



## Samhall

Proact enables seamless cloud migration.

### Overview

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#### Challenge

Samhall wanted to migrate from managed email servers to Office 365 without causing disruption to any of its 3,000 users. The company also wanted to learn how it could get the most value from this platform.

#### Solution

Proact conducted an assessment workshop to devise an effective migration plan. The installation was conducted in small steps and then Proact provided testing with different user categories to ensure that the platform could meet demands. Proact's Service Management for Office 365 was selected to monitor and review resources.

#### Benefits

- Seamless migration which didn't disrupt day-to-day operations
- Single sign-on features
- Simultaneous access to cloud-based services and applications hosted on-premise

**Extensive preparation was critical to ensure Samhall's migration from managed email servers to Office 365 was completed efficiently and effectively. The company didn't want this work to hinder any of its 3,000 users. Following this successful transition, Samhall has now set its sights on the second phase of the project, leveraging the potential of Office 365, creating more value from the cloud platform.**

### The challenge

Samhall is Sweden's largest state owned company, with 600 sites across the country. The organisation also works towards a special mission: to create work that furthers the development of people with functional impairments.

Several factors contributed to Samhall's decision to migrate to Office 365. Firstly, this choice perfectly aligned with the company's cloud strategy.

"It's important to keep up with technological developments in order to reap the benefits they can bring about. We have observed that the new Office 365 platform is primarily delivered by the cloud, through smart tools and services," says Odd Ingvarsson, Samhall's IT Infrastructure Manager.

The entire migration project for the Office 365 deployment at Samhall spanned six months. The installation began in small steps, with testing and pilot projects with different user categories. These trials were essential to correctly configure and customise the various Office 365 services.

For a large organisation such as Samhall, migrating to Office 365 involves much more than simply moving user accounts and mailboxes from the existing Exchange servers. There are applications that generate automatic emails which also need to be considered. The company employs third parties who need to communicate using a Samhall alias, for example when conducting surveys. This has required a number of adaptations and efforts to integrate systems.

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Other services used by Samhall are also becoming increasingly tailored for interaction with Office 365. One example where connection and integration has to be enabled is Telia Touchpoint, a cloud-based exchange solution offering PBX functionality and additional fixed and mobile communication services.

To prepare for the migration, various workshops were conducted, where many issues and options were discussed and decided upon. The key objective was to execute migration transparently, without interrupting Samhall’s users or causing interference with the 60,000 messages transferred each day.

“The migration went very smoothly. I believe we only had one issue which required support from Microsoft to be settled,” says Odd Ingvarsson.

A major task when executing the migration involved the Active Directory service, a component largely invisible to users, but still very much key to the Office environment. It stores data about system resources and user accounts, and manages access rights and identification. As Office 365 is implemented, Active Directory migrates to Azure AD, the corresponding cloud service. To perform this task, Samhall engaged Proact, resulting in an enhanced solution that now offers single sign-on features, giving users simultaneous access to cloud based services and applications hosted on-premise.

“We asked Proact to devise the best solution for us – and there were numerous settings and configurations that must be made to achieve this,” says Odd Ingvarsson.

Proact has previously hosted and managed Samhall’s Exchange email servers, and has contributed to designing the new IT environment.

“Proact has been a good advisor and has helped us shape a standardised environment where we now place workloads in the cloud, whenever that is possible,” says Odd Ingvarsson, IT Infrastructure Manager at Samhall.

## **Enhanced security**

As part of the initial phase of adopting Office 365, Samhall has focused on migrating the email service with maintained functionality, rather than striving for enhancements. Nevertheless, some differences could be spotted immediately.

“One advantage which we noticed directly deals with security for both inbound and outbound email traffic. Office 365 does a better job of detecting spam and malware such as ransomware,” says Odd Ingvarsson.

Security enhancements include screening email attachments for malware and assessing the hyperlinks contained in messages.

Samhall is now set on advancing its use of Office 365, integrating applications such as Skype for Business. There are also more open-minded efforts going on, to discover new opportunities presented by Office 365 for Samhall, or simply to make better use of the platform to get better value for the money.

As an Office 365 customer with the most advanced license plan (E5), Samhall has access to the full range of services and apps that come with the platform. This has evolved to address a much broader scope of user needs from the traditional Office suite and its workhorse applications Word, Excel, Outlook and Powerpoint.

“We intend to explore all the apps to learn which features can be useful to us,” says Odd Ingvarsson.

