WHAT IS MICROSOFT EXCHANGE?

Microsoft Exchange is a program that must run on a server, allowing Outlook users to warehouse their data (email, contacts, calendars, tasks, etc.) as a backup. Exchange is the email backbone of Microsoft 365's Business Basic, Business Standard, and Business Premium tiers.

Exchange's primary benefits are detailed below.

SHARE DATA

Exchange also allows users to share information in Outlook. For example, I could let someone in my office access my calendar electronically and add appointments.

ANYWHERE EMAIL ACCESS

Exchange also allows users to access office email while out of the office on many different devices. For example, I can see my inbox, calendar & contacts on my iPad (or any tablet), any Windows or Mac computer connected to the Internet, or my smartphone. I can use Outlook Web Access (which comes with hosted Exchange) via a browser, or I can run Outlook natively on my laptop (for example). As long as I'm connected to the Internet, I'm also connected to Exchange. A change to an email, calendar appointment, task, or contact replicates on all other devices.

FULL BACKUP

Everything in Outlook backs up to Exchange (email, contacts, calendar & tasks).

SMARTPHONE SYNC

Exchange will wirelessly sync with any smartphone or tablet running Android or iOS.

EXCHANGE OPTIONS

GET YOUR OWN SERVER

Of course, you would also need to have Exchange running on that server. The average law firm should not run its own Exchange server. It remains an option, but Microsoft prefers you subscribe to a Microsoft 365 plan with email hosting. Yes, it's a subscription, but it will be cheaper and less hassle than the firm running its own email server.

HOSTED EXCHANGE (TYPICALLY VIA MICROSOFT 365)

This is essentially renting Exchange on a server you access through the Internet. It is precisely the same as having it in-house, except that you avoid the expense of buying and maintaining a file server, Windows, and Exchange. In other words, rather than paying $8,000 + ongoing maintenance, you're paying $10/month/user. Depending on the size of your office and the physical setup of remote offices or telecommuters, a hosted Exchange Server is often much less expensive than having an Exchange Server onsite. Other benefits of a hosted Exchange Server include multiple internet connections, multiple power sources, guaranteed uptime, and no additional cost for backup or maintenance.

OPTIONS FOR HOSTED EXCHANGE

There are hundreds, but here are a few:

- Microsoft Exchange (for host email only) or Microsoft 365 (for hosted email and the traditional Office apps);
- AppRiver;
- CloudScale365;

- [Fusion Connect](#);
- [GoDaddy](#); and
- [Ionos](#).