

The Case for IT Consolidation



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The IT consolidation opportunity

This e-book is for IT leaders who want to stop managing the chaos and bring harmony to their IT infrastructure, management, and employees. Learn how to drive performance, reduce complexity and cost, boost efficiency, strengthen security, and prepare your organization for AI by consolidating to a unified platform.

01

IT sprawl is out of control

When it comes to managing a digital ecosystem, unified control can feel out of reach. **Meeting your organization's evolving demands for productivity, security, and AI readiness often means patching solutions together one tool at a time.** While this approach manages to keep things moving, it also creates a complex IT system that is often disconnected, time-consuming, and costly to maintain.

IT teams can quickly get overwhelmed by this complex and often costly stack of tools for endpoint management, identity and access management, messaging, email, productivity—the list goes on. Different tools often mean different vendors with unique requirements and siloed environments. No wonder it feels like budgets and resources are stretched thin.

The complexity creates challenges for the entire organization. Productivity stalls when employees spend their day navigating multiple logins and struggling to share information across disconnected tools. As they try to access resources from different devices and locations, fragmented endpoint management makes it harder for IT teams to maintain security. It's time to unify IT tools and simplify management.

The ecosystem of specialized IT tools and vendors keeps growing, and it's happening fast.



Stop paying the complexity tax

Every new software license follows a similar pattern: another solution, another cost center, another layer of complexity. IT leaders are being asked to do a lot on a limited budget, and somehow still find the resources to support new AI initiatives. To keep the budget under control, many IT leaders must constantly evaluate their infrastructure for duplicative and unused licenses. In 2024, IT leaders pursued savings in the following ways:

83% reduced spend on unused software²

82% improved their vendor **contract negotiation**²

79% purchased less expensive license option(s)²

These strategies can provide moderate savings, but there's a catch. Managing this growing patchwork of applications creates a "complexity tax." It takes valuable time and personnel to audit tools and remove idle functionality while managing security and access settings for disconnected solutions. Rather than focusing on high impact work, IT teams spend valuable time auditing licenses, negotiating with vendors, and searching for incremental savings while individually maintaining each existing solution. These time-consuming tasks steal focus from more meaningful work.

Despite these cost-cutting measures, the complexity tax creeps back up. The only sustainable path forward is to rethink your technology approach. Consolidating to a comprehensive platform will cut through the complexity and enable teams to focus on transforming the business.

15%

of organizations paid more than \$5 million in **software vendor audits** over the last 3 years²

