# **Securing success** for a high-security, high complexity Microsoft 365 tenant to tenant migration

## S&P Global

**At a glance:**

**Client**:  S&P Global Inc.

**Industry:** Finance

**Location:** Global

**Services provided:** Migrating all users and workstations from the acquired entity, along with their subsidiaries, to a single Microsoft Office 365 tenant

**Number of users:** 40,000

**Number of workstations:** 14,920

**Number of mailboxes:** 22,850

**Number of groups:** 2,092

**Number of teams:** 15,800

### The client:

Headquartered in Manhattan, with operations throughout the USA, Europe and APAC, **S&P Global Inc.** (SPGI) is a global giant in the financial information and analytics space.

### The need:

In November 2020, SPGI agreed to acquire analytics company IHS Markit in a $44 billion transaction. The transaction – which represented the world's largest deal that year, and which created a market-leading information services provider – was finalised on 28 February 2022.

The newly merged businesses needed to be able to collaborate and communicate effectively in order to drive operational efficiency – and with each business having its own individual Microsoft 365 tenant, this was hugely challenging and costly.

Migrating IHS Markit and its sub-brands into the SPGI Microsoft 365 tenant needed to be handled quickly yet cautiously. A combined total of more than 40,000 users meant unifying the newly aligned organisations would be a highly complex undertaking.

neroblanco

> **"** The number one benefit of the migration project is the impact it's had on our business: and we couldn't have pulled it off without the expertise of Nero Blanco. They're a small but mighty team of incredibly skilled and distinguished engineers who truly understand the workings of even the most complex tenant-to-tenant migration."
>
> – Joshua Feliciano - Vice President, Global Head of Digital Workplace, S&P Global

## Project in figures:

Mail/shared mail: 22,850

Archives: 15,037

OneDrive for Business: 18,530

Recoverable items: 18,365

Teams: 15,800

Groups: 2,092

SharePoint sites: 101

Windows workstations: 14,920

Number of teams: 15,800

Volume of data: 700 TB

## Tools:

PowerSyncPro DirSync

PowerSyncPro Migration Agent

## Proceed with caution

A number of technical, organisational and business factors needed to be balanced and managed to ensure the success of this mammoth migration, and to enable seamless collaboration between SPGI and IHS Markit, before, during and after the migration.

Specialising in large, complex tenant-to-tenant migrations, Nero Blanco were the ideal choice to help with the challenge.

Not only would the migration process from one Microsoft 365 tenant to another involve more than 700 terabytes of data across multiple Microsoft 365 workloads – including mailboxes with retention data, Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive with versions – customisation and integration meant much of that data couldn't be migrated on a like-for-like basis.

It was vital to minimise the impact on both users and the business as a whole when all users, revenue generating applications and critical business functions would be impacted. And, with the knowledge that all Microsoft 365 applications – from Outlook to Teams – would be unavailable for use during the cutover period, speed and efficiency were key.

High-end data security requirements – combined with a need for business flexibility – drove the need for extensive testing and validation in order to harmonise security, compliance and processes before the migration could take place. Nero Blanco also needed to maintain data integrity and comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

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With core staff located around the globe, Nero Blanco's 'follow the sun' approach meant their migration expertise was available to us, 24/7.

They really understood the challenges and pains involved in a project of this complexity and scale. We were able to trust them implicitly – something that's vital when security and compliance are paramount –  and communication was fluid with no misunderstandings.

– Joshua Feliciano - Vice President, Global Head of Digital Workplace, S&P Global

## The solution:

In a representation of true collaboration and partnership, the entire Nero Blanco team was involved in the pre-migration business analysis and discovery phase – working closely with SPGI and IHS Markit teams to analyse, assess and plan.

In-person meetings and workshops helped to iron out the process and ensure the migration represented a fully customised solution. The entire process took ten months and involved a total of five POCs and a lot of fine-tuning!

While the recommended migration solution initially considered a single cutover event, an ongoing cycle of learning, discovery, refinement and business discussions led to improvement and evolution through a number of pilots.

The question was, how do you migrate an entire business while still running that business and not impacting revenue streams?

The answer was to complete the migration in four separate cutover events – each one two weeks apart providing full cross-tenant access to applications. This solution provided the opportunity to migrate at scale and provide support, without putting too much strain on either the business or its people.

Four migration events meant four times the complexity, with each individual migration requiring careful planning, painstaking negotiation around dates and holidays, global teams working together and a high degree of compromise.

In a large and ever-changing environment with a high level of details and numerous activities taking place simultaneously, the stakes were high – but Nero Blanco were up for the challenge.

# neroblanco

> Choosing to deliver the project in four cutover events after months of discovery and planning was intense – but it was the right choice for us.
>
> I still can't believe we pulled it off! Impressive."
>
> – Joshua Feliciano - Vice President, Global Head of Digital Workplace, S&P Global

Understanding readiness is a vital element of coordinating any migration. The likelihood of success was determined by two simple key factors:

1. Was the user readiness complete?
2. Was the workstation prerequisite state confirmed?

PowerSyncPro provided key information on each device while ongoing business analysis complemented the user readiness for each of the four waves. An easy-to-use SPGI dashboard enabled internal teams to predict the success of each wave as a result.

Four cutover events with pre-stage – migrating over 700 terabytes of data across an eight-week period – would have been impossible to coordinate without the easy-to-use reporting capabilities provided by PowerSyncPro (PSP) Migration Agent.

The first part of any migration is identity. PowerSyncPro helped prepare the identities ready for the prestaging process, then became responsible for managing changes to scope, joiners/leavers, etc.

The complexity of the project meant the migration process had to be able to be executed and supported remotely. This is where PSP Migration Agent came into its own, migrating the workstations device join states between tenants remotely (with an average of just eight minutes of downtime per user) while providing full visibility into the process from its central console.

## The results:

After many months of planning, testing and preparation, four separate cutover events took place over an eight-week period – meaning the entire project was delivered within the expected timeline of one year.

SPGI management agreed that while the project was one of the most complex ever run by the company – streamlining operations and simplifying the support process – it was also one of the best received by the business's end users.

The success of the project, the quality of the preparation and the relatively low impact on users – despite the enormous volume of data and workstations being migrated – means SPGI is keen to leverage this trusted process  on future mergers and acquisitions.

# Extend your IT team with Nero Blanco

Imagine having Nero Blanco's expertise and experience on tap whenever and wherever you need it. Your internal IT team do a good job of day-to-day helpdesk provision and occasional larger projects, but you need a strategic partner to handle more complex plans, to ensure you're leveraging the best that Microsoft has to offer, and to keep your organisation running smoothly and efficiently.

If you'd like to benefit from ongoing support and expertise, **get in touch with us today**. We'd love to talk you through the ways we can help to unify your organisation.

**The benefits of working with Nero Blanco:**

- **Flexible service:** a fresh approach to IT that's designed around your business

- **Technical expertise on tap:** no more struggling with IT challenges

- **Responsive and fast:** we're there when you need us

- **Affordable solution:** a cost-effective way to outsource your IT function

- **Fully scalable:** increase your level of support as your business grows

- **Reassurance:** we make complex things simple

- **Peace of mind:** with over 50 years of combined experience, there's not a challenge we haven't overcome.