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e-book

Applications: The Key Ingredient of Your Merger and Acquisition (M&A) Recipe

A Liquit eBook

Current M&A Landscape Overview

While the post-pandemic M&A deal acceleration has returned to pre-pandemic levels as of Q4 2022, it reflects a cautious approach to ensuring deals deliver expected synergy. The stakes and the deals are still clearly high, with 48 percent of global deals in the Americas while Europe, the Middle East, and Africa increased to 28 percent, according to McKinsey.1 But while the bottom- and top-line returns are the standard of M&A success, it is the ability to merge cultures and operations through IT and applications that drive the degree of success.

The success of developing M&A cultural and operation synergies predominantly depends on IT integration across entities. But it isn't hyperbole to state that achieving that success starts with application management. This refers to the ability to identify, integrate, provision, decommission, and manage thousands of applications across a distributed enterprise. Today's hybrid multi-cloud organizational environment makes this a complex endeavor.

That complexity increases by an order of magnitude when it must happen between two separate entities in an M&A process. In M&A, the clock is ticking much faster on costs, risks, and expected profitability through projected synergies. Understanding the importance of application management in the M&A process requires starting with a definition.

What is Application Management?

Application Management (AM) provides the services, processes, and methodologies governing the operation, provisioning, maintenance, version control, patch management and upgrade needs of all applications across the lifecycle process. This ensures applications run optimally while providing real-time contextual usage, integration, and access permissions across every user and group in the enterprise. The goal is that users can have optimal access and use of the applications and the data that they carry.

Some enterprises are using an average of 976 applications, according to a joint MuleSoft and Deloitte survey.2 This forms the basis for the illustration of how application management is the foundation of business innovation and digital transformation.

Applications drive modern business functions that enable new business process solutions. These solutions increase an organization's ability to innovate and compete by supporting the development and delivery of new products and services to the marketplace. Efficient application management frees IT personnel and resources to focus on broader business challenges and possibilities.

Application management inefficiencies like manual provisioning, patching, versioning, updating, and access policy implementation can mean downtime for end users. When the need to move between platforms is factored in, downtime becomes the death of a thousand cuts for productivity.

The VEEAM 2020 *Data Protection Trends Report* estimates the costs of downtime for Tier 1 and 2 (mission critical) applications to be $67,651 per hour.3 Application downtime is usually associated with security tools like firewalls and BCDR solutions. But organizations generally, and those in the M&A process specifically, can also fight downtime with application management via identity access management (IAM) and single sign on (SSO) management.

Application Portfolio Management (APM)

It's common for distributed enterprises to use an application portfolio management (APM) tool. Among other uses, this acts as an application portfolio system of record to track use, usage, and data flow between applications. This can serve a vital function in the M&A process when coupled with an application discovery and dependency mapping (ADDM) tool.

Today's SMBs, SMEs, and enterprises must operate in a complex hybrid world of post-pandemic hybrid remote workforce needs and hybrid multi-cloud application/workload/database placement needs. While this hybrid world of application access and management is complex within a single enterprise, it increases exponentially during the pre- to post-M&A process.

The workforce is remotely accessing applications 24-7 using different virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and cloud platform silos across different providers. The typical IT service management (ITSM), help desk and system approaches are often different between M&A buyers and acquired entities. These ITSM differences are anathema to speed, standardization, and governance for IT and end user operations.

Typical IT support help desks are always overburdened, and quickly become overwhelmed during and after M&A. While APM and ADDM tools can support visibility, they have a limited impact on the granular processes of application management and integration. It's crucial to have a unified approach for end-to-end application management.

This simplifies everything from access and self-service to provisioning, versioning, patch management, and third-party platform interconnections. It will also support immediate and long-term performance success when user experience (UX) and operational agility are factored into an understanding of the M&A lifecycle.

Understanding The M&A Lifecycle

Although an M&A transaction is a highly complex legal, financial, and operational process, the goal of this eBook is to discuss its major components that guide or affect IT integration. This starts with the transitional service agreement (TSA), which spells out services the seller will temporarily provide to the buyer.

Transitional service agreements and application management

There are complex financial compensation, security, restrictions, and privacy aspects to the TSA. The main point for the purpose of this eBook is that the TSA gives the buyer the time needed to stand up its own infrastructure, IT systems, and application portfolio. Every post-merger company that emerges from the consolidation of the buyer and seller companies (referred to as a NewCo in M&A) should have a post-merger application stack that serves the new entity's business needs.

Realizing that post-merger application stack often introduces risk for both companies in the M&A. It also snowballs the workload and time investment for the IT team(s) who must manage those applications for transitional provisioning and permissions. Organizations will need to apply this process across thousands of users, groups, platforms, environments, and quite possibly, different IAM tools.

Most IT leaders will choose a "logical separation" approach. They will often meld this with the seller's access and data privacy policies, and its approach that limits sensitive systems and applications controls access. This approach can reduce the business risk and IT workload in some ways. The process will still be mired in excessive process time expenditure and outcome risks without a unifying, end-to-end application management approach. Applications and their needs will continually change over their lifecycle beyond the merger process. The NewCo and IT will always need an end-to-end app management approach to meet evolving needs.

Agility and due diligence through IT/business leader collaboration

IT leaders must have a prominent seat at the table as a strategic partner in pre- to post-M&A processes. A buyer company's IT team will have a big hand in defining and achieving potential synergies that strengthen the value created by the acquisition.

IT architecture flexibility of both companies determines the complexity of the integration where time and costs are always working against business outcomes. The IT team of the buyer is under enormous pressure to develop standardized processes and systems quickly. They will need to make tough decisions about what systems and assets to keep from a range of legacy, cloud-based, and SaaS applications.

It is always possible that many Tier 1 applications used by buyer and seller companies can be from the same vendor. This doesn't change the fact that the applications are still totally separate with different permissions, users, versions, and licensing within different data centers and/or different cloud provider instances.

