



Work better together
with **SharePoint**



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How, What & Why.

SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft Office. The features of the platform are centred around an intranet-based cross-collaboration experience that enables secure sharing, content management and workflow collaboration features among many others.

Businesses and public sector organisations using SharePoint on premises have an ongoing choice to persevere with the on-premises model and move to SharePoint 2019 or – as it seems Microsoft would prefer – to migrate to cloud provision and SharePoint Online.

The planned withdrawal of mainstream support for SharePoint 2016 in July 2021 now provides an excellent opportunity to migrate or update.

To help you make the decision, we recap what SharePoint could offer to your organisation in general and how the removal of mainstream support should be counter-balanced by migrating to the current version.

What's driving adoption of SharePoint?

SharePoint's popularity – already global – soared during the COVID-19 pandemic with the switch to home working across developed economies.

[Research](#) by Finder revealed that 60% of the UK adult population were working from home at the height of the pandemic and that 26% planned to continue working from home to some degree after lockdown.

[According to the BBC](#), fifty of the largest UK employers “have no plans to return all employees to the office full-time”, while Nationwide announced [a permanent transition](#) to a hybrid working model.

The combination of remote working and office-based collaboration will drive adoption of SharePoint and Teams in the post-pandemic era.

Just how popular is SharePoint?

Microsoft announced at Ignite 2019 that SharePoint had 100 million active monthly users.

Thirteen months later, in December 2020, it was revealed this figure had doubled to 200 million with, according to Statista, the majority (81%) using SharePoint Online rather than on-premise.

The fact that Teams – part of the Microsoft 365 collaborative platform which, among other things, facilitates remote meetings – is based on SharePoint has been a major driver for this massive uptick in monthly use.

The phenomenal growth in SharePoint usage is set to continue in the working environment of the future.

If the pandemic created the right moment for SharePoint and Teams to start showing their true potential, it also offered an opportunity to take a step back and analyse exactly what SharePoint offers.

Teams Growth (daily active users)

- November 2019: 20 million
- March 2020: 44 million
- April 2020: 75 million

Source: Business of Apps

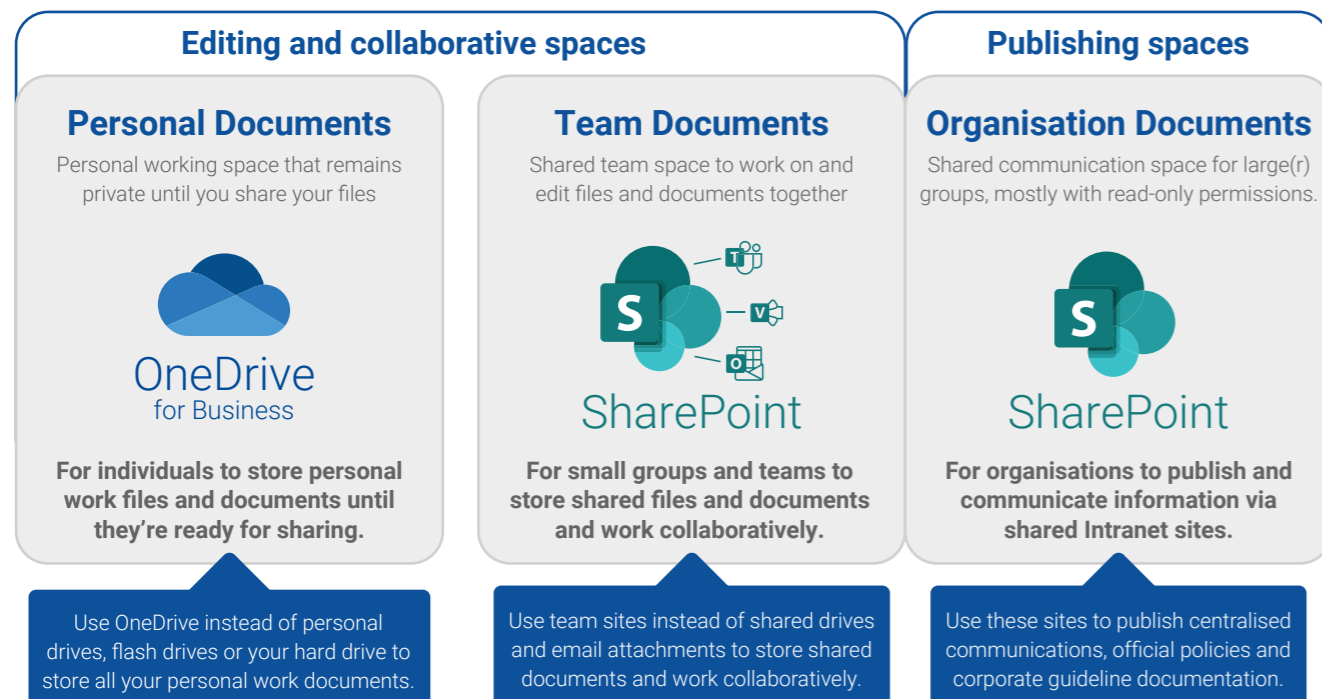
What does SharePoint offer?

