



Red River

RED RIVER'S GUIDE TO

# THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY



While 89% of organizations now report that they're focusing on a digital-first approach, only 44% of them have completed their digital transformation journey. Digital transformation is the process of integrating technology into all sectors of a business, to yield better results in terms of productivity, revenue, and customer experience.

Through digital transformation, organizations can streamline their operations, improve security and compliance, and ultimately build upon and future-proof their infrastructure. A full-scale digital transformation doesn't happen overnight. It's a journey. At Red River, we've separated this journey into three distinct stages: crawl, walk, and run.

Here's everything you need to know about getting started.





## CRAWL (FOUNDATION OR FRAMEWORK PHASE)

During the “crawl” phase, an organization will begin to lay the foundation for their upcoming digital transformation. The organization will assess its current capabilities and identify its major pain points. In the crawl phase, you are:

- **Cleaning up the active directory.** Active directory is going to control the organization’s security, permission, and authentication functions. At the beginning of the digital transformation, the AD system will need to be cleaned and reviewed. Any inactive users will be removed, and existing accounts will have their data and permissions updated and verified.
- **Identifying the needs of the existing network.** Does the existing network have the resources it needs to function, both now and into the near future? Is the network ready for a transition to cloud-based infrastructure? If the organization’s existing network isn’t scalable, then this will need to be addressed during the transformation process.
- **Exploring necessary technologies.** Does the organization need SharePoint, OneDrive, or other technologies implemented in order to achieve its goals? Are there third-party applications that should be added into the system for better productivity? Outline the organization’s needs and list potential solutions.
- **Securing mobile data with Mobile Device Management.** Mobile devices have become commonplace in any organizational infrastructure. At an early stage, an organization should consider how mobile data is going to be secured. If written MDM policies do not exist, this is the time to create basic compliance and security standards as well as look into what technology solutions you can use to protect mobile devices (such as Microsoft Enterprise Mobility + Security).
- **Assessing Windows 10 journey.** 37.2% of all PCs are still running Windows 7, despite its end of life swiftly approaching. Most platforms prior to Windows 10 are now defunct, with a transition to Windows 10 being important for any companies that have not yet completed that journey. If an organization is still using a system prior to Windows 10, the transition to Windows 10 is going to need to be incorporated into the digital transformation.



- **Creating basic compliance policies.** Compliance policies are exceptionally important when an organization is dealing with sensitive digital assets. At the very beginning of a digital transformation, compliance policies should be created to control the way that data is managed and stored. While these compliance policies will be built out and improved upon later in the process, a starting point is still needed.
- **Determining the ideal position of workloads.** Once the transformation has been completed, an organization's workflows will reside either on-premise or on the cloud. At this time, it's important to identify the organization's critical workloads and determine whether they would be better served by staying where they are or being moved. Organizations are increasingly using hybrid infrastructures, with both on-premise and cloud-based services.

For the most part, the “crawl” phase is going to prepare the organization for the provisioning and deployment of Office 365 and Teams. Cloud-based technologies are frequently used throughout the process of digital transformation, as they have become standard for organizations looking to leverage scalable resources and provide a better user and customer service experience.

At the end of the “crawl” phase, an organization should have a solid picture of its current status, as well as what it hopes to gain through the process of transformation. Processes will be inventoried, data will be cleaned up, and digital assets will be categorized and secured.





## WALK (COLLABORATION PHASE)

Once a foundation has been built, an organization can begin to leverage it. During the collaboration phase, an organization will begin to utilize the power of Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams is the “fastest growing business app” in Microsoft’s history, with adoption swiftly outpacing alternatives.

### DURING THE WALK PHASE, AN ORGANIZATION WILL BEGIN TO PREPARE THROUGH:

- **Assessing the advantages of Microsoft Teams to your business.** An organization can begin by identifying the features of Microsoft Teams that are most advantageous to its business processes. Through Microsoft Teams, an organization can voice call, text message, and video call. Microsoft Teams integrates directly into the Microsoft Office 365 ecosystem, making it easy to share and collaborate on files within a consolidated environment. Not every organization is going to need all the solutions that Microsoft Teams provides. However, it will now be the organization’s goal to identify areas in which Microsoft Teams can help, and identify whether a transition will need to be completed from existing solutions to Microsoft Teams.
- **Creating new business processes.** Once the areas in which Microsoft Teams can help have been identified, corresponding new business processes are going to need to be created. Ideally, the Microsoft Teams platform should replace a number of single-purpose tools, such as video chat and messaging apps. Microsoft Teams provides everything from screen sharing technology to the ability to integrate with utilities such as the Microsoft Planner and Microsoft Calendar. On a single dashboard, employees can review the information they need at a glance—rather than having to check multiple solutions. Ultimately, Microsoft Teams will be integrated into many of the organization’s day-to-day business processes.
- **Training employees on new technology.** Microsoft Teams and the Microsoft Office 365 platform is intuitive to most modern employees. However, training is needed to help employees get accustomed to the new platform as well as anchor the new business processes. Employees should train on the new features of the Microsoft Teams solution, in addition to learning about security compliance and other related issues. Continued support may be necessary to ensure that employees can get the answers they need moving forward.