Both companies will have discovered and mapped all applications and their dependencies by this point. The resulting blueprint will enable the team to determine which applications are critical and secondary to both businesses (as discussed earlier). The IT team must make all decisions about which applications to keep and migrate and which to decommission within the TSA time limit. Both companies will need to continue operating independently while also transitioning to an integrated application portfolio during the TSA stage.

IT leaders drive the due-diligence process required to integrate two companies' IT systems and applications. This process enables the buyer to forecast the savings from merged operations or bottom-line increases from synergistic services and products. Top- and bottom-line performance projections will lag market competitors beyond the projected transition time analysis without the right insights, processes, and tools integration. The result will be an increasing risk of customer and workforce experiences that further erode long-term brand and market possibilities.

The closing of the M&A deal officially starts the clock on developing collaboration approaches for determining integration timelines, costs, and ongoing risks. IT plays a key role in developing resources and plans for final approval by business leaders in the first weeks of the merger.

Buyer and seller IT teams are best positioned to identify integration obstacles that increase risks to the acquisition target, such as IT system and application incompatibilities. This can come from different/legacy system architectures and applications. It's vital that buyer and seller IT teams develop a plan for Day 1 agreements that set the stage for a smooth merger.

Day 1 Agreements and milestones for application management

The idea that the NewCo should be operational on the first day is governed by the Day 1 agreement. These legal agreements spell out best practices for close collaboration between the buyer and seller before the deal even closes. It will become the blueprint for infrastructure connectivity processes before the legal closing of the agreement. The goal is to have a detailed approach to quickly connecting buyer and seller infrastructure in ways that lower organizational and workforce friction.

Day 1 legal agreements provide the detailed legal roadmap for expectations between the various organizations involved by spelling out:

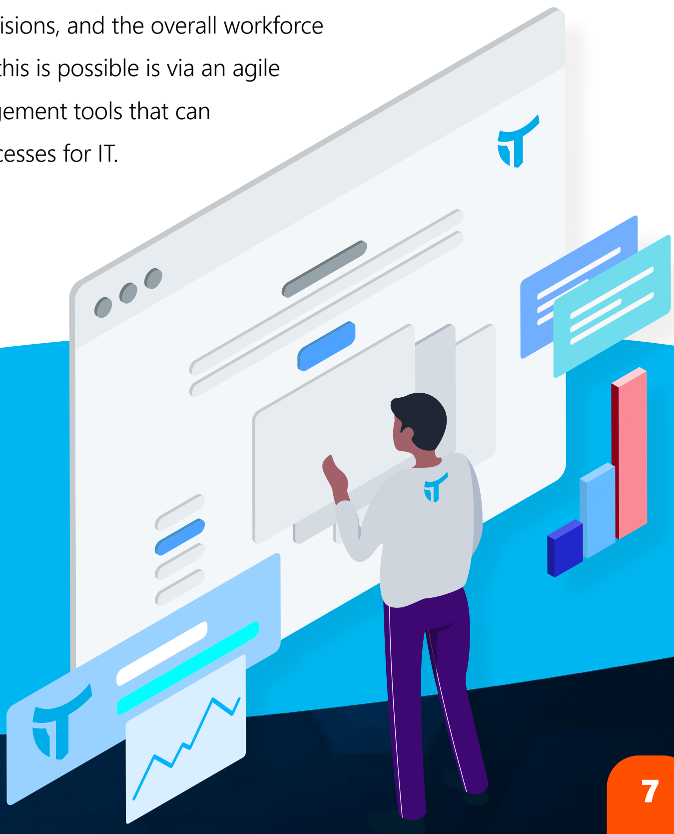
- What the buyer organization will do and not do
- What the seller organization will do and not do

This is where the buyer's organization must provide a clear strategy for determining which systems, applications, and workloads to migrate and which systems to temporarily maintain. Tier 1 systems and applications that are critical to business operation and regulatory compliance (like financial and ERP systems) are among the first to be ported over to the buyer's system/application stack. There are a considerable number of applications that lie at the heart of this Day 1 process, so it's vital to create an agile application integration framework.

Meeting Day 100 needs through agile application management

Day 100 is a key deadline since the NewCo will be operational for its first quarter. The combined financial and regulatory reporting will be coordinated and in place by this time. It's imperative that IT and M&A transition teams make decisions quickly in the runup to this milestone. The expectation of specific KPIs by Day 100 means that the scope of Tier 1 and 2 applications will be broad.

This means that collaboration across combined departments, divisions, and the overall workforce must begin happening as early as the TSA period. The only way this is possible is via an agile application integration framework and unified application management tools that can simplify and automate integration, provisioning, and access processes for IT.



Creating an agile application integration framework

Smooth collaboration and operations across a single enterprise is a difficult and complex process for IT under the best of circumstances. Application management for hundreds of applications stretches across divisions, departments and thousands of individual users and groups.

In a merger or acquisition, those challenges multiply by at least a factor of ten because of different systems, applications, workloads, uses, and cultures. This requires the creation of a broader agile IT integration framework and the holistically connected application integration framework.

While network integrations are critical, it is the higher-level application integrations that play a more immediate role in a smooth integration process. This is where an accurate and comprehensive inventory of applications and workloads can play a significant role in both application and network integrations. The goal is to dramatically increase pre- to post-merger collaboration and process fulfillment.

Developing an accurate and comprehensive application inventory

Defining the scope of integration in M&A starts with a complete list of applications in use by the acquired company. The next step is to identify which applications need to be integrated into the acquiring company. This forms the basis of IT timeline and resource needs along with business and department needs for the workforce.

