

# HOSTED EXCHANGE 2013 BUYER'S GUIDE

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO  
FINDING A BETTER EXCHANGE



# INTRODUCTION:

## HOSTED EXCHANGE 2013 BUYER'S GUIDE:

### YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FINDING A BETTER EXCHANGE

The recent end of support for Exchange 2003 and widespread adoption of Exchange 2013 has more organizations considering a move to Hosted Exchange. Whether you are moving from an in-house environment or switching email hosting providers, there are a number of considerations to be aware of when searching for and selecting a reliable business-class email provider. We've created this simple four-step Email Hosting Buyers Guide outlining some of the most critical points for consideration. It can be used as a resource when shopping potential email hosting providers to help you find an email solution that your business can trust.

## 1. Before You Shop: Define Your Technology and Business Requirements

Advance planning is the key to any successful email migration. This planning process should begin with an evaluation of your infrastructure, performance, security and reliability requirements, including:

### ● SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

Which systems and processes depend on email to function properly? This includes CRM and ERP, but may also impact things like marketing email campaigns, website forms and other hard-to-see components.

### ● SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Security and privacy of email data and communications are critical. Robust anti-virus and anti-spam protection is a must. If your business is subject to compliance requirements, it may dictate the need for a dedicated email hosting solution. These questions impact both your choice of a provider and your choice of an email hosting option.

### ● SERVICE-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

Every company would love to have a "gold plated" SLA for every hosted service. The reality is that there's always a trade-off between service levels and cost, and you should think carefully about this trade-off before settling on specific SLA requirements.

### ● SUPPORT

A provider's email options are only as good as the help you get using them. It's important to ensure that your service provider is able to provide the level of support that your organization requires. Understanding level of expertise, average response times and availability, and options available to contact support is critical.

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## 2. Consider Your Hosted Email Options

Business-grade email hosting providers also offer a wider range of hosting options. These options fall into three main categories:

### POP/IMAP

Several hosted email services offer their own POP or IMAP email platforms. A POP connection will allow your users to download their mail to one device and then automatically delete it from the server. An IMAP connection, the more popular of the two, leaves the mail on the email server so it can be accessed from multiple devices. This option is ideal for users managing mail from multiple devices and locations. You will typically have the option to pick the connection that best fits your needs. POP and IMAP mailboxes can offer features such as calendaring and contacts, as well as other collaboration services depending on your provider; however, unlike mail, these features will not synchronize across devices and clients. Some IMAP providers offer a “plug-in” for Outlook so users can access non-Exchange mail from a client they are familiar with; however, this option provides less functionality than the Exchange/Outlook experience and can require a multi-step setup process.

### Microsoft Exchange-Based Services

Microsoft Exchange is the most popular and feature-rich enterprise email platform on the market today. In a hosted environment, a business no longer has to worry about managing and maintaining its own Exchange servers – the provider takes full responsibility for these tasks. Users get to work in the familiar, feature-rich Exchange/Outlook environment; they also get access to powerful web-based and mobile messaging and collaboration tools.

Hosted Exchange services usually come in two flavors: multi-tenant and dedicated hosting. Both offer security, performance and reliability, but dedicated servers support a wider range of custom options at a higher monthly cost.

*Hybrid email services allow a business to provision a mixture of mail platforms on a single domain for seamless viewing and sharing of calendars, contacts and other business data.*



Exchange hosting is an ideal choice for companies that want to migrate to an email service provider without giving up their existing Microsoft applications. They are also a good choice for growing businesses that need a wider range of collaboration and messaging tools than other solutions can provide.

### Hybrid Hosted Email Services

IMAP and hosted Exchange services don't have to be mutually exclusive options. Hybrid email services allow a business to provision a mixture of specific IMAP and hosted Exchange mailboxes on the same domain; both platforms allow seamless viewing and sharing of calendars, contacts and other business data.

A hybrid solution is a good choice for cost-conscious businesses where some employees require a full-featured Microsoft Exchange solution and other employees require the more selective capabilities of IMAP. A business might, for example, provision hosted Exchange accounts for its executive management and sales team, while using a less expensive IMAP option for its customer service reps.

### 3. Choosing A Provider

Once you discuss your business and technical requirements and understand a provider's ability to offer the appropriate hosting solution — POP/IMAP, Exchange or hybrid, and multi-tenant or dedicated Exchange — you should ask a more detailed set of questions.