- **Discussing the benefits of Microsoft Teams with employees.** At this point, it's important to get employees on board with the changes that are being made. During the training process, it's important that employees learn how this new technology benefits them directly, not just the company as a whole. Any questions or concerns that employees might have about Microsoft Teams should be addressed—and any ideas about how Microsoft Teams could be better integrated into the existing system can be explored. Employees often have ideas regarding how technology can be best implemented, providing them with greater levels of productivity rather than disrupting their existing flow.

At the end of the collaboration phase, not only will the foundation of transformation have been built, but the organization will have a set of tools that its employees can leverage for better collaboration. Employees will have gained a suite of communication features that are integrated into the Office 365 ecosystem, and they'll be able to integrate these communication features into all areas of their current business workflow.





## RUN (SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE)

Once an IT system is created, it still has to be maintained. During the “run” phase, the system will be secured, maintained, and refined. This is the process of Digital Estate Management, and it is an ongoing process.

### THE RUN PHASE INCLUDES:

- **Assessing the organization for risk.** Security begins by identifying potential risk factors for an organization. During the initial stages of Digital Estate Management, an organization’s most critical digital assets will be identified. Any issues that could impact the organization’s data will need to be addressed during the transformation process. Any discovered risks should be matched with suggestions regarding the best way to secure that digital asset and the changes that should be made moving forward.
- **Identifying personal information within documents.** Personally identifiable information, whenever stored, needs to be kept safe. An organization should identify the personally identifiable and confidential information that it has stored, in addition to high priority copyrighted and proprietary items. Documents with personal information need to be secured at a more significant level than regular documents and information, and this will need to be reflected in the Office 365 ecosystem and the Active Directory system.
- **Securing and protecting information.** Business processes will need to be established to secure information both on-premise and in the cloud. These processes will identify when documents need to be copied, stored, and shared, and what ensures that these documents are kept secure. Documents may need to be encrypted or password protected, and the organization may need to consider who is allowed to access certain types of digital asset. Access to all assets should be restricted to the individuals that need them.
- **Setting up processes for continued security audits.** Security changes all the time. If continual security audits aren’t completed, it’s very easy for an organization to become vulnerable to attack. New types of threats continually pop up, requiring new solutions in order to defend against them. Audits need to factor in these emerging threats.



- **Investigating third-party solutions.** Many organizations use third-party platforms such as Salesforce for better productivity and business management. Yet third-party solutions can also represent data and security risks. During the run phase, any third-party solutions should be assessed regarding their potential security risk. Action should be taken to protect and configure these third-party platforms. If these platforms are integrated into any other solutions, the security risks associated with that integration should also be explored.

- **Properly classifying and labeling documents.** The correct classification of digital assets is incredibly important to their security, as it ensures the information is only accessible by the right people. As such, when new digital assets come in, they are going to need to be properly classified and labeled. Either an automated system or a set of business processes may be used to classify or label these documents; the most important thing is that they are continuously classified correctly.

At the end of the first run phase, an organization should have a solid picture of its security needs, in addition to new security processes that will need to be implemented. Moving forward, the organization should create a security audit calendar, as well as the business processes that will govern these future security audits.

It's important to note that this phase is never truly over. With ongoing monitoring and optimization, the infrastructure is going to be continually evolving to meet the changing needs of the business and its market.



## SUMMARY

While the process of digital transformation can be quite involved, it's necessary for an organization to remain competitive. As a result of the digital transformation journey, an organization can take a more proactive approach to IT. Digital transformation drives positive business outcomes, rather than putting out fires and maintaining the status quo.

By breaking down the digital transformation process into three discrete steps, an organization can embark upon the journey without substantial business disruption. The steps of the digital transformation journey are intended to create as non-invasive a journey as possible, beginning with a significant amount of information collection and preparation, and ending with an ongoing cycle of improvement.

At the same time, many organizations are going to need an experienced, knowledgeable partner if they are going to be able to complete a digital transformation successfully. The proper execution of a digital transformation hinges upon a deep understanding of the technologies involved, in addition to the benefits these technologies can provide a given business. A digital transformation partner will be able to quickly assess an organization's needs and identify the best solutions for that organization. Regardless of how a digital transformation is achieved, the transformation itself is absolutely critical for a modern business.

The future is made out of digital-first businesses: businesses able to take advantage of technology to deliver better products, services, and customer support. Your digital transformation journey begins with your company's communication and collaboration tools. [Contact Red River](#) today to start your journey.



## ABOUT RED RIVER

Red River brings together the ideal combination of talent, partners and products to disrupt the status quo in technology and drive success for business and government in ways previously unattainable. Red River serves organizations well beyond traditional technology integration, bringing 25 years of experience and mission-critical expertise in security, networking, analytics, collaboration, mobility and cloud solutions. To learn more, visit [redriver.com](http://redriver.com).