Although many organizations have an application inventory list, it often lacks updates if they derive it from a configuration management database (CMDB). This is where ADDM tools can play a significant role in ensuring that it provides a comprehensive and accurate list of applications and their dependencies wherever they live (on-prem, private cloud, public clouds). The resulting list will enable them to develop a roadmap that determines:

- Key business capabilities and processes each application supports
- How critical the application is to business operations
- Users and user groups that rely on each application
- Application migration schedules based on critical need

Once the IT integration team discovers and maps all applications and dependencies, they can determine application migration order and schedules based on business pre-, mid-, and post-merger needs. This will help drive development of a unified application disposition approach.

Develop a unified application disposition approach

Armed with an accurate and comprehensive application map, IT can determine the strategy for integration into the combined organization. During M&A, the number of applications can easily double between the two organizations, with hundreds of them being integrated into the NewCo.

Between the TSA period, Day 1, and 100-Day periods, IT must look at the feasibility of a lift-and shift-approach of these applications into the appropriate infrastructure of the new organization, which:

- Enables the shortest possible time frame for completing the TSA agreement terms
- Significantly reduces TSA services costs

It's common for organizations to use different solutions for the same process, such as Workday for one and SAP SuccessFactors for the other's human resource purposes. The same can be true across ERP, quality management, document management, and other systems. Then there are the challenges of platforms like VDI. IT must develop a hybrid multi-cloud management strategy that works efficiently and cost effectively for the new company and its workforce.

While application commonalities like Salesforce, Microsoft, Adobe, and many others may exist between both organizations, the challenge of integration and provisioning still exists. The goal is to quickly determine if the IT team can and should holistically integrate the applications based on data process and technology or migrated when no clear single solution works for both companies. In most cases, they must plan and execute this within the TSA time limits, which includes determining where the application will live for optimum efficiency, access, and cost effectiveness.

The need to develop user provisioning, access, and permissions across individuals and user groups will be fluid, so automation, transparency and simplicity are vital. The two companies can further complicate the process when the acquiring company buys just a division of a company rather than the entire company. Access and permissions may remain with the original organization or be modified by groups across the merged organization to restrict data access that is not part of the sale.

An example might be SharePoint, where the answer would require separate SharePoint sites with certain data excluded from the merged SharePoint. The ideal way to handle such a situation would be through a single workspace management solution that enables SharePoint integration.

These types of decisions and implementation/integration processes during M&A show how organizations must deal with people, processes, and technology holistically. That requires an application management strategy that is built on a solid change management approach for M&A.

How Application Management Supports M&A Change Management

The broader IT infrastructure, systems, and assets are often seen as the foundation of innovation and digital transformation. But it is the synergy between applications and the workforce that reinforces that foundation. These aspects take on greater weight and truth in M&A, where they hold the key to projected synergies. Countless studies (and most notably Harvard Business Review) have pegged M&A failures at 70 to 90 percent. There are countless reasons given for this high failure rate, including:

- Unclear integration process execution
- Cultural issues
- Poor financial and operational synergy assessment
- Negotiation errors

Unclear integration process execution and cultural issues are often high on this list because creating a cultural fit through change management is impossible without clear integration process execution. Most successful business leaders will argue that their most important asset is their people, but that importance is often overlooked during the M&A process. Without effective communication and collaboration throughout all stages of the M&A process between the two workforces, it's impossible to achieve:

- Operational synergies
- Financial gains rather than losses
- Retention of the key personnel that give the acquired company its value

The inability to make change management a foundation of the M&A process increases the chances of failure, since people, ideas, and processes must be shared. The Buyer must also acknowledge these three elements as a vital part of the often-disruptive aspects of the acquired business that made it attractive to the buyer in the first place.

Without that acknowledgement of cultural differences and the ability to communicate and collaborate, very little can save an M&A process from failure. The highly valuable people will leave the company during or post-merger. According to the EY Global Capital Confidence Barometer, 67 percent of executive respondents cited talent as the driver of M&A.4 But the report also shows that 75 percent of key employees leave within three years of a major transaction. The details of why there can be high workforce attrition across an M&A process can include:

- Poor communication on M&A process and projected outcomes
- Lack of integrated workforce communication and collaboration
- Slow transitional processes and access permission updates

The merging companies must have the ability to communicate and collaborate clearly and often throughout the M&A process. If the companies lack these abilities, cultures cannot merge, people leave, financial and synergistic goals cannot be met, and the merger fails. That's why applications and application management are the foundation for achieving the key aspects of communication and collaboration that set the stage for a successful merger. In every organization, application management affects:

- Productivity
- Product and services innovation
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Resiliency
- Business continuity/disaster recovery (BCDR)

Increasing control and speed of application management translates to more fluid, productive, efficient, and pleasant user experiences, which results in the growth of data as capital.

Communication between stakeholders, transition teams and the workforce by quickly creating the means for the merging workforces to do their jobs is paramount. Communication, collaboration, and enterprise applications can be the roadblock or the answer to that challenge. To make these attributes the answer, IT must quickly provide contextual access and permissions to those applications for every person across the two companies via collaborative application stack integration.