61%

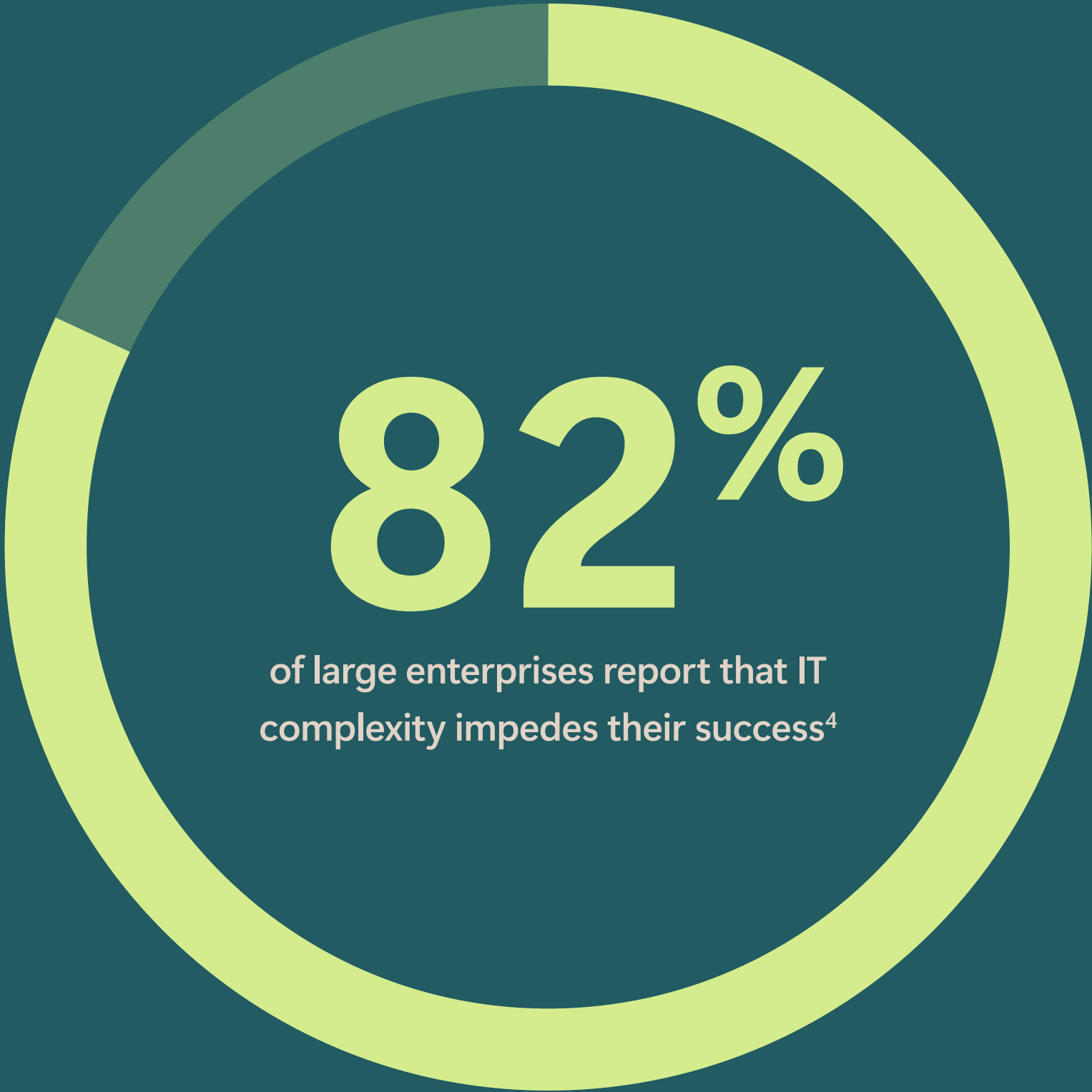
of IT asset management professionals say they **still don't have full visibility** into IT assets that impact business outcomes²

02

Free your IT team from disconnected solutions

For organizations with a large suite of technology offerings, the daily reality of IT work is exhausting. Each single-use solution requires its own expertise, and the technology ecosystem becomes a maze of disconnected tools.

IT teams become overburdened with all the management, maintenance, integration, and support tasks. Each specialized tool demands hands-on management, so you'll need multiple specialists with narrow skillsets just to keep systems operational. Already, **64%** of IT business leaders report challenges when hiring candidates due to a lack of necessary skills or experience.³ That makes it harder for you to hire, onboard, and upkeep expert knowledge on your team.



82%
of large enterprises report that IT complexity impedes their success⁴



03

The power of unity

There's a better approach to IT management. By consolidating to a unified solution, you can reduce IT overload and maintain a strong, flexible, and focused team. This lets you:

Streamline management of vendor contracting, maintenance, and operations

Improve productivity by accelerating support and request management

Proactively secure your IT environment with unified visibility and management

This isn't just about streamlining systems. It's about clearing the path for what matters most: empowering your team to shape the future of how your organization works.

Minimize digital friction

Technology should help clear the path forward, not create obstacles. As an IT leader, you know that **disconnect between productivity tools affects the entire organization.**

Sixty-two percent of people say they struggle with too much time spent searching for information in their workday.⁵ The average employee now spends **57%** of their workday on meetings, emails, and chats, so it's no wonder that **68%** of people say they don't have enough uninterrupted focus time.⁵

Disconnected point solutions create resistance in daily workflows in subtle ways, but the frustration adds up quickly. Multiple logins, siloed work, scattered information, systems that don't work together—every point of friction is a small tax on creativity and innovation.

By consolidating to one platform, you can reduce these barriers and create space for valuable creativity to emerge. Imagine your organization transformed by consolidation. Workers use a central, secure gateway to access all the tools and resources they need. Information flows freely and collaboration happens naturally.

When friction fades away, people rediscover their capacity for more meaningful work. It's not just about clearing obstacles—it's about creating an environment where technology amplifies what people can do.