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## Making all staff users

Samhall's incentives for choosing Office 365 had to do with economical benefits as well as functionality. One reason is that email, together with many other applications, becomes easier to access in the cloud. Samhall is also considering migrating its file storage to OneDrive in the cloud, a service which comes with Office 365. This can result in cost savings by reducing the number of on-premise file servers and simplified backup procedures, while the data becomes directly accessible, regardless of the user's location, from any device.

Only 3,000 of Samhall's 24,000 employees are actively using computers at work. By means of Office 365 and the mobile device apps which the platform provides, sights are now set on giving all staff access to Samhall's intranet. A pilot has been established to prepare for the implementation – targets and objectives must be defined, and many questions need answers: What services and apps should be offered to employees, and how will they be accessed? There is little doubt that mobile devices will play a significant role in the solution, as most employees don't use computers. When it comes to applications and purposes, Samhall has first of all concluded that a digital channel for reaching out to every employee is an obvious goal.

## Video conferencing with Skype

Samhall is an experienced, large scale user of video conferencing. With hundreds of sites all over Sweden, the ability to have meetings without the need to travel is highly appreciated. The company has 80 meeting rooms equipped for video conferencing.

Part of Office 365, Skype for Business (formerly Lync) is a conferencing application which Samhall plans to deploy throughout the organisation. The existing fixed video conferencing systems will be phased out, being replaced by Microsoft SkypeRoomSystems with large screens in meeting rooms, and additionally the standard Skype setup where all users have access to video conferencing from their own desktops, laptops or mobile devices.

Samhall also expects to make good use of Microsoft Teams, an Office 365 app which supports group communications, including chat features.

## A challenge to track cloud service updates

A fundamental difference between using Software as a Service in the cloud and deploying applications in your own IT infrastructure is that you lose some control as a cloud customer. The service provider acts as the conductor, and you are well advised to follow suit as changes are introduced, which they certainly will.

This also dictates a different mode of working for IT administrators when managing Office 365 in the cloud, as compared to a legacy Microsoft Office environment. They are accustomed to infrequent but major upgrades, conducted in well-defined steps from one release to another. For the Office 365 platform and the apps that tie into the service, there is instead a continuous flow of news and updates. This means that there's a wealth of information to absorb for IT management, in fact creating an impossible task for a systems administrator who strives to stay fully updated while performing the regular duties. On top of this, the organisation should work actively to address changes to the platform and implement the numerous software updates efficiently.

Samhall has addressed this challenge by employing Proact's Service Management for Office 365. Proact's team of experts will keep track of the cloud platform, notifying Samhall of critical updates before discussing events and trends at monthly meetings. Samhall's usage of Office 365 and its resources will also be monitored and reviewed.

“Relying on Proact for Office 365 Service Management is convenient and saves us a lot of time as we don't have to search for information. It also ensures that we're not missing any important updates to the service,” says Samhall's Odd Ingvarsson.

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## Benefits



### Peak performance

Leverages the potential of Office 365 and Microsoft's latest developments



### Seamless migration

Step-by-step transition including testing and pilot projects to customise features effectively



### Simplified operations

Enables single sign-on features allowing simultaneous access to on-premise and cloud applications



### Integration

Applications such as Skype for Business will be introduced, amongst others, due to an advanced license plan



### Security

Platform detects spam and malware from both inbound and outbound traffic to help protect systems



### Cloud first

Standardised environment where workloads are placed in the cloud where possible



### Service Management

Proact will monitor and review resources, assessing needs against Microsoft's continuous flow of updates



### Mobile

Staff can access emails and the company's intranet anywhere, anytime, using mobile devices

## About Samhall AB

Samhall is a state-owned Swedish company with a mandate to create work that furthers the development of people with functional impairment. The company is one of Sweden's largest professional services providers, with a broad offering which includes cleaning, laundry, facilities management, logistics, manufacturing and care. Samhall operates at over 600 sites nationwide and has more than 24,000 employees.

## About Proact

Proact is Europe's leading independent data centre and cloud services provider. Proact supplies business benefits by helping companies and authorities to reduce risk and costs, and above all to supply them with flexible, accessible and secure IT services. Proact's cloud service operations manage 70 petabytes of information. Proact has completed more than 3,500 successful projects all over the world to date.

The Proact Group has more than 800 employees and operates in 15 countries in Europe and in the USA. Proact was founded in 1994, and its parent company Proact IT Group AB (publ) has been listed on Nasdaq Stockholm under the symbol PACT since 1999.

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