A key benefit of SharePoint is that it enables friction-free collaboration and information sharing. This is true for smaller as well as larger organisations, whether based together in a single office, distributed across many office locations, or with hybrid teams working onsite and remotely.

Importantly, according to a 2020 survey, SharePoint is as popular with employees as it is with employers, with 83% of employers and 71% of employees viewing it as “a success”.

The withdrawal of mainstream support for SharePoint 2016 gives added impetus to organisations to understand why migrating to SharePoint Online is worth considering and what the benefits are.

Its role within the context of “what should be managed where” is illustrated in this graphic:



Let's look in more detail at what it offers.

Documents

SharePoint can be used to store documents in a single shared location, with permission-based access via a web browser. Administrators can create different levels of permission so the right members of specific teams can access and modify certain documents. Version control is managed via modification alerts so everyone working on a specific document and project is informed whenever modifications are made.

Intranet

SharePoint can be used to create an organisational intranet, providing employees with access to announcements, scheduled tasks, news and other key information that needs to be shared. Individual departments can customise their own part of the intranet and Administrators can set access levels to enforce security across different information levels and classifications.

Collaboration

Regardless of physical location, and provided they have internet access, employees can access SharePoint securely on any device. Instant access to features such as project status, team location, online conferencing, calls and meetings, calendars and documents enables the same level of collaboration, interaction and communication as can be enjoyed within a single office space.

Websites

SharePoint can be utilised to build and manage company websites, via an intuitive Content Management System without needing to rely on development resource. Team members without in-depth technical skills or experience can create new pages or update existing pages with new graphics and text.



Customer Relations

A key driver of SharePoint adoption is its integration readiness with other Microsoft platforms and productivity tools such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM as well as third party CRM solutions. Departmental teams across sales, marketing, finance and customer service can have seamless access to customer information and supplier details without having to switch application.



Social

SharePoint makes use of social networking tools like Microsoft Teams to enable team members to collaborate with ease on issues such as planning, meetings and workshops. As with the other features, the fact that networking is accessed via the single portal that is home to everything else needed for a project helps to make collaborating as smooth and frictionless as possible.



Business Intelligence

The fact that all relevant data and documentation is housed centrally on SharePoint makes gathering business intelligence for effective strategic planning straightforward. The shift away from departmental data silos facilitates deeper and wider data analysis using SharePoint Business Intelligence. Users can create graphs and charts to visualise snapshot and longer-term trends at departmental or organisational level and share reports to relevant teams.

In addition to this, SharePoint also offers users the ability to analyse data, build solutions, automate processes, and create virtual agents with Microsoft Power Platform. This program is proving highly successful for business and [a 2021 commissioned study](#) conducted by Forrester Consulting found that it can support an average 502% ROI and investment payback within 11 months.



Scalability and flexibility

The SharePoint mobile app enables employees to access files, co-workers, team sites and other resources on laptop, smartphone or tablet, wherever they are working. Because SharePoint solutions are scalable and flexible, organisations can pay only for what they need rather than for a one size fits all solution with potentially un-needed features.

The benefits of migrating to SharePoint Online

Some organisations may have invested in development work to achieve a tightly customised solution around their specific business processes.

If this is you, migration of any kind to the newer SharePoint version might at first seem a daunting prospect.

The good news is that SharePoint Online offers many of the integration, collaboration and reporting features not available with earlier versions. It also offers the ideal choice for organisations wanting to shift to the hybrid working model balancing remote working with a degree of office-based interaction as described earlier.

A huge benefit of the cloud-based model is that organisations can offload and effectively outsource the burden of developing and managing on premises hosting and network infrastructure by opting for SharePoint Online. Let's look at some of the main aspects of this.

