

Syncomail™



Hosted Exchange  
5 Myths Busted



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## Introduction.

E-mail has become the single most important tool for business communication. In a recent survey of mid-market IT professionals responsible for messaging systems, 96% of respondents said e-mail is important or extremely important and has a negative impact on business operations when not available.

According to Osterman Research, one in five organizations believe a single major e-mail outage could result in revenue losses. Even more telling is the claim by management consulting firm Eagle Rock Alliance that a whopping 40 percent of companies that go more than 24 hours without access to their data go out of business.

Given these statistics, it's not surprising that a Skillsoft survey found that 97% of IT professionals report daily stress stemming from user complaints, managers and deadlines. And these are trained IT professionals, a staffing luxury that many smaller companies simply don't have. For small-to-medium sized enterprises, lucky enough to have an in-house IT team, keeping e-mail up and running is just one of the many responsibilities these busy individuals must stay on top of, joining security, database, Web and network administration, to name but a few.

For companies with strapped and/or non-existent IT teams, outsourcing Microsoft Exchange can be an extremely efficient and cost-effective option. Gartner predicts the market for hosted e-mail relative to total e-mail seats to grow to from its current 1% up to 20% by 2012, representing 40 million hosted mailboxes.

While the hosted e-mail market is growing fast, a few stubborn myths continue to hold back many businesses from embracing Hosted Exchange as a viable option to an in-house solution. In this article we will bust these myths one by one and clarify why a Hosted Exchange model is the best choice for SME's.

## Myth 1: There is less downtime with an in-house Exchange environment.

Most in-house solutions are comprised of a basic environment with one or two servers that have little or no redundancy to the internet, no backup systems, and no disaster recovery solution in place. Many smaller organizations simply don't have the budget or resources to implement and manage these initiatives, so they don't even try, instead employing a precarious "let's cross our fingers and hope nothing goes wrong" approach. As a result, according to Gartner, the average business running an in-house messaging solution suffers *40 hours of unplanned outages per year*, on top of two hours per month of planned outages for maintenance. Osterman Research says the majority of e-mail outages are caused by unplanned technological failures, and [www.Disaster-Resource.com](http://www.Disaster-Resource.com) says 29 percent of outages last from 4 to 24 hours. Compare those figures to the ones discussed at the beginning of this paper, and you are looking at a significant amount of risk with an in-house solution.

Top-of-the line Hosted Exchange providers connect their customers to world-class Exchange infrastructures, offering clustered high availability, redundancy, backup and disaster recovery. This protects small organizations lacking an IT department from the pain of unplanned downtime, which can severely damage a company's revenue, not to mention its relationships with customers and partners—and its reputation. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) of 99.99% uptime is now the industry standard for Hosted Exchange providers, regardless of the number of subscribers.

## Myth 2: An in-house Exchange server is more secure than a hosted solution.

Businesses without a dedicated, in-house IT professional to monitor the security of its network, have less physical security, digital security and backup security than hosted solutions. Every month Microsoft releases patches for Exchange and the Windows operating system it runs on, and in some months that number reaches 25 or more. That means someone has to download and install the patches to correct identified security vulnerabilities. Who is going to manage that in a small firm? And in addition to technical expertise to make sure it's done right, this process often requires server downtime for the installation, which presents an additional headache for smaller businesses without a backup plan.

Another key issue to address here is that while most people think of e-mail security as protecting data from falling into the hands of outsiders, the unfortunate reality is that many security breaches originate from *within* an organization. An in-house solution opens the door for curious subordinates to read the confidential e-mails of top executives, a door that is securely closed with a hosted solution.

## Myth 3: In-house Exchange offers more control than Hosted Exchange.

The SyncMyMail Control Panel allows non-technical administrators, such as office managers, to add and remove users, manage mailboxes, distribution lists and mobile device connections, stay on top of e-mail compliance regulations, and control any other critical functionality of Microsoft Exchange—*all in real time*.

It's also important to point out here just how complex an Exchange server is. Proper maintenance requires at least one full-time, trained IT professional. For most, smaller organizations, this option isn't economically feasible. As the size of an organization gets larger, additional IT resources are needed to handle outages, vacations and off business hour support issues.

## Myth 4: In-house Exchange offers more functionality than Hosted Exchange.

While a Hosted Exchange solution doesn't offer the complex (and expensive) third-party customization often implemented for large enterprises by consultants or in-house developers, the reality is that most smaller organizations don't need—or want— more functionality than what comes out of the Exchange box. And for those companies that do want more, we provide easy integration with a wide range of Microsoft products that includes mobility, encryption, archiving, backup and recovery, document management, and antispam/antivirus, among others.

An example of such integration is the popular Office Communications Server 2007 (OCS), which allows employees to communicate in real time using instant messaging, voice, and video chat. Smart “presence capabilities” built into OCS identify the best application for users to reach each other *at any given moment*. The product also unifies that communication in a secure, easy-to-search archive that is fully integrated with Microsoft Exchange and Outlook, significantly boosting employee collaboration—and overall productivity—as a result.

Installing and configuring OCS is a complex process and integrating it with an in-house Exchange Server can be a nightmare for anyone lacking the technical expertise necessary to do it right. SyncMyMail allows non-technical administrators to add OCS *and* integrate it with their Exchange mailboxes, using the Control Panel.

## Myth 5: Hosted (subscription) models are too expensive.

Hosted Exchange plans start at 79 per user per month. An in-house Exchange solution has an INITIAL investment of R 70,000 – R 150,000, depending on the type of deployment and the number of users. Take Exchange 2007. In addition to requiring five new server roles (client access, mailbox, hub transport, unified messaging, and edge transport), plus x64-bit hardware, which provides the system architecture to support memory, storage and security requirements. And Exchange is hardly a “set-it and forget-it” solution, requiring constant monitoring, tweaking and changes to settings. Sometimes the machines need to be rebooted. Services need to be stopped and restarted. As mentioned in myth #3, doing this properly requires the full-time attention of one or more systems administrators, which costs significantly more in salary and benefits than the low monthly per-user subscription fee of a hosted model. Add another 90,000 initial investment if you want to add a BlackBerry Enterprise Server to provide instant sync between the BlackBerry and the users’ mailboxes. And this goes on and on for other services like SharePoint, Dynamics and Office Communication Services.