Counting the Hidden Costs of Google Apps

As an IT professional, you might be considering adopting Google Apps for Business (GAFB) for messaging and collaboration. But many IT teams have found that the projected versus *actual* costs of using GAFB increases their total cost of ownership to far more than Google's claimed $50/user annual fee. GAFB is missing critical features and functionality that you get at no additional cost with Microsoft® products. Adding those missing features and functionality to make GAFB enterprise-ready can cost you more for **deployment**, **IT support**, **user training** and **lost productivity**.

Deployment Costs

Migrating Email Data: Customers who deploy Google Apps burden their IT teams to migrate email messages, contacts, tasks, folders, and other data from messaging solutions such as Microsoft Exchange Server.		
Contacts	You must install and run Google Apps Sync for Outlook to migrate contacts from Microsoft Outlook®, and install an add-on to manage organization-wide contacts.	
Tasks	Google's capability for migrating tasks and notes from Outlook to Google is partially supported. Criticial task information like start date, progress status and task reminders is not suppported by Google Apps.	
Distribution Lists	Google Apps Sync will not migrate distribution lists, so you must recreate and maintain distribution lists in Gmail.	
Public Folders	To use Exchange public folders for shared documents, you must manually upload all documents and mark them as shared in Google Apps or use a third-party application.	
Hidden costs:	Exchange to Google Apps Migrator: Provides bulk migration of email messages from Microsoft Exchange to Gmail.	$20/user
	Shared Contacts Service: Provides bulk upload service to import shared contacts.	$49-$349
Directory and Address Book Integration and Synchronization: Because Google Apps offers limited directory services and synchronization, IT departments often have to deploy third-party applications.		
Active Directory Integration	IT staff must download a separate utility in Google Apps to integrate Active Directory.	
One-Way Directory Synchronization	You can only sync Google Apps down to your on-premises LDAP directory. You must also download an open-source tool to complete the synchronization.	
Global Address Book Synchronization	You must set up a server to synchronize your LDAP server with Google Apps, yet you still have no way to view that directory. It simply lets you discover someone by search.	
Permanent Password Synchronization	Users have separate sign-on names and passwords for network access and Google Apps. You must use a third-party application to enable a single sign-on for both.	
Hidden costs:	MyOneLogin: Provides single sign-on for Google Apps	$30/user, annually
	Promevo gPanel for Google Apps: Provides shared contacts management	$8/user, annually

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Deployment Costs (continued)

Integrating Microsoft Outlook with Google tools, and enabling videoconferencing for more than 4 concurrent users: To integrate Google Apps with Microsoft Outlook, you have to manage several add-ons. Even with those, you may have to struggle to make your calendar and email folders work properly, leading to lost productivity. Additionally, unlike with Lync Online in Office 365, if you want to videoconference with more than 4 people via a supported service, you must purchase a third party tool.

Google Apps Sync for Outlook	This add-on lets Outlook synchronize with Google Apps, but it only provides partial synchronization and may require users to manage two inboxes.
Outlook Free/Busy Time Synchronization	The Outlook calendar is not instantaneously synchronized to show free and busy times.
Google Talk	Google IM/Chat is not integrated with Outlook and requires that users or IT staff install and deploy the Google Talk client to receive email notifications locally.
Google Offline	Requires IT or users to obtain Chrome 13 browser or higher version. Grossly deficient offline functionality results in costs from lost productivity. When users are offline, there is no rich text email, no printing, a subset of email is available; the user cannot create or update appointments and cannot see calendar invites. Offline users have no access to presentations, drawings, forms, and many common file formats.
Google Talk Video-Conferencing Add-on	Users or IT staff must install this add-on to provide video conferencing for Google Talk. While Google+ hangouts provides videoconferencing, it requires installation of the Google Voice and Video plug-in, is unsupported, and is limited to 10 person conferences.
Videoconferencing tool such as WebEx	Users or IT staff must purchase and install this third party tool to conduct videoconferences with more than 4 participants.
Hidden costs:	Testing, deploying, and supporting add-ons which don't always work well. Google may remove any feature with little or no warning.
	WebEx: Provides up to 25 person conferencing with application and desktop sharing at $588/user annually.

Supporting Mobile Users: With Google Apps, IT teams may have to install extra applications to synchronize email, calendars, and contacts so mobile users have the latest information.