Collaboration application stack integration

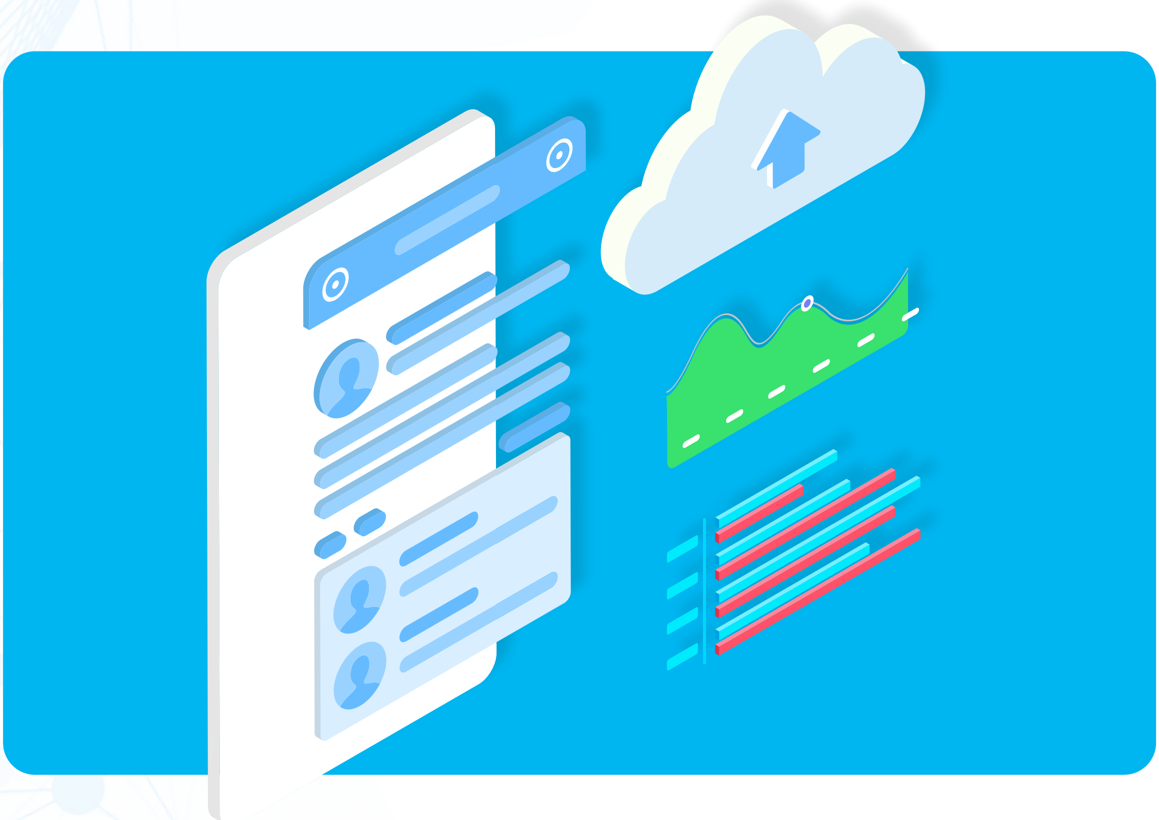
Collaboration is a priority for a smooth M&A process, so IT must have a way to integrate applications like SharePoint, Microsoft 365, and collaboration tools like Slack, Microsoft Viva, Teams, and others. The two organizations will need these applications to start working, collaborating, and communicating, which will further change management processes and enable meeting projected deadlines.

With IT burdened with massive projects during this transition, this aspect of change management through application integration and access must be simple, agile, and automated. Although IT will oversee the purchase of many tools to facilitate aspects of the M&A integration /transition, there is often little leeway in those budgets for application management tools that cannot handle processes from end to end and still be integral to operational efficiency with the NewCo.

The ideal scenario is a single platform that integrates all necessary tools for application management, provisioning updating, versioning, patch management, and contextual access for the workforce. This is one of many ways where application management can limit risks and costs while increasing speed and value.

Balancing Risk, Cost, Value, and Speed Through M&A Application Management

Risk is always present in M&A, so the process must be designed to limit or eliminate that risk wherever possible. The same holds true for costs, as the process of integrating people, processes, and technology is inherently costly, depending on the proposed business outcomes.



Those outcomes determine the value of the new organization, which they ideally hope to realize in the shortest possible amount of time. The challenge is that there are so many factors in the M&A process where time and cost are determined through analysis that delivers projections rather than certainties. The ideal scenario is to focus on the most critical part of speeding up and containing costs of M&A, which is IT integration.

Once again, many aspects of IT integration are difficult to determine time and costs outcomes with great accuracy or which aspects will deliver the biggest benefit the fastest. Therefore, application management rises to the top where a single end-to-end application management solution can bring transparency, agility, speed, and cost containment to the M&A process.

Pre, Mid and Post Merger Application Management

Pre-merger application management

For practical purposes, it is easiest to see the TSA period as constituting the pre-merger M&A process. The goal is to identify all applications, workloads, and their dependencies across the two organizations and determine which of them they should integrate, eliminate, or reduce (for example, one ERP system, rather than multiple instances).

Mid-merger application management

Day 1 and Day 100 milestones can be seen as the mid-merger point. Application management will continue to evolve over this period as the IT team:

- Adjusts integrated applications
- Decommissions others
- Introduces new applications (or applications new to specific users and groups)

Post-merger application management

The post-merger integration (PMI) process is no less complex than any other stage of M&A. The difference is that PMI focuses on long-term value creation and operational efficiency that enables growth of the NewCo. This process will involve reaching the following states:

