MFT: Do you have the right implementation strategy?

9 INCREMENTAL PHASES TO ENSURE A SMOOTH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Implementing a Managed File Transfer (MFT) solution is, in many ways, no different than any other IT project — it requires careful planning, testing and execution. But it can also be quite disruptive. One of the most common mistakes is thinking that MFT is a static technology implemented as a one-time project, rather than a strategic asset that must continue to evolve as business needs change.

A phased approach to MFT implementation allows you to invest incrementally, show progress and value quickly, and improve business processes and infrastructure incrementally as you progress on your journey to digital business.

Phase 1 — Build a Solid Business Case

Build a formal business case and presentation to educate stakeholders on the value and impact of the MFT solution and, most importantly, convince them that the required investment is worthwhile. Remember, your business case should justify MFT as a strategic asset for the business — not just a project. At a minimum, it should cover executive sponsorship, project funding and launch customer, capital expense or operating expense, use cases and pain points, and future benefits.

Many technology analyst firms provide information on MFT as a key part of an integration strategy. Look for analyst research reports to help you identify and quantify the benefits.

Phase 2 — Initiate the Project

During the project initiation phase, the project team performs the due diligence required to establish a phased program plan and an estimate of project benefits and costs. This crucial first step facilitates a mutual understanding of the project’s strategic goals, the components and capabilities of the solution, the deployment approach and timeline, and project team roles and responsibilities.

Key deliverables of this phase include:

• Requirements Discovery and Assessment
• Project Scope and High-Level Plan
• Stakeholder Contract
• Preliminary Project Plan

Phase 3 — Create the Project Blueprint

Leveraging the Preliminary Project Plan you created at the end of Phase 2, you now need to dig deeper and create a Detailed Project Plan. Make sure that timelines are realistic and you have identified the appropriate dependencies. As with any implementation project, milestones should be set and time built in for testing. This project plan will be your measuring stick for the implementation. If possible, leverage project management resources to help ensure that your plan is realistic and tracked efficiently.

At the end of Phase 3, you will have a detailed integration design and blueprint, and deep knowledge of the level and types of information that must be supplied to relevant applications.

Phase 4 — Execute the Project Blueprint

The execution phase provides a forum for developing a common understanding of the relevant business processes, refining phase requirements, proposing solutions, and testing those solutions for accuracy and adequacy. The successful completion of this phase depends on the project team using real data from real systems to execute use cases in a pilot instance of the application platform.

Note that testing in this phase is at the implementation level; this is not the same as comprehensive testing that ensures a specific point transfer is acting as expected.
What's next?

It’s clear that there is a lot to know and a lot to do when it comes to implementing a successful MFT strategy for your journey to digital business. But you don’t have to go it alone. For more than 30 years, Axway has been working with all kinds of businesses to design and implement industry-leading MFT solutions.

For more detailed information about the 9 phases outlined here, download Part 3 of the Axway Managed File Transfer Survival Guide.