Security

Enterprise grade security requirements are now a compliance issue and SharePoint Online offers multiple layers of physical security, data centres in confidential locations and multiple levels of back-up. SharePoint Online offers all this as part of the package. It is managed, maintained and updated on your behalf, relieving you of the cost and management overhead of deploying standalone security.

Hardware maintenance

As with security, the removal of on-premises hardware requirements means no more dedicated server rooms, freeing up space and resource to focus in other areas. Staff can be deployed to more front line or business critical roles as the responsibility for maintaining and supporting servers is shifted to Microsoft.

Software updates

Like all cloud-based systems, SharePoint Online is maintained automatically with new features, version updates and bug fixes as they become available. The update and upgrade process is managed by Microsoft, minimising the effort and disruption for users, and freeing organisations from the responsibility and cost of maintaining software versions.

SharePoint Online Benefits Summary

- Managed security
- Managed hardware maintenance
- Seamless, automatic software updates
- Permission-based access to documents, teams and data
- Rich features set:
 - Document storage
 - Website creation
 - Social interaction
 - Business insights

The SharePoint Migration Process

Microsoft is clearly favouring cloud-based SharePoint deployments today, and the withdrawal of formal support for 2016 version supports this.

Meanwhile, for businesses that want to gradually progress their existing on-premises SharePoint services to the cloud, SharePoint Server hybrid offers an organised migration path. In essence, it allows users to extend high-impact SharePoint workloads to SharePoint Online, in order to handle any overflow.

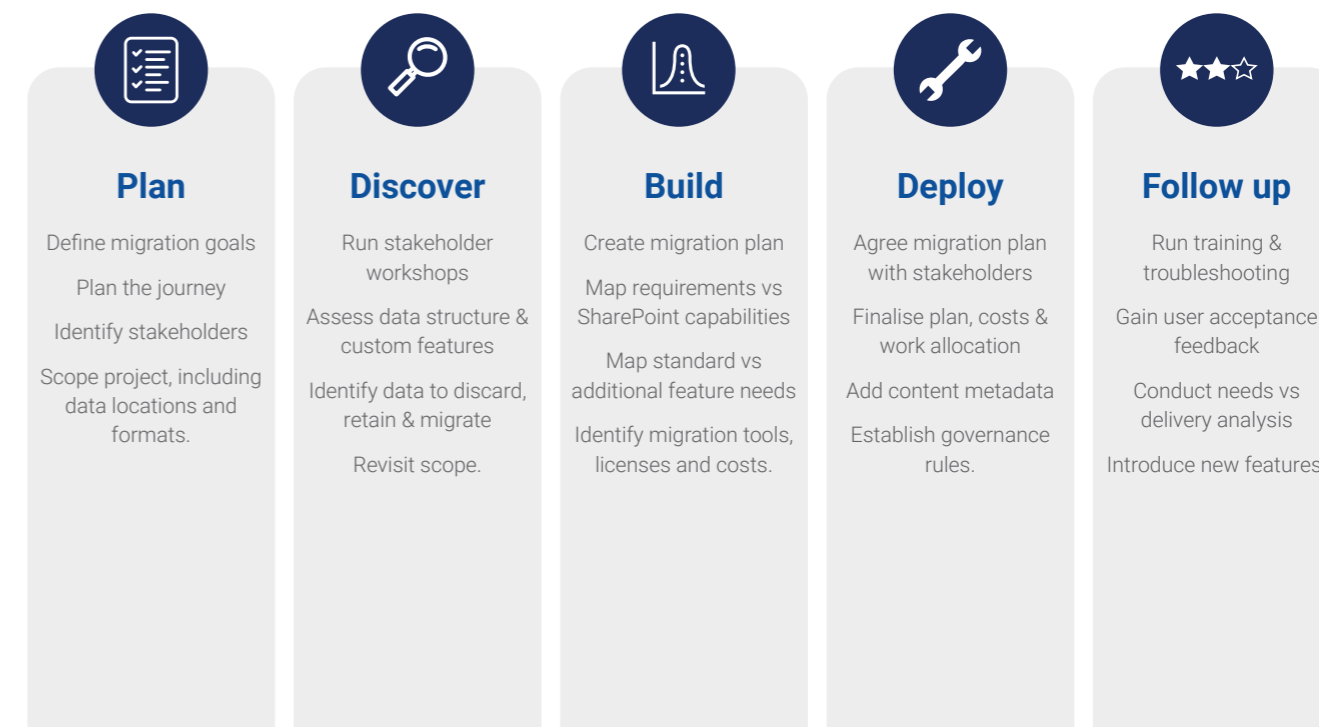
Migration to SharePoint Online must be planned and

managed carefully, with clear communication across all relevant stakeholders central to the process.