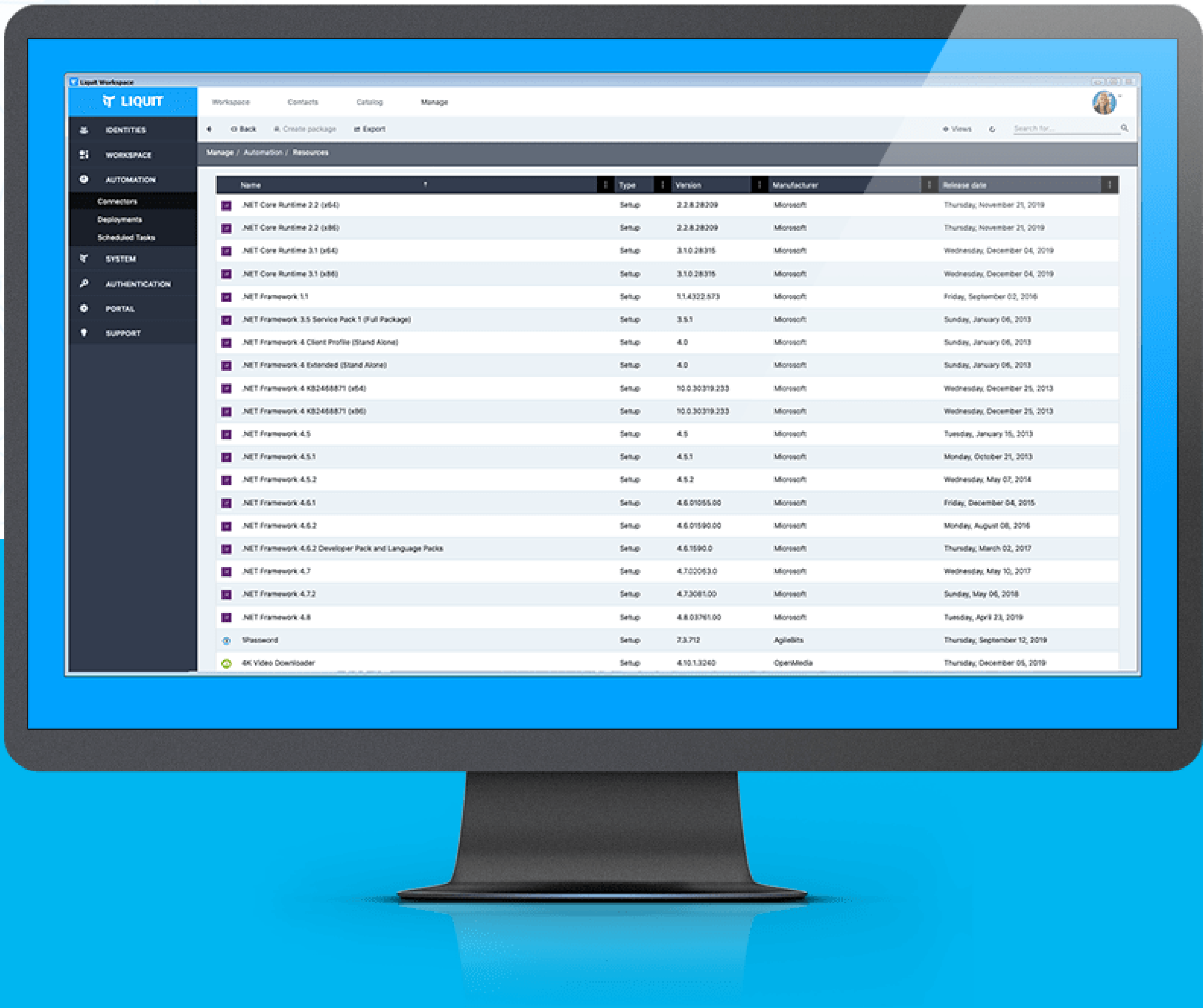
- Transparent IT landscape
- Rationalized place and use of integrated application portfolio (full application discovery and dependency mapping, licensing consolidation and cost optimization)
- Realizing future-state target architecture
- Business capability mapping with seamless integration across hybrid and multi-cloud architecture

The entire M&A process will consider the current and transitional needs of the two companies and how to ensure collaboration, data flow, and growth. The goal here and throughout all stages of the transition process is to ensure it is as free of friction and glitches that can affect the M&A outcome value proposition by:

- Evaluating the target company's technology to determine where it complements the IT strategy and operations based on IT systems, applications, and data migration to its own platforms
- Limiting back-end integration complexity to lower failure risk, costs, and confusion
- Carefully planning Day 1, Day 100 and post-merger integration and future state of system architecture and application portfolio across a hybrid multi-cloud environment along with the role that IT will play
- Enabling agile, simple, and automated application provisioning, access, versioning, patch management for all users and groups for anywhere any device contextual access

Although most M&A processes span 12-24 months, business needs, opportunities, and potential outcomes are constantly changing. Just as with any single enterprise, the NewCo will be on a journey of digital transformation based on achieving present and future business and operational outcomes.

Applications are clearly the driving force of any organization, so evolution of users, application stack, and needs will not end in any post-merger state. The best approach is to find the right application management solution that can handle all end-to-end processes, integrations, and changes. The solution must constantly evolve to be future proof in ways that can accommodate all changing needs. Liquit continues to refine and develop its agile and cost-effective end-to-end application management solution to meet those needs today and tomorrow.



End-to-End Application Management for M&A Lifecycle

All organizations generally see M&A as a means to consolidate companies or assets to achieve specific goals such as growth stimulation, competitive advantage, increasing market share or supply chain influence. Some organizations will go through one or two M&A processes spread over decades while others build their growth strategy on constant M&A processes.

While Private Equity (PE)/banking investment firms or the buying companies can start these financial transactions, making it work ultimately falls to the project team. The IT leaders on that team are the crucial linchpin of saving time and money while maximizing the potential outcome gains of the post-merger NewCo.

As every IT team involved in this process understands, IT portfolio management is the key to delivering the financial and business synergies of M&A. But it is the end-to-end application portfolio management process across the M&A lifecycle that is the foundation of that success. The primary reason is that application rationalization will determine the speed and smoothness of the M&A process across the lifecycle from the TSA through the 100-day process and far beyond.

Application, platform, and workspace management silo challenges are anathema to M&A transition and cost efficiency. Many organizations in the M&A process face multiple approaches and tools for application management and workspaces. This leads to the process of application provisioning, deployment, and management coming to a crawl, which slows down the entire M&A process while increasing its costs.

