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DANIEL CAVE
Senior Infrastructure Engineer

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2 Engineers shifted from admin to value-driven enablement

Sophos elevates cybersecurity, productivity, and impact with Atlassian cloud

As Sophos evolved from a regional firm to a global cybersecurity leader, managing their on-premise Atlassian infrastructure and processes grew more complex. By migrating to the cloud with the help of an Atlassian Solution Partner, Sophos has increased availability of their services while tripling their global workforce.

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By improving their internal systems, Sophos has been able to scale to the global cybersecurity pioneer they are today.

In the early 2000s, Sophos' Engineering team implemented server-based deployments of Atlassian products for project management, product development, and collaboration. As usage increased, the team upgraded to Atlassian Data Center, which was the perfect interim solution to improve performance and stability.

Over time, Sophos continued growing, and their needs continued to change. Migrating to Atlassian Cloud presented an opportunity to empower and unblock the team, using tools they already knew and loved. By making the move with help from the Atlassian Migration Program and a Solution Partner, Sophos has improved availability amid almost 300% growth in headcount, elevated IT's role as a strategic business partner, and streamlined workflows so employees can focus on their core mission of providing superior cybersecurity outcomes for enterprises around the world.

Simplifying for efficiency and enablement

After upgrading from Server to Data Center deployments of Jira Software and Confluence in 2019, Sophos' headcount growth, global expansion, and wide adoption of Atlassian tools continued putting stress on their infrastructure. With so many users and so much activity, the load was becoming unmanageable.

> ❝ Our engineers and the business aren't being disrupted by unplanned events. Now we're able to think about how we can make our users' lives better, rather than just addressing stability and performance issues.

RAJEEV KAPUR
Director of Enterprise Engineering

The pace of change was also accelerating. "Everything is moving faster. And when the business runs fast, IT has to run faster," says Director of Enterprise Engineering Rajeev Kapur. The team wanted to test new tools and agile processes for the sake of innovation, but integrating new technology was difficult because their software was behind a firewall. Plus, IT was spending the majority of their days fixing issues, leaving little time for strategic projects and forward-thinking initiatives.

A cloud migration offered an opportunity to optimize on all fronts. "The business cannot possibly survive if we have multiple ways of doing the same thing," says Senior Infrastructure Engineer Daniel Cave. "Moving to the cloud was an opportunity to clean up the mess and improve from a technology and process perspective."

This focus on optimization and simplification became the North Star for Sophos' migration. "You need to have a key reason for migrating to the cloud and use it as a mantra for your team and your users. For us, that was simplicity and enablement," Daniel explains. "Our ethos is that you shouldn't spend an infinite amount of time configuring and managing the system. It should just run by itself and get you back to doing your job. – By moving to Atlassian Cloud, we shifted our focus to championing adoption, improving efficiency, and looking toward the future."

Migration success comes in waves

With the decision made to migrate, the next question was how. Sophos considered lifting and shifting the whole system at once, but ultimately decided to optimize and shift (Atlassian's recommended approach) and migrate instance by instance to show value as quickly as possible. The team hoped staggering the project into waves would also help boost adoption.

IT began the planning process with a spider web exercise to identify which Confluence and Jira Software projects were linked so they could be migrated as a unit. Then, they gathered a set of key stakeholders from each business area to help plan and test the migration and serve as champions among their teams. "Get key decision-makers in each business unit involved: both the technical people and the most influential people," Daniel suggests. "They understood the value proposition, complexities, what people could and couldn't get out of this, and they took that information back to their teams."

IT planned the next phase around the business units that would feel the biggest impacts if errors occurred. For this wave, they took even more time with planning and testing to minimize risk. Rajeev says, "Stakeholder management and user acceptance testing are what make the migration successful. You absolutely have to be honest and consistent."

To help with stakeholder communication, an Atlassian admin created an internal press release to set expectations on the new functionality and get teams excited.

Partnering and problem-solving throughout the process

During each phase of Sophos' migration, IT used Jira Cloud Migration Assistant (JCMA) and Confluence Cloud Migration Assistant (CCMA) to assist with planning and implementation. "You have to be optimistic that the migration tool is going to take care of the vast majority of data," Daniel says. "Then you can focus on the shortest way to get an operational system.'"

Their Solution Partner also played an invaluable role in providing migration planning expertise, as well as testing and technical support. Rajeev says, "Our Solution Partner was truly part of our project team. Bringing in a partner allowed us to leverage their knowledge, connections with app vendors, and experience to migrate faster. They also helped massively with user engagement by explaining to stakeholders and users what they can do with Atlassian Cloud."

Atlassian's APIs also helped to streamline the process. "Have a look at the APIs for Atlassian Cloud to understand what they do. There were many instances throughout the project where the API provided solutions to management at

scale," Dan explains. "For example, because we migrated in stages, we created a process whereby content was made 'read-only' before it was moved, then made 'read/write' once it arrived in the cloud environment. This meant that we needed to switch Jira permission schemes in bulk both on the on-premise deployment and then on the cloud. During our first iteration, this took one engineer a few hours to do by hand. By our second iteration a script, based on the APIs, did it automatically."

Leveraging resources and guidance from both Atlassian and their Solution Partner, Sophos completed the majority of their migration in about six months. The team is already reaping the rewards of working on the cloud and looking ahead toward more enhancements in the future.

Free to focus on improving lives and bottom lines

Now that Sophos is collaborating on Atlassian Cloud, teams across the organization and around the world can work confidently without disruption, and IT can serve as a more productive, strategic partner in the business.

"Availability on Atlassian Cloud has definitely been better. Our team's work has changed from 'Why is Jira having issues?' to 'How can I do this in Jira?'" Rajeev shares. "Now we're able to think about how we can make our users' lives better, rather than just addressing stability and performance issues."

Daniel says this shift has been meaningful to both individual employees and the organization as a whole. "My position has completely changed from a database administrator (DBA) to an enablement role. We're no longer a bunch of DBAs or server engineers. We're attracting and developing employees who are focused on efficiencies, improvements, and utilizing systems. Those people have a much more significant impact on operational effectiveness for the business."

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> **DANIEL CAVE**
> Senior Infrastructure Engineer at Sophos

On the subject of efficiencies, Sophos is reveling in their newfound productivity thanks to native cloud functionality. "Automation in Jira Software is helping us run faster, manage things better, and adopt new practices," Rajeev says. "For example, when a sprint starts, anything that's in the sprint gets nudged along automatically, and internal customers get status updates. Automations like these are faster, smoother, easier, and provide a better experience for people requesting work." Daniel adds, "Anyone can use automation because it's so simple."

It all ties back to Sophos' biggest migration win: achieving their goal of simplifying and enabling. "We have simple products that are easy to use. We want the same thing internally to help our employees be more successful. It shouldn't be a burden. It should just work," Daniel says. "By migrating to Atlassian Cloud, we moved away from being pure support to focusing on process enablement and adding value back to the business."

Explore Atlassian's Cloud products today.
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a free migration trial.

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