BlackBerry Synchronization	Google provides this through its beta, unsupported, Google Sync software which has documented issues as of July 2012, including that neither Gmail sync nor push support is available for Blackberry. Users must download the software.	
iPhone/Smartphone Synchronization	Beta, Google Sync software is unsupported and customers must set it up. As of July 2012, the software has many limitations.	
Hidden costs:	CompanionLink Professional: Needed to sync Outlook contacts, calendars, and tasks with a Google account across devices including Android, iPhone, iPad, Blackberry and PC.	$129..95/user
	ExchangeMyMail: To host more than 500 BlackBerry phones	$120/user annually

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Deployment Costs (continued)

Managing data: IT teams choosing Google Apps may have to secure and install additional applications to enable their organization's existing, routine, internal processes. In addition to not having built-in no-code workflow features, they will not have the compliance capability in Office 365.	
RunMyProcess	In order to design, integrate and manage workflows for business processes, Google Apps users need to obtain Google's RunMyProcess.
CloudLock	For Google Apps users to have basic capabilities for governance, compliance and record retention, either IT or users will need to install this utility.

Hidden costs:	RunMyProcess: Provides ability to design, integrate and manage workflows for business processes.	$40/user, annually
	CloudLock: Provides controls to implement governance, complaince and record retention.	$19/user, annually

IT Support Costs

IT Administration: IT administrators often find they have to spend extra time maintaining GAFB because of lack of support from Google, and extra time supporting add-ons and client-side connectors to make GAFB work.		
Unannounced Feature Rollout/Pullback	Google often releases new features that require extra support, and sometimes ends support for features such as Google Gears with little or no warning.	
Fragmented Administration	IT teams can manage some features through GAFB, but others require Postini or another add-on. Google lacks macros and scripts for common administrative tasks.	
Limited Administrator Privileges Delegation	Limited preset administrator roles to manage accounts. Lacks ability to delegate billing specific tasks. Unable to manage support by products.	
No Universal Management	IT cannot manage enterprise-wide contacts such as customers, partners, and vendors.	
Faulty Problem Resolution	When users experience a problem in GAFB, they may visit a forum to resolve it. Support information is often incomplete on Google forums.	
Overburdened Help Desks	GAFB is unfamiliar to users and lacks features found in Microsoft Office, so help desk staff are overwhelmed with questions from users. As a result, certain customers elect third party support which also includes remote desktop support not offered by Google.	
Hidden costs:	Promevo gPanel for Google Apps: Lets you delegate administrative tasks, run macros and scripts, create reports and import and manage shared contacts.	$8/user, annually
	Google Apps Help Desk Support Services: This, optional, addition help service from a third party provides live help via phone. It provides remote desktop support not offered by Google.	$360/user annually & $30/user signing fee
Security and Archiving: Google Apps came from Google's consumer division and wasn't built with enterprise-level security and archiving. You have to pay extra to secure email and meet requirements for email and document retention.		
Encryption	Users cannot encrypt messages containing sensitive information.	
Privacy	Users cannot mark messages as personal or confidential.	
Information Rights Management (IRM)	Because Google Apps doesn't support Information Rights Management, email message recipients can easily edit, forward, or print sensitive information. Users can easily reveal sensitive information to others internally, or leak it to people outside the organization.	
"Off the Record" Chat	Users can conduct instant messaging sessions where portions of conversations can be conducted without any IT record.	
Data Retention Policies	Your organization's data retention policies are trumped by Google's terms of service. For example, Google retains the rights to all copies of information for as long as they require.	
Data Recovery	Google does not guarantee backup of email for data recovery.	
Hidden costs:	Postini: Provides some security and 10 years of retention for Gmail	$33/user, annually
	EchoSign Electronic Signature for Google Apps: Provides eSignatures for Google Docs.	$359/user, annually

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User Training and Lost Productivity Costs

Training Costs: After switching to Google Apps, many users find that even routine tasks take more time than necessary because of the unfamiliar interface and meager online help. Sometimes features appear not to work, and tasks that used to be easy to complete take extra steps. Google Apps' constant feature changes are confusing and frustrating.	

User and IT staff training	This varies according to organization's needs. Training is needed because routine tasks take more time to accomplish. Tasks are effected by limited file import and export capabilities, Outlook/Gmail incompatibility, feature gaps and bugs.

Hidden costs:	Dito: Provides "Train the Trainer" IT staff-training package.	$2,499
	Suite/Apps: Provides end-user training.	$125/hour

Lost productivity—email and file-fidelity problems: Gmail isn't as intuitive and flexible as Microsoft Outlook, so users might lose many hours of productivity. Opening a Microsoft Office file in Google Docs can also cause many problems that can cost users many hours of work time.	