Making that process simple and cost effective is priceless, whether the M&A is a once-a- decade occurrence or it is a constantly recurring process based on a foundational business strategy. The application rationalization process covers four distinct outcome goals that include:

Change

This refers to application changes that determine which applications the IT team will use across the two entities at different times throughout the M&A process. It also determines the user, groups, and access permissions that will constantly change over the M&A process.
Ideally, the IT team will structure the process to enable:

- Global system integration to create users and user groups based on context
- Agile Packaging to accommodate changing user needs
- Global access via any device
- Implement SSO across all users, apps, and platforms

Efficiency compression

This process ensures the IT team can streamline the chosen applications that are needed at each stage of the M&A process for specific users, groups, and departments. The goal is to ensure users have the right level of access and integration without having to learn new systems or dashboards. The ideal structure of this process will quickly and smoothly deliver the following benefits for end users and IT across the two entities and the eventual NewCo to realize:

- Improved positive impact of applications across business areas, users and groups through fast and agile provisioning, delivery, access updates, and universal automated patching.
- Identification of the countless applications that have redundancies or poor support, carry too much legacy debt, and are outdated. These applications must be quickly and easily updated or consolidated.
- Consolidation/closing of applications to eliminate outdated, redundant, costly or those no longer useful based on users, groups, and licensing

Integration and connection are a major challenge for every organization, but the M&A process can make those challenges worse in countless ways. Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) is a critical project during M&A for data flow between applications in the post-merger period.

Application management integration across users and groups from pre- to-post merger periods is a far more fundamental challenge that can position the merger for failure if not dealt with properly. This integration aspect of application management will also set the stage for choosing and implementing EAI tools for those long-term service-oriented architecture needs.

This application management process will enable users to continue working and begin collaborating via applications while also revealing where and when EAI tools will be most beneficial. The integration and connection process for application management must also include integration and connection of:

- Microsoft VDI, RDS (Remote Desktop Server), printer server, configuration manager, 365, VMware, Citrix, Nutanix, and more
- macOS and Windows users
- Collaboration tools like Viva, Teams, Slack, WhatsApp, Adobe, and countless other productivity applications that are used across the two entities
- Platform rationalization (VDI, DaaS (Desktop as a Service)
- Minimize licensing costs based on targeted users and groups across all merged entities

Meeting the applications, users, groups, access, and integration needs across the M&A lifecycle will be critical to realizing early operational efficiencies and synergies. These are the primary means for keeping end users informed, collaborative, productive, and happy. By making application management and access transparent, simple, and automated for IT and end users, IT can lower overall M&A process and overall operational costs by eliminating communication friction and collaboration bottlenecks.

An automated approach that drives end-to-end application management frees IT teams to focus on more complex tasks while keeping end users happy and productive, with no major learning curve challenges. This will be an ongoing need throughout the M&A process and beyond for the NewCo since these application management processes will be in a constant state of flux.

IT teams face a mountain of different tools for countless process and integration projects across the IT portfolio for the M&A process. This eBook shows how application management is clearly the most effective project that lays the foundation for realizing a fast and low-friction M&A that delivers immediate results. But IT can lose those benefits when countless workspace and application management tools must be used to achieve the desired result. Liquit has proven that it is the only solution capable of meeting all these needs in today’s hybrid multi-cloud and hybrid workforce M&A world.

Future-Proof Application Management with Liquit Workspace

Although no two M&A projects are alike, they all share the same complexity and need for achieving defined outcome successes. IT and application portfolio management are the foundation of defining operations for the post-merger NewCo. While IT teams shoulder the biggest burden in helping to achieve those outcomes defined by stakeholders, they are expected to do it quickly and cost effectively.

Application management is the best way to achieve efficient communication, collaboration, and operations between and across the two entities as they become a single company. As the only end-to-end application management solution, Liquit serves the collaboration and communication flow needs of M&A by enabling these foundational processes that support all other complex pre- to post-merger processes.

The same levels of automation, simplicity, agility, and transparency that Liquit provides will continue to serve the NewCo throughout its entire life. It does this by creating a future-proof application management approach that can adapt to all future needs and changes. The seamless integration of **Liquit Workspace**, **Liquit Access Manager**, and **Liquit Release & Patch Management** helps organizations, people, and IT teams to make the M&A process smoother and more cost effective in the following ways.

Liquit Access Manager expedites onboarding and access

Transforming two companies into a single entity via M&A requires that employees have application access throughout the process and not just at its conclusion. Specific roles may change, so access to applications and how they are used can change throughout the process.

This merging of hundreds or even thousands of employees and applications across the two entities can be very time consuming for IT and confusing for employees when multiple workspace, platforms, and identity access management tools are in use. Liquit Access Manager provides a single-sign-on solution that is fully integrated with Liquit Workspace, which means that IT can:

- Provide simple, contextual, and immediate access to the applications each user and user group needs.
- Deliver the right user access to the right applications to make application access simple and immediate through intelligent identification and authentication.
- Eliminate complex sign-on processes by enabling the consolidation of multiple identity sources for improved security and efficiency.
- Speed M&A collaboration by removing application management bottlenecks and silos that lead to cumulative time losses (measured in days or weeks) to deliver nearly instant end user access. This takes IT mere minutes on the back end to deliver organization-wide access to the right applications for every user on any device.
- Create measurable IT team efficiency and time savings that can be applied to other M&A projects through major reductions in application/ device provisioning and deployment and help desk tickets via centralized application management and self-service provisioning.

What makes Liquit the only end-to-end application management solution for even the most complex M&A is the tight integration of **Liquit Workspace** with **Liquit Access Manager** and **Liquit Release & Patch Management**. Together, they deliver a powerful, agile, and simple application management backend with transparent, familiar, and customizable application workspace front end that integrates across hybrid multi-cloud and hybrid remote end users.

