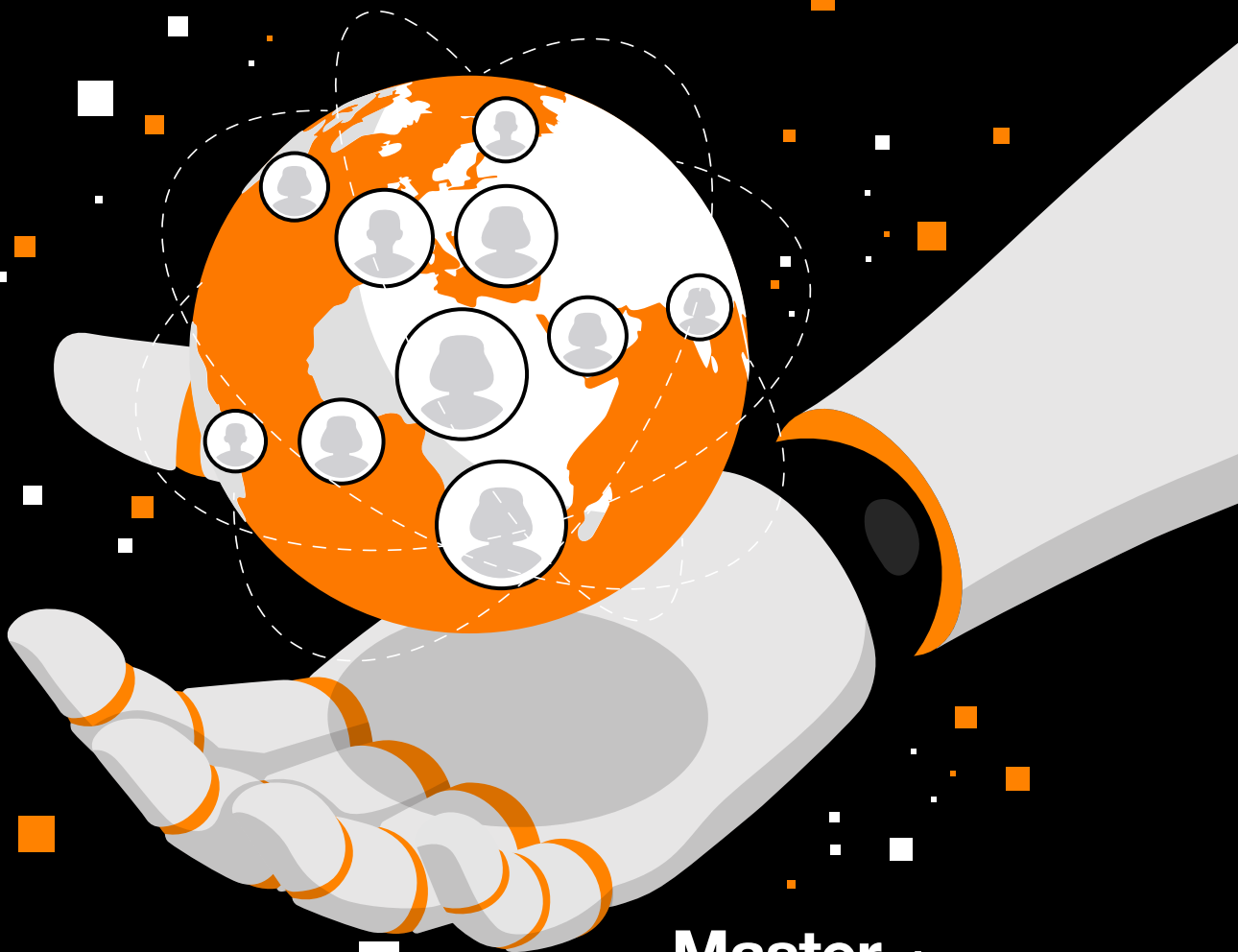




Business

From Day One to synergy delivery

Why rapid completion of post-merger infrastructure integration matters



**Master the
moment**
with Evolution Platform

Any successful merger and acquisition requires the post-merger integration (PMI) process to be completed as quickly as possible. However, the complexity of interconnecting two disparate IT environments and the need to ship physical hardware assets to office locations have meant that digital infrastructure integration has often been frustratingly slow. By virtualizing this entire process, Evolution Platform rewrites the rulebook of infrastructure integration. Typically with our customers we have cut the time required from months to weeks and reduced the total cost of ownership by 20 – 40%.

