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eBOOK

Eight Tips for Mastering Migration

How to enable and ensure business agility

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Content

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Introduction

Every day, a new product launch promises speed, efficiency or savings for businesses eager to stay a step ahead. But if you're an IT pro, and it's your job to onboard the new system, the allure gives way to practical considerations:

- How will you move all that critical data—including dependencies, settings and custom configurations—from one system to another so it all talks to each other the way it's supposed to?

- Will you need users to test the environment, and how much of their time will you need, before it goes into production?

- What's the best way to minimize planned downtime while performing workload migrations?

- Whether you're tackling a one-off project or looking to improve your in-house skills, these eight tips for mastering migration will help you form a strategy, determine costs and find technical solutions to ensure successful migration no matter what platform you're on or which one you're moving to.

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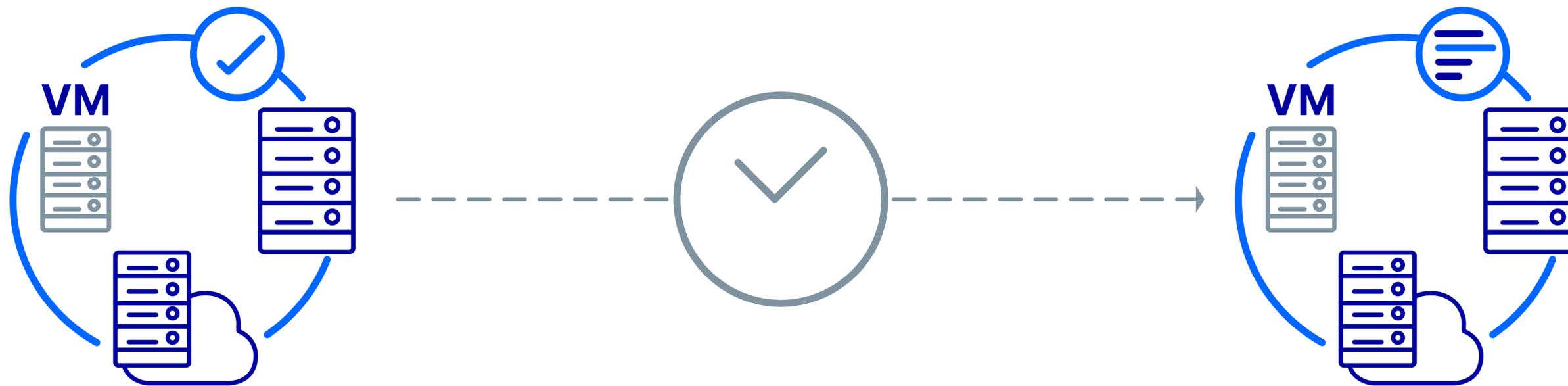
Factor downtime into your cost analysis

Today's businesses have no tolerance for downtime on critical systems and data. Anytime a user can't access that data, there's a cost. But most businesses neglect to calculate the cost of downtime, even after experiencing it.[1] Generic estimates only provide a partial picture of the true cost of downtime for your organization. In pricing out the total cost of ownership (TCO) for protection, a critical factor will be the downtime cost for each application in your ecosystem.

This includes:

Decreased productivity – How many employees are affected and for how many hours?

Lost revenue – What are the direct losses from downtime, such as a missed sale or an inability to bill for services?

Financial performance – How does downtime affect key metrics like cash flow, revenue recognition and stock price?

Surprise expenses – Did you have to hire additional help, pay overtime, or cover extra shipping or legal fees?

Damaged reputation – Will customers, suppliers, partners and investors look at you differently?

Before you consider how much the fix is going to cost, first understand the cost of the problem.

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Use the right tool for the job

The growth of public cloud services from major players like Amazon, Google and Microsoft has led to a proliferation of tools for migrating to a specific cloud platform. But these tools use inferior technology that opens the door for data loss during the migration process. They're often platform-dependent, engineered for one type of migration scenario only. Many businesses have service level agreements (SLAs) that dictate exactly how much downtime is allowed for a specific server or platform. A good migration tool gives you the flexibility to ensure these predetermined outcomes. Durability is especially urgent for mission-critical systems and data subject to regulatory compliance.

A platform-dependent tool based on technology that introduces the risk of data loss into the migration process is simply not an option for these types of businesses.

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Fully plan out the migration

You can carefully plot your pre-migration steps but still end up with an unsuccessful migration if you don't have a post-cutover plan. It's not unusual for migrations to go smoothly at the beginning, only to fall apart later. For example, you may run into issues with the new platform that necessitate a return to the old one—but by that point, you may already have users on the new platform. You need a plan for returning to the original source without losing new data.