Employees and senior management alike need to buy into the changes from the beginning. Their input and enthusiasm will play a key role in successful delivery.

At Chess, the SharePoint migration is a 5-Stage Process comprised of incremental steps.

Planning a SharePoint Migration



1) Plan

The starting point of your migration project is to define the journey from current deployment to the target destination. What are your current requirements, what is currently missing, what features must be migrated and what do any additional future business requirements look like?

The need at this stage is for a high-level scope and requirements document for your SharePoint migration, which includes at minimum an outline understanding of the shape of the organisation, and the location and format of its data.

Top tip:

Identify the key stakeholders at the very beginning of the migration process and establish communications channels and methods with them. Communications and approvals will be critically important to the success of the project from start to finish.

2) Discover

The discovery phase involves developing a more detailed picture of the “information estate”. It involves running workshops with key site owners and stakeholders to assess:

- Current and desired content types, structure and storage requirements
- What can safely be discarded
- What must be retained and migrated
- Access permissions for different classes of data
- Project scope, based on workshop outcomes

Top tip:

A vital consideration at this stage is whether and how to migrate customised features. Examples include colours, fonts or logos to comply with corporate branding, custom functions, aspects of workflow such as how content moves between different systems, event-triggered updates and custom access levels. Other often-seen forms of customisation include integrations with third party systems, custom forms used by finance, accounting or HR documents and custom reporting routines.

3) Build

Once the scope is agreed, it's time to build the Migration Plan. It is only at this point that the requirements can be assessed and mapped against the standard capabilities of the new SharePoint version.

Matching requirements with Microsoft's licensing structure is best left to the build stage too, because of the sometimes bewildering array of options and features available either as standard or optional.

Inevitably, some requirements will be addressed by the standard 'out of the box' SharePoint solution, while others may require further 3rd part integrations. It is frequently possible to identify new value-added benefits from within the standard feature set.

Top tip:

Don't migrate every single document on the basis of “better safe than sorry”. Instead, go through the documents and identify those which can be removed before migration. There's every chance that legacy systems grew in a piecemeal manner rather than on the basis of a thought-through plan, potentially leading to significant duplication and multiple versions of documents, many of which are no longer relevant.

4) Deploy

Once your Migration Plan is ready to go, you'll need to walk the stakeholders through it and only activate the migration once the scope and parameters are fully approved. Ownership of project elements can be allocated and working groups established. Final decisions can be made about look and feel and the project timescale can be agreed.

Having identified the content to be migrated, it can now be processed by adding meta data according to identification, verification and location, and a suitable migration tool can be selected.

Governance rules can be configured and automatically applied to the content as it migrates, ensuring that content access is properly controlled and protected once the migration goes live.

Top tip:

Run test migrations to pilot the plans you've made using a test data set to assess whether the migration process will comply with expectation. Discovering any problems at this stage is simpler and far less disruptive than only finding out after a full-scale migration.

★★☆ 5) Follow Up

Once your SharePoint migration has had a chance to 'bed in', and you've completed your initial training and troubleshooting process, your Migration Team should run a comprehensive assessment.

You need employees and managers to buy-in to the updated SharePoint solution, so it's important to gauge the level of satisfaction. Find out what stakeholders thought about the process, how it was planned and whether the results live up to the scope that was originally intended or promises made.

If the migration process has taken months to complete, it may be that new features have been released, so now is a good opportunity to embed these into the user experience.

Top tip:

Don't just run through the assessment as a box ticking exercise. If it reveals any shortfalls in expectations or delivery, formulate a plan to plug the gaps and show stakeholders that you take any concerns seriously. The more you engage with them post-migration, the better the chances will be of SharePoint being used to its full potential and that you'll have happy employees and management.

Chess is a Gold accredited Microsoft partner

Chess are on the Microsoft Technology Adoption Program (TAP), allowing their technical architects and solution specialists to work together with Microsoft on new features, advise on new developments and be the first to test the new releases.

