Executive Summary
The end-user benefits of Microsoft Office 365 are numerous. As the leading productivity platform, it is allowing people to communicate and collaborate more effectively as well as deliver them the tools and information they need to get their jobs done anytime, anywhere. Not to be overlooked, is how Office 365 can actually simplify and take the day-to-day tasks associated with enabling and managing productivity off the plate of IT teams so they can focus on the strategic projects that help their organization differentiate and be competitive. It was the later outcome that brought a global consulting company to Long View as they were looking for a partner to help them migrate to the Office 365 platform.

Client Overview
A global consulting company that focuses on many areas (including Business Strategy, ERP, CRM and HCM system implementation, IT Outsourcing, Managed Services, and Application Development) with more than 8,500 employees worldwide approached Long View to assist with an assessment of their Active Directory and Exchange services, expressing interest in both simplifying the architecture and potential migration of Exchange.

Challenge
The company expressed a number of business and communication related challenges:

• Due to a number of mergers and acquisitions, the support staff for the company was global, with very little in the way of administrative structure or standards.
• The mergers and acquisitions resulted in the need to support three different Exchange and Active Directory forests. Consequently, the time invested to manage these environments was more than the team could bear.
• A previous migration attempt (Active Directory) had failed, leaving the status of security principals in a completely disorganized and unsustainable state.
• There had been a number of outages related to their complex on-premises Exchange environment, which affected users and mail delivery.

Approach and Solution
While the company possessed experience in the support of Exchange, the complexity of this project was beyond their capabilities. Therefore, the customer determined early on that it would engage with third parties, including Long View, to develop and implement the solution.

After analysis and discussion, it was determined that to solve the current challenges the approach must deliver a supportable and more efficient model for messaging while also reducing the overall administrative overhead and consolidate/simplify the messaging platform as a whole.

To meet these requirements the Long View team made a recommendation to migrate the entire organization (including the new end users from the mergers) to Office 365 with a hybrid configuration in Exchange. It was determined that the best approach would be to include specialists in all areas, to ensure a seamless and timely migration and deliver:

• All user accounts collapsed to a single domain: All users had an account in the primary environment; this allowed the security principles to be the object used to migrate to Office 365.
• Synchronized user accounts: A customized FIM instance, configured for multi forest support. In addition, Microsoft was included to provide expertise in the FIM customization and to provide support for their fast track migration program.
• Support for multiple organizations in Exchange: Long View assisted in the architecture, design, and implementation of their migration to an O365 infrastructure while maintaining seamless co-existence between on-premises and cloud environments in a Hybrid Exchange environment.

The Migration solution was based on the following considerations;

• The migration would take place over multiple weeks.
A "big bang" approach was not feasible due to the user count, version of Exchange to be used for Hybrid (Exchange 2013), and concerns of user impact;
- **The Global Address List (GAL)** needed to include all users globally;
- **Integrated functionality:** Users with mailboxes homed on-premises had to be able to view the Free/Busy information of users who had been migrated to O365;
- **Legacy Domains:** At the conclusion of the project, security principals in the acquired Active Directory forests would no longer be used for anything email related. They would remain only for access to resources homed in those domains (such as files and applications), and;
- **User mailbox size limits needed to be increased:** Existing on-premises limits were causing issues for end users.

This solution consisted of the following tools/software:

- A customized FIM implementation to synchronize the objects from three forests.
- An ADFS (Active Directory Federation Services) implementation including both High Availability (HA) and Disaster Recovery (DR).
- Three separate Hybrid Exchange 2013 environments to be collapsed into the single O365 tenant, with accounts in a single Active Directory domain.
- Custom scripts used to manage object creation and object property copying between the secondary AD Forests and the primary AD Forest (the primary).
- One Office 365 Tenant, including Windows Azure Active Directory and Exchange Online.

**Business Results & Benefits**

The migration to Office 365 reduced the team’s management of Exchange significantly. The removal of two tertiary Exchange environments meant they no longer needed to troubleshoot, maintain, and backup those environments. Additionally, the primary on-premises core Exchange environment was reduced from multiple DAG’s to a few servers running basic Exchange functionality and local databases for special account use cases. This reduced support overhead required for Exchange.

In addition, the migration to Office 365 allowed all users to communicate as a single organization, with Calendar free/busy as well as listings in the Global Address List functioning, as they should. Globally, executives now have the visibility to others they required.

Finally, the reduction in complexity has led to a reduction in outages that were commonplace in the on-premises Exchange environments.

**Conclusion**

The project resulted, in the migration of not only mailboxes but of security principals to a single domain, the collapse to a single Exchange organization in Office 365, and a more stable and supportable environment. The overall benefit of the migration was:

- Reduced hours required to maintain on-premises Exchange
- Removed the necessity for an on-premises backup strategy and support for Exchange
- Enabled much larger mailboxes for users
- Reduced use of tertiary Active Directory Domains for account creation and maintenance