coordinated change management processes between you, the service provider and the technology vendor.

Beyond the basic functionality of Skype for Business, there is also an opportunity to extend the service significantly with applications from the ecosystem, such as unified communications analytics and call accounting solutions. This can also help in designing communications enabled business processes (CEBP) to realize the full value of unified communications.

We can help you every step in this transformation. Our portfolio is based on the Skype Operations Framework methodology combined with Orange expertise to maximize success. Delivered with a local touch and award winning "World Class" customer experience (Ocean82 bench marking's Voice of the Customer. "Gold award", 2016) , our professionals bridge the gap between technology and what's right for your business to help you overcome challenges and gain maximum value out of your solutions. We are present in 220 countries, with local support in 166 countries.

Your next step: Get your business Skype'd up.

For more information on making the transition to full cloud voice with Skype for Business, please visit us online: http://www.orange-business.com/en/Skype-for-Business