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- Gold Application Integration
- Gold Cloud Platform
- Gold Cloud Productivity
- Gold Collaboration and Content
- Gold Communications
- Gold Data Analytics
- Gold Datacentre
- Gold Project and Portfolio Management
- Gold Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions
- Silver Enterprise Mobility Management

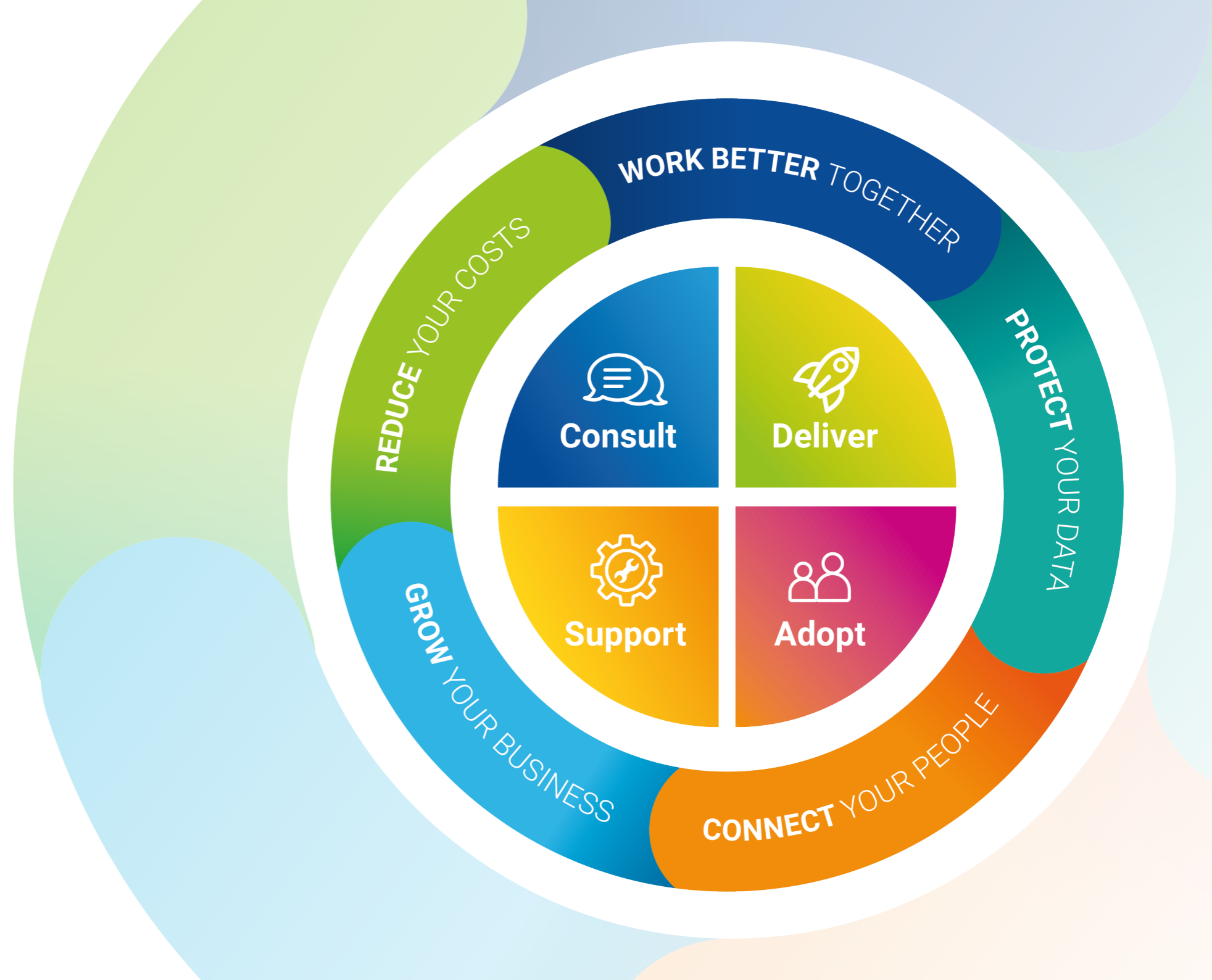


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We're extremely proud that our people voted us No.1 in 'The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work for' list 2018, and we continue to celebrate more than ten years in the top 100.



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Work better together

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