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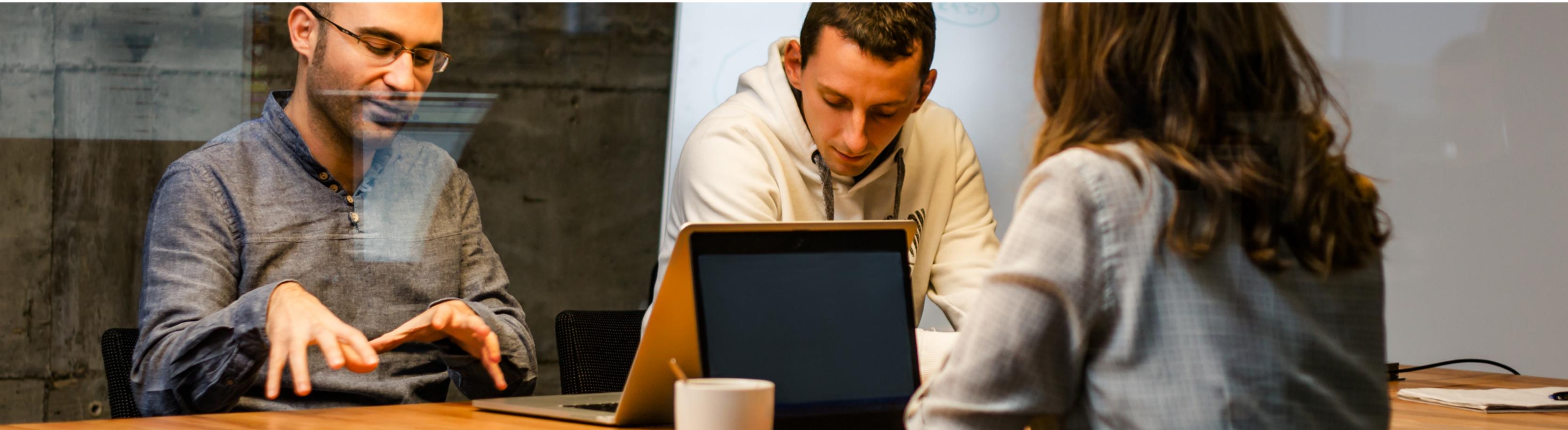
Chunk workloads

Depending on the size of the migration project, organize server workloads into manageable groups based on criticality, difficulty, performance, etc. Figure out the organizational scheme and break projects down into logical units. Then attack those server groups accordingly.

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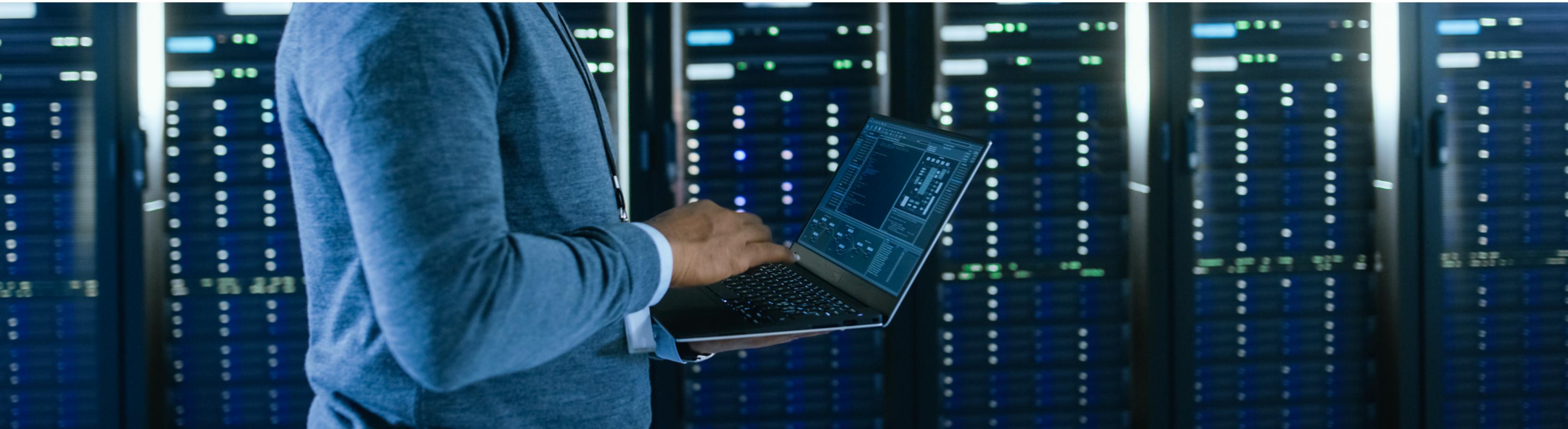
Perform fully functional tests

There's no substitute for having a fully functional replica to test, with the entire server workload on the target platform. Fully functional tests are critical for consistently successful migrations.

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Know when to raise your hand

Cross-dependencies can be so complex that not even the system architect can discover all of them. If there aren't enough resources to dedicate to migration, don't bite off more than you can chew. The best route may be to hire professional services. A service provider with migration expertise can reduce the risk of a failed migration and may help control costs versus attempting to do it with insufficient resources.

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Take the long view

Assume that migrations will need to be performed again. Invest in tools and methodologies that will be useful for future projects as well as the current one. Start asking procurement questions like, "How easy will it be to get onto or off this particular piece of hardware, hypervisor or cloud platform?" The cycle of technological innovation and frequency of moving are only accelerating, and a better system or platform could be just around the corner. Start thinking ahead and scrutinizing ultra-proprietary systems now. And as always, question how each decision will benefit you in the long run.

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Make the most of migration

Take the opportunity of a migration project to review your overall business continuity (BC) plan. Use it to determine if the BC plan will continue to provide the optimal coverage for both older and newer systems, and if there is any need to eliminate conflicts between migration and BC plan interoperability. Consider high availability (HA) and disaster recovery (DR) strategies holistically, where each plays off the other's strengths, and as part of the larger business continuity strategy.

OpenText Migrate

Easy Windows, Linux and SQL migrations without downtime

OpenText Migrate quickly and easily migrates physical, virtual and cloud workloads over any distance with minimal downtime or risk of data loss. Using real-time, byte-level replication technology, Migrate creates a replica of the data, application, database or server during migration, and keeps it in sync with the production system. Downtime is limited to the few minutes (or seconds) it takes to cut over to the new server, giving IT teams the agility and flexibility they need to adopt new, innovative technology.

- Perform seamless any-to-any migrations

- Create structured, repeatable migrations

- Test target servers before cutover

About OpenText

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