Email	• Instead of letting users organize email by folders, Gmail tags messages with labels—an unfamiliar user interface that requires retraining • In Gmail, you often must scroll through many "folders" (labels) to find a message
Documents	• Tab stops, paragraph spacing, page margins, and images move unexpectedly • Revisions and comments appear jumbled together as plain text • Page headers and footers are converted to inline text at the top of the document
Spreadsheets	• Images and formatting beyond simple cell sizing and shading are discarded • Charts disappear or appear as large, white boxes labeled "No Data" • No support exists for features like trend lines, no formatting options, and the output is hardly presentation-ready
Presentations	• Fonts change. Animations and transitions are eliminated
Hidden costs:	Many hours or days in lost productivity per user, and potentially lost business.

Total Cost of Ownership

One-time cost per user with Google Apps		Annual cost per user with Google Apps	
Exchange to Google Apps Migrator	$20	Google Apps	$50
Shared Contacts Service	$49-$349	MyOneLogin	$30
End-user training	Varies	Promevo gPanel	$8
IT staff training	Varies	WebEx	$588
Lost user productivity	Varies	RunMyProcess	$40
		CloudLock	$19
		Postini	$33
Total:	**$69-$369**	**Total:**	**$768**

Each cost above is based on Google Apps marketplace pricing or other publicly available sources. These add-on costs will differ for each organization, based on their specific needs.

In contrast, Microsoft provides enterprise-class solutions that integrate with each other based on the needs of your organization. Microsoft understands the needs of the enterprise user, including their stringent compliance requirements, while understanding how small businesses need an easier way for users to communicate.

Microsoft provides Office 365 to bring cloud productivity services to businesses of all sizes, with anywhere access. It developed and supports one of the world's most familiar software products—Microsoft Office—to help users everywhere work productively.

> *"We previously evaluated Google Apps as a potential solution for our corporate email and document needs. Google Docs is not really suitable for business use due to limited functionality and the lack of offline capabilities.*
>
> *– Paraic Nolan, Finance Director, Big Red Book*
>
> *"With top of the line security and mobility, Office 365 has vastly better functionality than Google."*
>
> *– Jiří Pavlike, Owner and Managing Director, Flashboard Media*
>
> *"We're accustomed to using Microsoft Office products and wanted to continue to use them, so the compatibility issues with Google Docs caused concern. We were always worried, for example that our forms' layouts would be skewed by whatever formats Google chose… What we get for a total of $12 a month is really priceless: instant availability, a robust suite of products, and the ability to synchronize documents between Office 365 and our workspaces."*
>
> *– Paul Lovette, Vice President, D&L Representative Payee Services*

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Requirements Checklist for migrating to Google Apps for Business

As you evaluate GAFB, see if you need any of the requirements listed below. If you answer 'Yes' to any of these, your cost for GAFB will be more than Google's claimed $50 per user, annually.

Requirement	Need?	Possible Costs
Migrating data such as email messages, contacts, calendar, and documents		• IT time spent migrating data and resolving discrepancies • Third-party tools like Exchange to Google Apps Migrator See Migrating Email Data.
Directory integration and password synchronization		• IT time spent synchronizing directories and other servers • Third-party tools MyOneLogin that provides Single Sign On See Directory and Address Book Integration and Synchronization.
Offline access		• Grossly deficient functionality means costs in lost productivity. • Business must absorb costs in rolling out Chrome 13 or later version. See Integrating Microsoft Outlook with Google tools, and enabling videoconferencing for more than 4 concurrent users.
Videoconferencing for more than 4 parties		• Users or IT staff must purchase and install a third party tool to conduct videoconferences with more than 4 participants. See Integrating Microsoft Outlook with Google tools, and enabling videoconferencing for more than 4 concurrent users.
Outlook client		• IT time to install and support add-in Google Apps Sync for Outlook • Since it only provides partial synchronization, employees may have to spend time managing two different in boxes. See Integrating Microsoft Outlook with Google tools, and enabling videoconferencing for more than 4 concurrent users.
Mobile users		• IT time supporting mobile synchronization • Third-party tools such as Companion Link Professional to help integrate calendars, contacts and tasks with Outlook See Supporting Mobile Users.
Delegating Administrator Privileges		• Third-party tool such as Promevo gPanel for Google Apps for role-based delegation of admin privileges; downtime due to admin error See IT Administration.
Document compliance and Archiving		• Add-on tools like Postini for hosted security and archiving See Security and Archiving
Enhanced Security		• Third-party tools like SendMail or EchoSign Electronic Signature for Google Apps that can provide added level of security for Gmail See Security and Archiving.
Exchanging documents with customers, partners, and internally		• Employees will likely lose time resolving document fidelity issues, leading to costly delays and unprofessional documents See Lost Productivity.
Training users when switching email and office productivity suite		• Employee time in training; IT time developing & delivering training • Third-party costs for training delivery such as Suite-Apps or Dito See Training Costs and IT Administration.

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