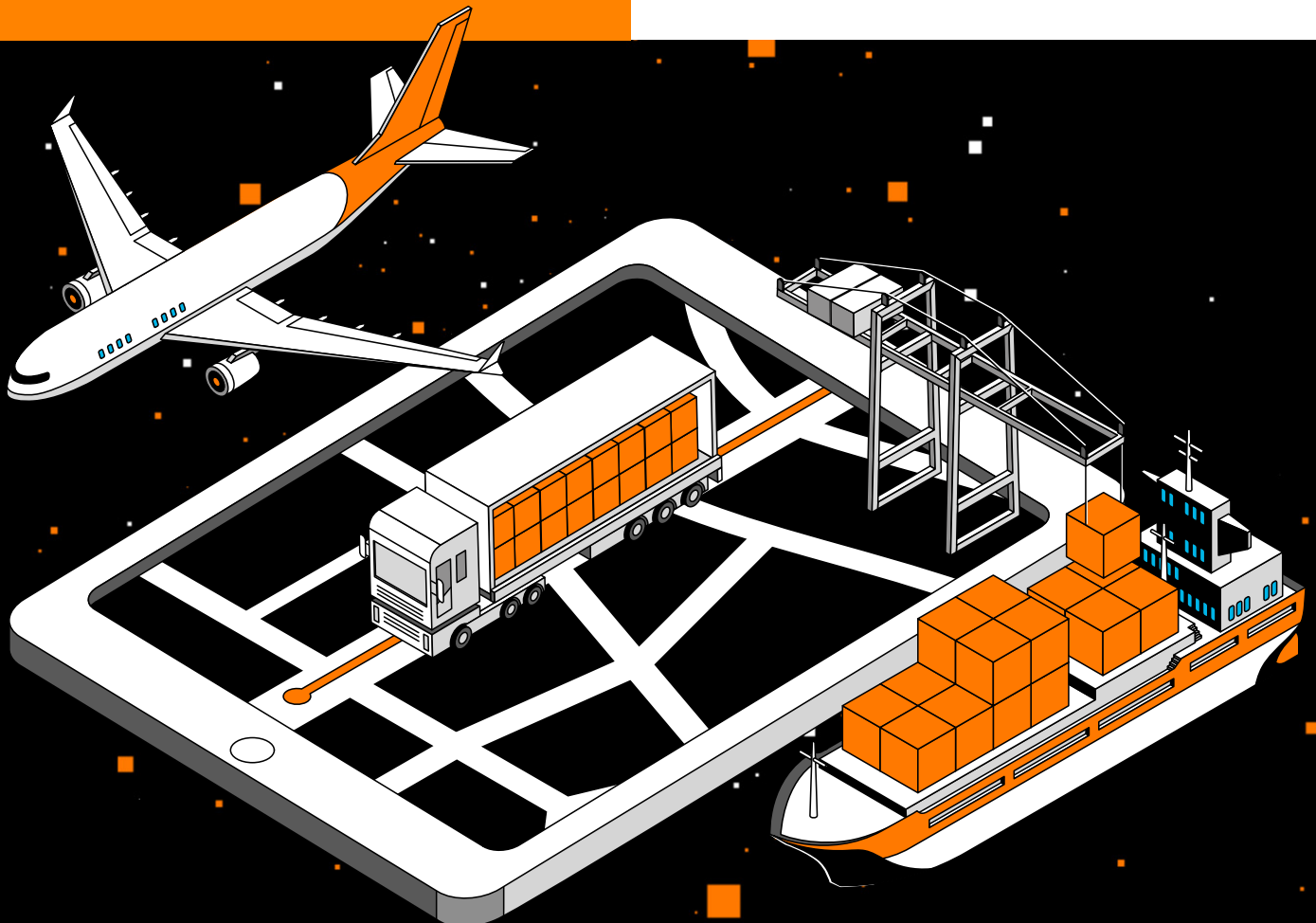
M&A activity is on the rise

Orange Business's experience of working with major customers around the world is that mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have become an almost annual event for many of them. This anecdotal evidence is supported by formal research. For example, McKinsey reported that global M&A activity increased 43% in 2025.