Creating a familiar and branded portal with Liquit Workspace

Digital workspaces generally provide centralized application management. But these solutions cannot provide everything that end users and IT teams need across hybrid multi-cloud environments that use multiple platforms, clouds and VDI. Many organizations already have one or more of these digital workspaces and multiple platforms. This means that the problem of unifying the experience across two entities is even more challenging due to:

- Confusion about the self-service aspects
- The constant uptick in helpdesk tickets
- A lack of defined protocols and processes for application provisioning, deployment versioning, updating and patch management

This can create a big headache for users and IT, resulting in:

- Process and operational bottlenecks
- Low productivity, increased downtime, and frustration for end user

This all adds up to higher expenses and delays in meeting operational and profit benchmarks, increased pressure on the IT team, and a significantly greater chance of M&A failure. While these digital workspaces produce numerous benefits, they also pose many varied challenges to IT and users, such as:

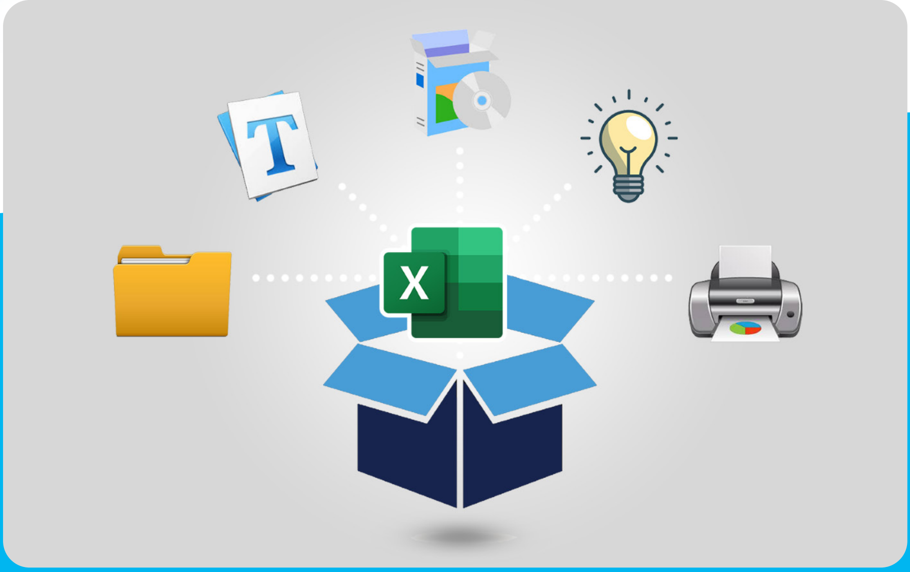
- The ability to provide centralized notifications because digital workspace notifications are spread across the range of systems and applications used. This decreases efficiency throughout the workforce since it takes more time and energy to track what's going on and ensure nothing is being missed.
- The digital workspace increases the number of applications and systems being used as well as the amount of sharing that occurs, which creates a need for highly scalable access management down to the individual where Zero Trust should be the norm.
- Complicated digital workspace training and adoption across new or multiple workspaces can slow down work processes and frustrate both end users and IT teams because of constant support needs via helpdesk tickets.
- Different workspace and platform solutions across the two entities mean different user experience for different groups, which requires different training that takes time away from workforce productivity.
- Communication and collaboration may happen across dozens of collaboration tools, which makes end user access to specific tools for their groups or department a communication nightmare.
- Major application suites and platforms like Microsoft 365 can be on prem for one company and cloud-based for another. This makes universal companywide access setup for groups or departments a major challenge for IT and end users. Email along with collaboration tools are the primary sources of M&A process dissemination that enables smooth transitions, change management, and employee confidence.
- Making it difficult, if not impossible, to integrate different virtualized desktop platforms, file/printer sharing, and other tools and platforms across different workspaces

Making sure that the right people have a seamless and transparent access experience across different VDI along with the use for SaaS, cloud native, and on-prem applications are things that become challenging with traditional digital workspaces. Some parts of the organization may use different VDI workspace and cloud platform solutions from vendors like Microsoft, VMware, Nutanix, Citrix, and others. The licensing costs are often a major expense that requires companies to limit them to high priority users and groups.

Any combination of these platforms could come into play in the M&A process when integrating two entities. IT must find a way to provide contextual application access to individual and group users regardless of what VDI platform they use. This must be a transparent process for the user across the M&A lifecycle.

Liquit Workspace makes it possible to manage application provisioning for thousands of applications across any of these workspace platforms through integration and the use of what we call Smart Icons. The backend of these **Smart Icons** enables IT to:

- Automate the deployment, provisioning, versioning, and patch management with simple access to each user's respective VDI platform across and beyond the merger lifecycle.
- Provide a single dashboard backend so IT can constantly assess and provision access to each specific platform for each user/group. This enables them to make immediate and long-range determinations about consolidation or even migration for licensing cost reductions.
- Deliver a clean and crisp UI dashboard that is a simple to use universal access point that can be branded to the new company. Each user gets the familiar look and feel via icons and menu options that are instantly recognizable, regardless of the device they are using anywhere, online, or off.
- Give each user a clean and simple view of all their applications with application icons displayed via a customizable web portal that allows them to create their own look and feel.
- Simplify the complexity of the delivery method of the application for IT via dynamic application management. This ensures IT can deliver a consistent, quick, and customizable user experience across any device, so end users can work efficiently at every stage of the M&A process.
- Integrate Liquit with all existing VDI, third-party digital workspaces and platforms via Liquit connectors to ensure seamless and transparent access
- Automatically deliver the latest version of the applications each end user needs, delivered how they want.
- Empower end users with intuitive self-servicing that enables them to get what they need from an easy-to-access catalog of applications and services throughout the M&A process.
- Fast contextual provisioning includes connection to the right version and VDI infrastructure via Smart Icons.
- Day 1 integration without user impact and step-by-step migration to the NewCo that eliminates IT department and end user stress.
- Collect data on application use that can drive important decisions around prioritization, consolidation, maintaining support, etc.



