

Top 10 Considerations in Migrating to Windows 10

WHITE PAPER

Migrating to Windows 10 is an urgent priority for many IT departments. IT leaders have identified Windows 10 migration as one of their top 10 overall initiatives for 2016, according to an exclusive survey of more than 3,000 IT professionals by TechTarget. Windows 10 migration is by far the most important desktop initiative, with more than 50% of midsize businesses in North America planning a migration in 2016.¹

When you look at the challenges and opportunities involved in migrating to Windows 10, it is easy to understand why it is such a pressing concern for so many IT decision-makers. Windows 10 is a major operating system release for Microsoft, which means that migration from Windows 7 and Windows 8 is inevitable. Support for Windows 7 ends in January 2020 and, while that might seem like a far-off date, in reality it isn't. A successful migration can take time, and many companies that delayed migrating from XP several years ago ran up against significant problems that impacted end-user uptime and productivity.

Beyond the inevitability of Windows 10, there is the reality that the new operating system offers a significant upgrade in features that IT departments want to—and need to—leverage as quickly as possible, particularly in this era of enhanced mobility and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) initiatives. Windows 10 offers a single platform for a variety of different form factors, including tablets, smartphones and embedded systems in addition to traditional PCs and laptops. It also offers important new security features such as Device Guard and Microsoft Passport authentication. Finally, Windows 10 provides a clear migration path for Windows 7 and 8 machines that are reaching the end of their lifecycles.

¹ "2016 IT Priorities Report," TechTarget, March 2016

If your organization is considering a migration now or at any point in the future, it is critical to understand the myriad challenges involved and utilize migration and management tools that let you leverage the benefits of Windows 10 while mitigating the risks. You should be looking at a configuration management platform that features high levels of automation and centralized control. What else? Here are the top 10 factors you should be considering in choosing the right tools and technologies to ensure a smooth and successful migration to Windows 10.

No. 1: Achieve a Centralized View of Your Mixed IT Environment

In order to migrate successfully to Windows 10 you have to know what you are migrating. Most organizations are not completely homogenous and have a mix of different Windows desktop operating systems and versions. In today's environment you also have to be aware of BYOD devices that are being used for critical applications. So any successful migration starts with a management platform with a centralized console that lets you see all of the different Windows versions and operating systems that are in use.

No. 2: Eliminate/Minimize Business Disruptions

The last thing users want is to manually restore personal desktops and applications following an OS migration. You should make sure your management platform uses powerful imaging and migration capabilities to facilitate the migration to Windows 10. For example, you want to preserve personal desktop and application settings to minimize the business disruptions that typically accompany a major OS migration.

No. 3: Simplify Provisioning and Deployment for Your IT Team

You don't want your IT staff manually managing each step of provisioning and migrating users. If they are doing that, they won't have time for anything else. Look for a management platform that allows your IT team to perform all configuration management tasks from a single console, eliminating the problems of dealing with multiple tools. Also, make sure your solution automates many of the tasks involved in creating images and assigning them to devices.

Your IT team should have the flexibility to create and apply subsets of images to different devices and create add-on images that can be used to perform incremental updates.

No. 4: Support the Use of Multiple Directories

You shouldn't have to worry about picking a single directory for the migration. With the right configuration management platform you should be able to integrate directly with Active Directory, NetIQ eDirectory or even multi-directory environments. You should also be able to dynamically read user identity information from your directory. This will enable your IT team to manage users with the directory of your choice, while using the configuration management platform to manage the applications and policies intended for each user.

No. 5: Resolve Potential Problems Prior to the Migration

You don't want to start a migration and then realize during the process that you are lacking the necessary hardware and software. A new operating system will often involve a need to upgrade memory, processor speed and/or local disk capacity for some of your older devices, if not most of them. While the hardware requirements for Windows 10 are not significantly greater than for Windows 7 or 8, an OS migration is often a great opportunity to upgrade hardware. Whether you are buying new units or keeping older systems in place, you should make sure your configuration management platform allows you to perform prerequisite checking to ensure that all systems are ready to go before you start the migration.

No. 6: Accelerate Your Deployment

Without the proper tools, migrations can be extremely time consuming. The longer it takes to make the migration, the more risk and cost for your organization. One of your goals should be to expedite the deployment and eliminate unnecessary delays. You can accelerate the migration by using a centralized configuration management platform that offers a range of pre-boot services that allow IT to automatically multicast, assign and deploy images to devices, users and groups. Image creation should be simple, to the point where you can make an image by clicking a single button on the management console.

No 7: Enable Critical Updates at Any Time—Even After the Migration

One of the differentiating factors of Windows 10 compared to earlier Windows versions is that Microsoft will issue updates more frequently, with the updates typically being more incremental and less obvious to end users. With a centralized configuration management console, IT can manage updates much more easily and consistently, ensuring that all users receive updates at the same time and are equipped with the latest patches and software versions.

No. 8: Distribute Resources Based on Need

Different requirements will demand different resources from Windows 10. You want to be able to easily distribute whatever resources are needed, where they are needed. You also don't want a solution that locks you into a Microsoft-only back-end, so you should look for a configuration management platform that runs on Windows or Linux and works with your database of choice.

No. 9: Leverage a Family of Solutions

Your Windows 10 migration will not take place in isolation. In addition to using a centralized configuration management solution, you will also benefit by leveraging a family of integrated solutions that work in concert with one another to simplify and secure your migration. For example, you will want to incorporate endpoint security management that allows you to define granular security settings for individual devices; combine security and configuration policies into unified policy groups; and assign policies based on any combination of users, devices and locations. You will also want to be able to utilize an asset management tool that assures workspace compliance for your assets, licenses, applications and contracts.

No. 10: Choose the Right Platform and Partner

The final and perhaps most important consideration is to choose the best solution and partner for a smooth and cost-efficient migration. That's where Micro Focus

and ZENworks come in. The ZENworks Configuration Management platform from Micro Focus provides all of the key features and functions to accelerate, automate and simplify any Windows 10 migration project.

ZENworks Configuration Management provides a centralized single-pane-of-glass management platform that allows you to manage all of the different Windows desktop operating systems and versions in a mixed environment. It uses a highly automated approach that simplifies provisioning and deployment, with powerful imaging and software delivery capabilities to facilitate Windows 10 migrations.

In addition, ZENworks Configuration Management is part of a broader family of Micro Focus endpoint management solutions that includes tools for asset management, endpoint security management, mobile management, application virtualization and IT service management. As the family of products evolves this year, the configuration management and mobile management functions will merge into one management tool so that customers can not only smoothly and easily migrate their PCs and laptops to Windows 10, but they can also incorporate mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and manage all devices from one central location.

Taking the Next Step

Many IT executives may be wary of migrating to Windows 10 because, based on past experience, migrating to a new OS can be a massive undertaking that places a major strain on IT. However, with the right tools, technologies and partner, the migration doesn't have to be onerous. In fact, it can take place relatively quickly and smoothly, without disrupting users and without impacting productivity. Micro Focus, with ZENworks Configuration Management as the foundation, has the tools, technologies and experience to transform your Windows 10 migration from a challenge into an opportunity. For more information on how to simplify and accelerate your Windows 10 migration, please contact Micro Focus.