It attributed this to corporate FOMO (Fear of Missing Out):

“Economic effects were lighter than anticipated, balance sheets remained strong, monetary policies lowered the cost of capital, and the buzz around AI contributed to growing optimism¹.”

As a result, companies are investing in transactions that could “help control costs, protect margins, and mitigate risks,” and McKinsey concluded that this trend was likely to continue in 2026. Goldman Sachs went one step further and anticipated that 2026 would be a “bumper year” for M&A activity².



Failure rates are high, and a fast start is essential to achieving success

One statistic that will dampen this mood of optimism is the fact that, according to Forbes, an estimated 70 – 75% of acquisitions fail to deliver expected returns. There are many reasons for this – cultural misalignment, inadequate due diligence, or a weak strategic rationale – but one of the most underestimated threats to M&A success is “the failure to integrate systems, teams, and processes swiftly and strategically³.”

In any M&A, Day One – the date on which the merged entity begins operations and integration plans can start to be implemented – takes place when (or shortly after) approval has been received from the regulatory entities in each of the territories in which the organization operates, the deal formally “closes”, and the acquired assets are legally transferred. Getting this PMI off to a fast start is critical, with one consultancy claiming that, “The first 100 days after the deal closes can set the tone for everything that follows⁴.”

The speed at which the integration is completed is crucial for several reasons: a fast, well-prepared start builds strategic



momentum for the entire integration process and ensures critical systems, financial operations (payroll/banking), and services continue uninterrupted. And, perhaps most importantly, synergies (such as cost savings and new revenue opportunities) can only be achieved after Day One, and delaying the integration slows down the realization of these benefits. As Kearny observed, “The rule of thumb is that the longer it takes to deliver synergies, the harder it gets⁵.”

And, of course, extended disruption will unsettle employees at a time when competitors are actively looking to recruit the best talent.



The first 100 days after the deal closes can set the tone for everything that follows.

Companies are failing to deliver PMI success in the 100-day window

Research indicates that only 14% of companies achieve complete success across strategic, operational, and financial integration goals⁶, which, given the primacy of the first 100 days, suggests that the majority are not delivering on their immediate PMI objectives.

Again, there is no single point of failure here. Cultural misalignment and employee resistance may reduce momentum and productivity, while poor or inadequate planning leads to tactical firefighting rather than strategic management of the integration. Communication failures may result in mixed messages or create a vacuum that is filled by misinformation. In some cases, trying to do “too much, too soon” overloads the organization and leads to burnout.

Perhaps the toughest of integration challenges is operational and technical complexity. In fact, up to 84% of IT integrations experience significant issues or outright failure⁷. This may owe to the fact that M&A activity is generally managed from a business perspective, which may underestimate the complexity of the IT merger. And these technical difficulties have significant business impacts: 30 – 50% of deal value is lost to slow or ineffective IT integration⁸.

Doing IT integration the old way

In an M&A, IT infrastructure and operations integration is inevitably the lengthiest and therefore the most frustrating element of the PMI process. This is because these systems often rely on on-premises infrastructure, and combining two companies involves consolidating cloud, network connectivity, and cybersecurity services.

In this situation, several processes need to be managed in parallel. Disparate networks must be interconnected to establish a single, unified IT infrastructure that enables employees to securely and seamlessly share resources. Cloud environments such as AWS, Azure, and GCP must be harmonized by merging different cloud environments and, in some cases, migrating on-premises applications to the cloud. With so much of the security stack residing in the network, policies for security, IAM, and vulnerability management must be standardized across the merged entity.

Once all planning is complete and the “to-be” state is determined, the process hinges on shipping physical hardware to the office locations where it is needed, a service that we routinely provide to our customers. Over the years, we have

streamlined this process as much as possible by, for example, storing commonly used hardware items in our offices worldwide for more rapid shipment to office locations. We have also become very well-versed in the red tape necessary to ship this hardware across international borders.

Nonetheless, until teleportation becomes a standard feature of the logistics profession, this process will always introduce delays that put the brakes on PMI. And, of course, if any mistakes are made or new equipment needs to be ordered, further delays will result.

In the face of demands for more rapid and more successful PMI, expectations are rising in terms of speed, simplicity, flexibility, etc.; in other words, “Existing approaches are still not good enough!”



The virtues of virtualization

When we introduced Evolution Platform to our customers, it quickly became clear that, although it was not created exclusively for this purpose, this virtualized platform offered a radical new approach to IT infrastructure integration.