These same Smart Icons look the same as the familiar application icons but have powerful automation behind them. IT can automate the setup and access for end users who merely click on them to have instant access on any device, anywhere, at any time.

Hassle-free delivery quickly gets the right applications to the right users no matter where they are, removing inefficiencies and reducing helpdesk tickets. With end users having complete self-servicing capabilities for all their applications, IT departments spend less time on one-off fixes for individual users and have more time to deal with bigger M&A projects.

A distributed workforce defines M&A, so Liquit provides end users with the flexibility to function at peak productivity regardless of device, location, or internet access. As applications evolve, Liquit future-proofs application management to adapt to future needs. End users also have simple self-service provisioning from the self-service catalog to gain access to applications and add them to their customized workspace. IT sees the addition in their back-end dashboard to have an updated view of each user's profile.

End users can spend more time being productive and less time figuring out how to make applications work with a certain device or browser. This has a substantial impact on lowering M&A workforce attrition by constantly informing the workforce while delivering the transparent application access they need to be productive.

Liquit Self Service Catalog Delivers Agile and Fast Application Provisioning Across the M&A Lifecycle

Liquit Self Service Catalog handles the application provisioning with a repository of thousands of applications with different versions to meet the needs of different users.

End users also have simple self-service provisioning to gain access to applications and add them to their customized workspace. IT sees the addition in their back-end dashboard to Liquit Workspace to have an updated view of each user's profile.

Turning M&A weeks into minutes with Liquit Release & Patch Management

Patch management across disparate application portfolios with duplicate applications, licensing, versions, and different patch protocols can be a major roadblock to M&A. This will be true from TSA through Day 1, 100 Day, and well into post-M&A NewCo lifecycles. **Liquit Release & Patch Management** eliminates those time and operational bottlenecks by:

- Making the process of configuring, deploying, and updating applications fast and easy. This frees up valuable time for IT personnel to devote to bigger IT portfolio integration projects.
- Putting **thousands** of curated applications at IT's fingertips to ensure that all end users and groups have transparent and immediate access to the right applications across the M&A lifecycle.
- Providing the Liquit staged development process that enables automated, easy, and optimal application configuration so end users only encounter applications that work correctly, each time.
- Providing consistent presentation on any device, including Smart Icons that can deliver contextual application access, and local access without an internet connection.

IT also has the advantage of the Liquit Development, Testing, Acceptance and Production process (DTAP) in Liquit Release & Patch Management. This supports a natural flow and more structured testing of applications and settings to be deployed. The major advantage of DTAP is its ability to drive efficiency at all stages of the application lifecycle by enabling the creation of a unified image across all the workspace technologies that reduces errors in the production environments. With the Liquit DTAP from Liquit release and patch management a true hybrid workspace with single management is finally reality.

The seamlessly integrated Liquit Workspace, Access Manager, Self Service Catalog, and Release & Patch Management save a great deal of time during M&A as the application portfolio will undergo countless changes with new users and groups constantly being added. What likely would have taken days, weeks, or even months for IT to manage during M&A can now be reduced to minutes or hours collectively.

The time savings from eliminating the common multi-step processes for IT application provisioning and end user application access can clearly reduce costs through more productivity time. The bigger picture is that Liquit end-to-end application management saves a great deal of money across the M&A process in terms of helping to lower licensing costs and providing operational productivity gains early in the merger process. This increases shareholder and stakeholder confidence through upwardly trending EBITDA and long-term profit projections.

Conclusion

Every M&A project is different and brings its own specific challenges and needs. What is universal is the need for quickly defining the current pre-merger state of the broader IT portfolios and developing a roadmap for transition to a lower TCO/higher value post-merger future state. To do this, the leadership, workforce, and IT teams will need to create common understanding and processes for how to work, communicate, and collaborate in a change management environment.

Application management becomes the nexus point that bridges the gap between current and future state. But it requires the right solution to bring together applications, platforms, and third-party tools. It must also holistically work across distributed on-prem/data center environments and multiple cloud environments and third-party platforms and workspaces. High business risks, pain and cost challenges could derail the hope for M&A synergies without the right unifying solution.

With tightly integrated and seamless **Liquit Workspace**, **Liquit Access Manager**, and L**iquit Release & Patch Management**, M&A can flow through constant changes and transitions to stop bottlenecks, workforce frustrations, and IT headaches. It does this by enabling applications to flow like water through every stage of the rocky restructuring of every M&A project.

Liquit Solutions deliver continuous improvements through ongoing product evolution to meet the post-merger needs of the NewCo. Liquit has the same mission for supporting every organization that must thrive and compete—help them respond to global market and socioeconomic forces in a hybrid multi-cloud world.

To learn how Liquit can support you during your M&A process:

- Schedule a call with Liquit
- Participate in an application evaluation to understand time and resource savings of the Liquit platform for your M&A activities
- Plan a demonstration of the Liquit Platform

You can also reach out directly to our sales team at:

EMEA
Kastanjelaan 6
2982 CM Ridderkerk
The Netherlands
Phone +31 88 63 83 500

Americas
228 East 45th St Suite 9E
New York NY 10017
United States of America
Phone +1 (630) 940-5013

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About Liquit

Founded in 2015 in the Netherlands, Liquit is a software vendor that delivers Enterprise-ready End-to-End Application Management for Hybrid Environments. Liquit bridges the gap between the IT department and the end-users. The Liquit platform makes accessing corporate IT resources for end-users less complex and easier than ever. With Liquit, IT departments have the tools that empower them to immediately respond to business requirements, enhance user productivity, and give their organization a competitive advantage.

sales@liquit.com / www.liquit.com

LIQUIT

Europe
Kastanjelaan 6
2982 CM Ridderkerk
The Netherlands
Phone +31 88 63 83 500

Americas
228 East 45th St Suite 9E
New York NY 10017
United States of America
Phone +1 (630) 940-5013