Centralize security

The cyber threat landscape is more complex than ever. Bad actors are better resourced, more sophisticated, and armed with tactics that challenge even the best-prepared security teams. As security threats become more sophisticated, it becomes harder to keep up. **Eighty percent** of organizations have attack paths that expose critical assets.⁶ **Eighty-two percent** of security leaders have been surprised by a security failure which evaded a control they thought was in place.⁷

Organizations now spend **65%** of their security budgets on third-party products, while only **35%** goes to internal labor.⁸

What's driving this lopsided spend? Large enterprises often manage a wide array of tools to ensure they have the best solution for each specific task, even when it means juggling a larger suite. This approach can lead to increased spending and complexity.

600M cybercriminal attacks occurred in 2024—per day⁶

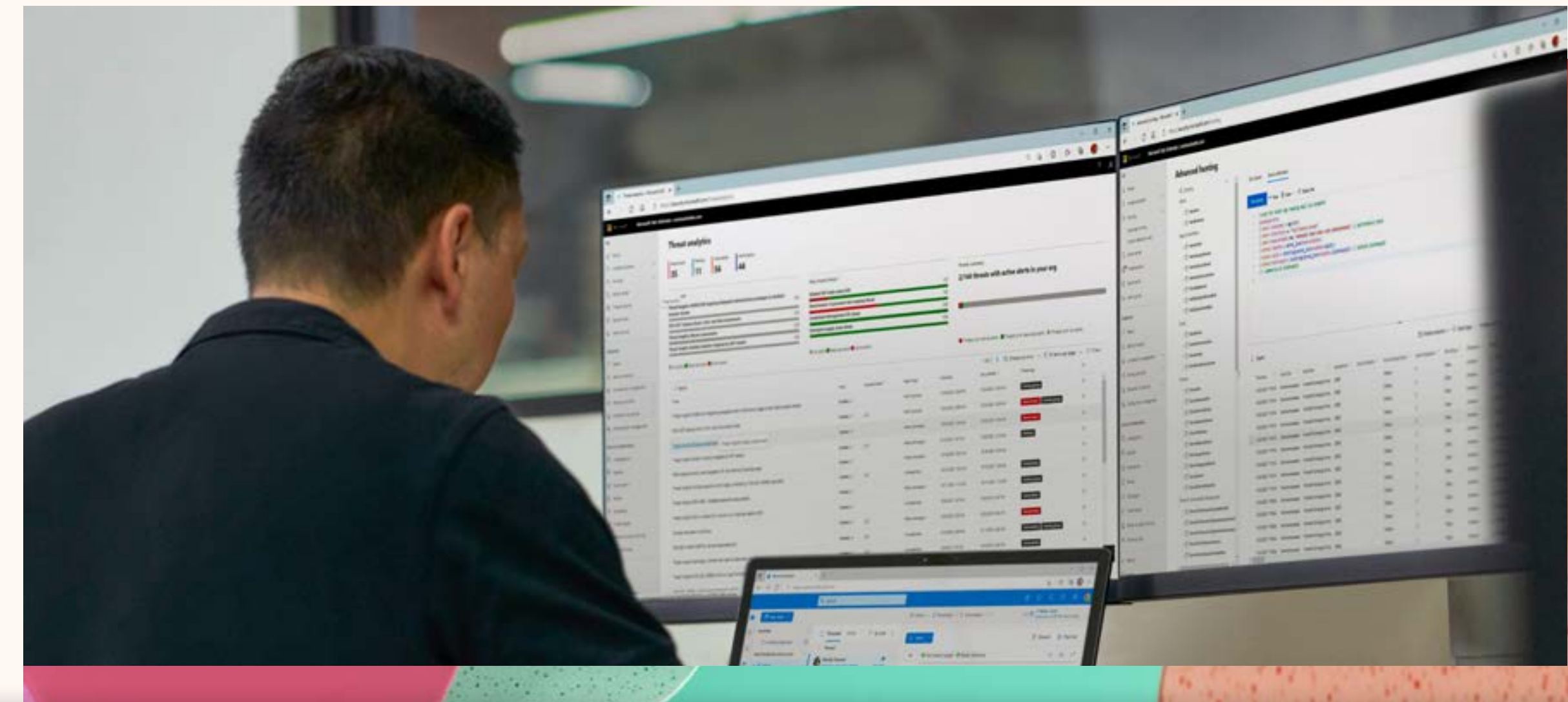
2.75X year-over-year increase in human-operated ransom-linked encounters⁶

In response to increasing threats, security teams add more solutions.