Evolution Platform is our market-leading Network-as-a-Service solution, empowering customers to configure and manage infrastructure services in near real time. It combines the robust cloud, connectivity, and cybersecurity services customers have long expected from telco providers with the flexible, consumption-based model of the cloud world. This approach reduces the time taken to complete the PMI process from months to weeks – and drastically cuts costs at the same time.

The traditional approach to infrastructure integration, described in the previous section, focuses on directly interconnecting two inevitably heterogeneous IT environments and the complexity that inevitably results from that. Evolution Platform offers a completely different approach by serving as a digital bridge

between the two environments: rather than interconnecting the two environments, these are instead each connected to Evolution Platform.

Within Evolution Platform, virtual firewalls, SD-WAN gateways, and routers can be spun up to connect the two IT worlds, even if the vendors in the parent and acquired entities are different. The only requirement is for the two entities to be connected to the Orange Network so they can access these capabilities. The designed, fully interconnected architecture can then be delivered with a few clicks, on a temporary basis if needed, and then evolved to a final architecture design.



You're in control

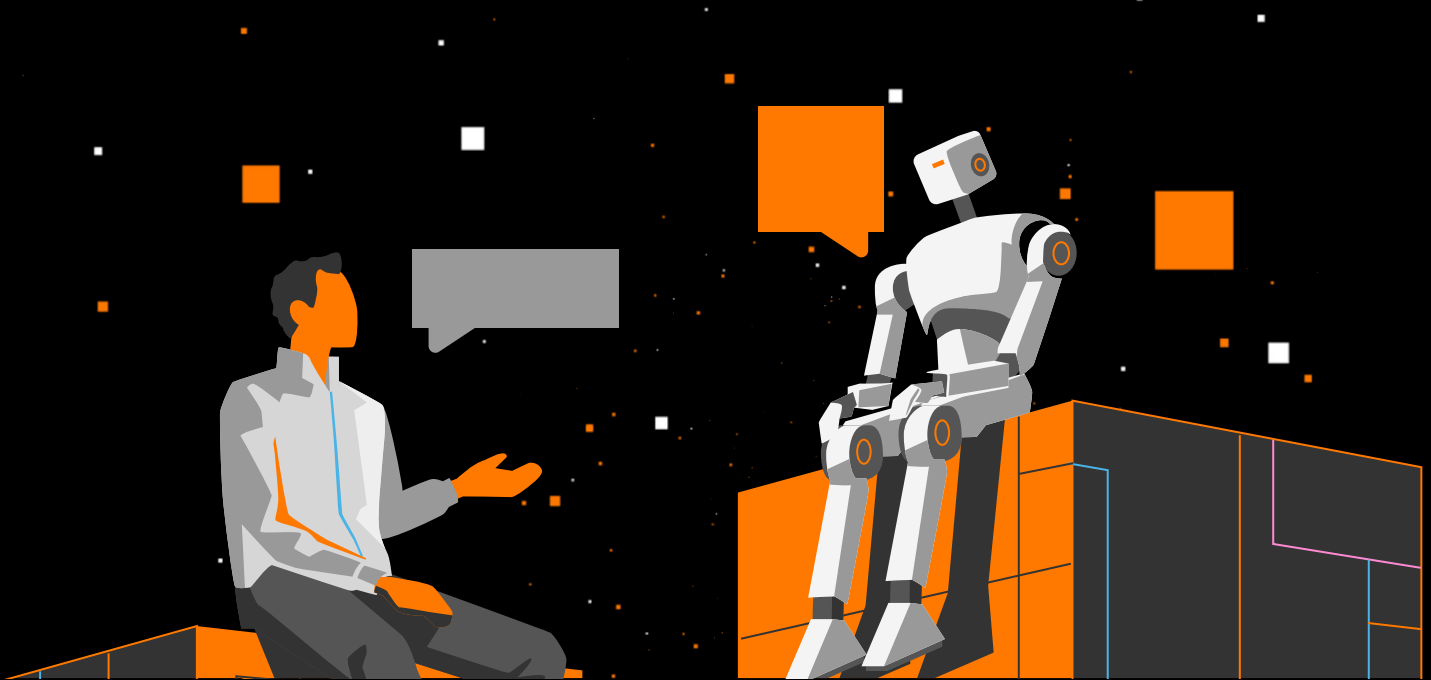
Once this bridge is in place, infrastructure leaders are in complete control of their environment. They can select vendors and solutions of their preference from more than 16 Evolution Ecosystem partners. Because the platform automatically chains underlying cloud, connectivity, and cybersecurity services, these can be spun up, changed, or retired on demand in near real time. And, as a result of the virtualization of the entire platform, no hardware shipments are required, and all provisioning is achieved in minutes.