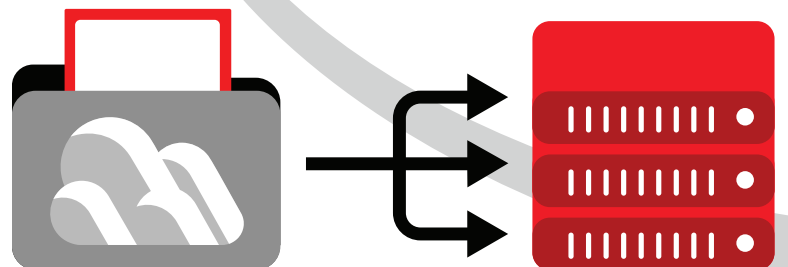
The answers you get to these tough questions will go a long way toward separating your top-tier provider options from the rest of the pack.

#### SUPPORT

- How responsive is the provider's customer service? Look for a company you can easily reach, any time of day.
- Do you prefer U.S.-based support?
- Do you prefer the support options of phone, chat and online documentation?
- Do you prefer speaking with staff that is empowered to make decisions?
- Do you need a dedicated account team?
- Does a provider guarantee response times for new support requests?
- What is a provider's escalation process for high-priority requests?



*Your final choice will depend upon the provider's ability to offer the appropriate hosting solution — Exchange or hybrid, and multi-tenant or dedicated Exchange — for your business.*



#### UPTIME HISTORY AND GUARANTEE

- How does the company's uptime guarantee compare to other providers in the industry?
- Do you prefer a financially backed Service Level Agreement (SLA) — a credit offered for downtime?
- Is the provider transparent about its uptime history and is it willing to share the information?
- How does the provider define terms like "uptime" and "unplanned outage"?
- How does the provider communicate with customers regarding outages, and how does the provider compensate customers for outages?

## 3. Choosing A Provider (Cont.)



### SECURITY AND PRIVACY

- Look for a company that offers multi-layered spam and virus protection.
- Consider the company's stance on privacy and selling your information.
- Do you require your email to be located in two separate data centers?
- What are the company's backup and recovery policies? Can administrators and end users access deleted emails?
- What are the provider's support policies and standards for easy downloading and/or exporting of your email, contacts and other data?
- Are there specific encryption standards needed for email connection (TSL/SSL) and/or access? Data security standards such as PCI-DSS for e-commerce transactions and SSAE16 for data center security are an absolute necessity for most companies.
- Ask a provider to document its compliance with key standards – and always review a provider's privacy policies.

### EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

- Look at the provider's history and successful track record as an email provider.
- Look for a company that has years managing and supporting businesses like yours.
- Consider the company's partnership with Microsoft and long-term commitment to email hosting.
- Check out the provider's customers, leadership team and investors, and look at what the media has to say about the provider and its reputation.

### CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION

*Look for a company with a billing structure that meets your needs.*

- Do you prefer a company with monthly or annual billing cycles?
- Consider annual lock-ins and hidden fees for setup and migrations services.

### SCALABILITY

*Can the provider prove its ability to easily scale and grow with your business?*

- Ask the provider to prove this by explaining why its infrastructure is scalable.

### ACCESS

- Does the provider offer the right mix of online and mobile access options?
- Define your requirements for web browser support and preferred mobile devices, and ensure that your provider supports these options using your chosen mix of POP/IMAP and Exchange-based email tools.

### ARCHIVING

*Are the provider's archiving solutions easy to manage?*

- What are the retention timeframes offered?
- Ask a potential provider to walk you through its policies, capabilities and procedures; pay particular attention to the vendor's testing procedures for its archiving and backup systems.

## 4. Plan Your Migration Process

The actual process of migrating your email – whether it’s from an existing provider or an in-house system – depends upon a large number of variables.

### EXPERIENCE

Consider your time and experience when choosing a migration option. Moving from another email provider to a new environment will take time to plan and execute. Some IT admins have the bandwidth and expertise to handle the move themselves, while others would like the reliability and time savings of a migration team to plan and perform the migration.

### MIGRATION TOOLS AND OPTIONS

Look for a provider that has the options you need to make your move as non-disruptive as possible. A good service provider will offer a mix of self-service tools and consultative services to customize your migration experience. Be sure migration services include the technical resources and expert support to walk your business through the details of a migration.

### TIMETABLE

Work with your provider to set a realistic schedule for provisioning and migrating to your new hosted email environment. The exact timetable will depend upon the complexity of the migration.