19% The two-year average increase in the number of security tools large enterprises use⁷

Adding more security tools can feel like establishing a stronger defense for your organization. However, solution chasing can actually leave your organization more vulnerable. A complex IT environment—with many interdependencies—is harder to comprehend, manage, and secure. Tool overload prevents you from getting a clear, enterprise-wide view of your complete tech stack. It also creates a larger potential attack surface with more “side doors” into corporate systems.

By consolidating your security onto a comprehensive platform, you transform complexity into clarity. That means a clear line of sight across your entire digital estate. The strongest security posture isn't found in a growing collection of distinct tools. It comes when you establish the right foundation with a central platform.





04

Safeguard AI usage

Employees are eager for AI to lift the weight of work.

75% of employees **are already using AI** at work⁹

78% of workers using AI **are bringing their own AI tools** to work⁹

Employees aren't waiting for security protocols to catch up. As "Bring your own AI" (BYOAI) tools gain popularity, organizations can fall behind. Only **24%** of generative AI initiatives include robust security measures.¹⁰

If organizations don't build the right foundation for secure AI usage, employees might fill the productivity gap with shadow AI: unsanctioned tools that exist outside your systems and beyond your control.

Shadow AI creates two key challenges:

No oversight

Shadow AI opens the door to serious risks; what's stopping employees from copy-pasting sensitive information into their personal AI tool of choice? Every interaction with uncontrolled BYOAI becomes another security threat. Your data is likely to end up being leaked or may be used to train an outside model.

Limited usefulness

Seventy-nine percent of employees would feel comfortable using AI for analytical tasks,⁵ but an AI tool is only as good as the information it can access. Segmented, siloed AI tools often deliver incomplete answers. That's why BYOAI tools provide only limited usefulness for workers.





Organizations are now at a crossroads: let fragmented AI usage spiral into potential security failures, or take control and adopt a unified AI-ready platform. As an IT leader, you have a key strategic opportunity to guide your organization through this critical moment. Deliver the full power of AI across your organization with an enterprise suite that brings together productivity applications, security, and compliance capabilities—all designed for seamless AI integration.

A consolidated platform makes it possible to effectively deploy the right tools to reduce the risks of AI usage and protect your data. Consolidation also helps you better deploy and manage a seamless, secure connection between your organization's AI solution and proprietary data, resources, and workflows. This allows your AI solution to provide the accurate, actionable insights employees need to deliver high-impact work.

05

A unified platform

Microsoft 365 E3 is a unified platform that simplifies IT management, enhances your organization's productivity with connected experiences, secures tools and endpoints, and integrates seamlessly with AI.

The benefits of consolidating with Microsoft 365 E3

Reduce IT costs

Choose a comprehensive solution that simplifies management from the cloud and consolidates vendors to minimize total costs and improve ROI.

Protect your organization

Secure access to data, applications, and resources with a centralized solution for threat protection, strong multifactor authentication, conditional access policies, and continuous access evaluation.

Securely adopt generative AI

By building a secure foundation with a comprehensive platform that maintains data privacy and security, your organization becomes ready to adopt AI with Microsoft 365 Copilot.

Cut through IT complexity

Centralize application, endpoint, and identity management while reducing point solutions for productivity—controlling access and use without interrupting the flow of work across your organization.

By consolidating your IT ecosystem with Microsoft 365 E3, you're choosing a more secure and more productive way of working. This comprehensive platform equips your IT team and your whole organization to meet whatever comes next.

06

Lead the way with IT consolidation

Today's pace of IT sprawl is no longer sustainable. Consolidating your digital ecosystem isn't just a strategic move—it's critical to reducing costs, simplifying management, accelerating productivity, and strengthening security. By unifying your tools and processes, you'll empower your organization to work more efficiently, innovate faster, and embrace AI with confidence.

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