If interim solutions are required between the current and to-be state, these can be deployed and withdrawn as needed – again, no hardware is required, and all payments are on a “pay-as-you-go” subscription basis. The flexibility of the platform ensures that experiments – or mistakes – can be made and rectified in a moment with zero risk.

In a divestment/carve-out scenario, Evolution Platform functions as a bridge in the same way, but the whole process is greatly simplified by the fact that the starting environments are the same. The divested part of the company is simply segmented via Evolution Platform and then connected to the acquiring company (either via Evolution Platform if the acquiring company

is [or is willing to become] a customer or via the physical interconnection approach described above).

Of course, IT integration encompasses more than just these infrastructural elements. It also involves data center consolidation, software portfolio rationalization, data integration and management, and the harmonization of IT Governance. There are tools and methodologies that can expedite each of these processes, but they cannot be productized in the same way as those services on Evolution Platform. However, our consultancy teams have extensive experience in these areas and would be delighted to help out if you need help with any of them.



The virtues of virtualization: everything right now

The virtualization of a process that relied on physical hardware elements massively reduces the friction involved in IT infrastructure integration. This has profound effects.

For example, for a large customer that makes multiple acquisitions every year, we have created an M&A as-a-Service methodology based on Evolution Platform. This completely standardizes what was previously a complex and highly bespoke process, and transforms the timescale from months to a few weeks. In a different M&A project, we provided the blueprint for a multi-cloud environment interconnect, leveraging Evolution Platform as a bridge between the two worlds. In this way, we successfully integrated over 150 sites in fewer than 90 days, which would have been a mammoth project in the past.

The softwarization of what previously required the physical interconnection of two environments, typically in a private data center, has significant cost benefits. There are no hardware or shipping costs. Interim services can be spun up and retired on a “pay-as-you-go” basis. The automatic chaining of services

eliminates the need for expensive engineering skills. As a result, Evolution Platform customers report overall savings of between 20 and 40% compared with their old approach to IT infrastructure integration. When integration costs for large M&A projects can run into millions of dollars/euros, those savings are significant.

However, in any M&A, time is money. And, in the wider scheme of things, these IT infrastructure savings pale almost into insignificance. Accelerating IT integration brings new colleagues together quickly and ensures critical systems function smoothly, minimizing disruption and disengagement. And of course, those synergy benefits can be realized sooner rather than later, helping ensure your merger is not among the majority that fail to realize value but among the few that fulfill their full potential.

¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/m-and-a/our-insights/top-m-and-a-trends>

² <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2025-09-03/goldman-sachs-forecasts-record-m-a-in-2026>

³ [https://www.valoremreply.com/resources/insights/blog/why-delayed-integration-post-mergers-can-derail-your-investment/#:~:text=Mergers%20and%20acquisitions%20\(M&A\)%20are,between%20M&A%20success%20and%20failure](https://www.valoremreply.com/resources/insights/blog/why-delayed-integration-post-mergers-can-derail-your-investment/#:~:text=Mergers%20and%20acquisitions%20(M&A)%20are,between%20M&A%20success%20and%20failure)

⁴ <https://www.introlution.co.uk/articles/post-merger-integration-first-100-days#:~:text=Early%20wins%20might%20include%20blending,Is%20Riskier%20Than%20Moving%20Early>

⁵ <https://www.kearney.com/service/mergers-acquisitions/article/-/insights/signing-to-close-using-this-m-a-golden-period-to-your-advantage#:~:text=Ensure%20a%20smooth%20Day%201,soon%20as%20possible%20is%20crucial>

⁶ <https://www.ideas2it.com/blogs/post-merger-it-integration-in-private-equity>

⁷ <https://www.ideas2it.com/blogs/post-merger-it-integration-in-private-equity>

⁸ <https://pmistack.com/blog/post-merger-integration-statistics>