Also remember to involve your business users in the scheduling process. Major business initiatives, such as marketing campaigns or a new website launch, should not overlap with a migration.

*Be sure migration services include the technical resources and expert support to walk your business through the details of a migration.*



*Additional questions for consideration include:*

- What email client and mobile platforms do you want your users to use? What are they currently using (if different)?
- What is your range of mailbox sizes?
- Do you want your email to sync with your Active Directory?
- Do you have firewall restrictions?
- Do you have PST or other files to migrate that aren't currently part of your mail system?
- Do you want users to be able to use their mail immediately, or do you want to wait until all previous mail has been downloaded to begin sending/receiving mail?

## Conclusion:

### Hosted Email as a Competitive Advantage

There's a lot to think about before you select a hosted email provider, and there's definitely a lot of planning involved. Like any smart IT investment, however, it's important to look at the long-term benefits to your business. With benefits like improved uptime, and fully managed maintenance and security, hosted email solutions can help employees to be more productive and IT staff to be more effective. That can equal a big return on a relatively modest investment. And as we have demonstrated here, the right planning and migration process can go a long way toward making your hosted email investment even more likely to pay quick dividends.

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## Email Hosting Provider Comparison Worksheet

GENERAL	PROVIDER 1	PROVIDER 2	PROVIDER 3
How many mailboxes do you host?			
How long have you been in business?			
How many employees are dedicated to email?			
Is there a Control Panel dashboard for email management?			
SUPPORT			
Is live, dedicated, U. S.-based support available 24x7x365?			
Do I have unlimited access to support?			
What options are available to contact support?			
Is migration and transition assistance offered?			
Do I have to pay for data restorations?			
How do you provide maintenance notices?			
SECURITY			
What kind of encryption standards do you use?			
Is multi-layer spam & virus protection included?			
Do you offer granular controls of your malware and anti-spam/anti-virus solutions?			
Are there daily, off-site backups?			
What security measures are in place at your data centers?			
UPTIME			
What is your uptime guarantee (SLA)?			
What is the financial reimbursement for downtime?			
What steps have you taken to ensure redundancy?			
Does your platform provide High Availability capabilities.			
How many data centers do you operate?			
FEATURES			
Can you combine Exchange and POP/IMAP mailboxes on a single domain?			
Are email data migration services available?			
Are optional email archiving services available?			
Are mobile email services available?			
What is your maximum mailbox size? Attachment size?			
Are mailbox sizes modifiable?			
Do you offer Active Directory integration?			
Do you offer SharePoint?			
Are online and video chat services available?			
Which mail clients are supported? (Outlook 2013, 2010, 2011, 2001, Thunderbird)			
Do you offer setup tools for Outlook or mobile devices?			
PRICING			
Do you offer monthly billing?			
What are the penalties for cancellation?			
Do you offer a reseller discount and/or volume discounts?			





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## About the Rackspace Hosted Email Portfolio

### Hosted Exchange

Advanced Outlook® collaboration with email, calendars, contacts, tasks and notes automatically synchronized to your mobile device, desktop and browser.

### Rackspace Email

Affordable business POP/IMAP email hosting with email, calendars, contacts and more on your desktop.

### Exchange Hybrid

Combines Hosted Exchange and Rackspace Email mailboxes on the same domain. Compared to using Hosted Exchange alone, a 50-user company can save 40% by moving half their users from Exchange to Rackspace Email.

### Rackspace Email Archiving

Email retention and storage service allows you to restore lost email, take advantage of search tools and protect vital email — without extra software or expensive hardware.

For more information on Hosted Exchange from Rackspace, visit:

[www.rackspace.com/Exchange2013](http://www.rackspace.com/Exchange2013)

Or call **1.866.201.7852** for more information.

### About Rackspace

Rackspace® (NYSE: RAX) is the global leader in hybrid cloud and founder of OpenStack®, the open-source operating system for the cloud. Hundreds of thousands of customers look to Rackspace to deliver the best-fit infrastructure for their IT needs, leveraging a product portfolio that allows workloads to run where they perform best—whether on the public cloud, private cloud, dedicated servers, or a combination of platforms. The company's award-winning Fanatical Support® helps customers successfully architect, deploy and run their most critical applications. Headquartered in San Antonio, TX, Rackspace operates data centers on four continents. Rackspace is featured on Fortune's list of 100 Best Companies to Work For. For more information, visit: [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com).

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