



Getting the most out of Google Workspace: An IT manager's guide

Drive more value for all your departments with Google Workspace

 Google Workspace

Pythian



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Navigating the future of work

IT managers have a lot on their plates. Over the last few years, we've seen the rise of remote and hybrid work—and for IT managers, that means adapting corporate culture for a new era of work while managing teams across physical and virtual spaces. At the same time, they're under pressure to handle growth through uncertain circumstances in changing environments. And they need strategies that will make hybrid work a more equitable and productive experience for everyone.

In today's evolving hybrid work environment, IT managers are tasked with supporting remote and hybrid workers, who may have a desk at the office and at home—using multiple devices, applications and platforms. Unlike in the past, where you could lock down the corporate IT environment behind a firewall in a physical building, this new environment extends beyond the office and into people's homes. That poses a number of security challenges and is driving a substantial rise in the use of shadow IT.

But managing this environment is just one aspect of the job. On any given day, you might have to onboard new users, manage software licenses or deploy a new technology. You may need to manage multiple clouds, both private and public. You're also likely supporting third-party tools, some of which aren't authorized by the IT department. For example, your company's primary web client might be Gmail, but perhaps employees are also using Microsoft Outlook or Apple Mail, so you have to support third-party mail client tools or sync Google Workspace data.

Maybe your organization is already using Google Workspace, or maybe you're in the process of rolling it out. But if you're like most organizations, the administrative duties of Google Workspace are just one of a multitude of priorities for your team. You may not necessarily have the time or internal resources to manage every aspect of your Google Workspace environment. But, by following these helpful tips and insights from our experts, you'll be able to get a more effective, intelligent and secure Google Workspace environment—and gain a world of extra support at no extra cost.



How to manage users in a hybrid world

IT managers are responsible for adding, removing and managing users, as well as setting up devices, security and permissions levels. At the same time, you need to stay on top of the latest features being rolled out by Google and ensure your team is up-to-date.

For example, Google is rolling out features in Google Workspace that can help teams stay better connected and engaged, including more secure and inclusive hybrid meetings that cater to both in-person and remote attendees. Google is also increasing team size limits in Google Spaces to support communities as they grow, improving collaboration in larger organizations.

Some best practices to manage users include:



Keep on top of [upcoming products and features](#) planned for Google Workspace, which are typically added every quarter.



If you're responsible for managing large numbers of users and multiple devices, configure Google Cloud Identity for access, app and endpoint management (IAM/EMM).



Set up Google Vault, included with Business and Enterprise editions, to archive data in a format that's compatible for e-discovery.

How to support users with Google Workspace

IT managers get asked a lot of the same questions by users: Can I migrate existing email to Google Workspace? Can I sync all of my calendars? What types of files can I upload to Drive? How much storage space do I get with Drive? Can I access Docs offline and share them externally? How can I convert existing documents into Docs? Can I convert other spreadsheets in Sheets? How does co-editing work?

The best way to onboard, support and empower users to be successful with Google Workspace is to provide ongoing education and training, but keep in mind that different users will have different comfort levels with features and functionality. Some may insist on using unauthorized tools; some departments will authorize other tools to work alongside Google Workspace. For example, some users might be die-hard devotees to certain Microsoft 365 tools, so IT managers will have to support both platforms.

Some best practices to support users include:

- Create a central training website with resources so employees can quickly get up to speed and find reference materials in one place.
- Create training modules for new employees and keep adding to the roster. Training with Google Workspace is an ever-evolving adventure, with new features and functionality rolled out regularly.
- For distributed workforces, conduct virtual training classes or Q&A sessions with Google Meet, and then share the recording and materials in Google Drive.

Keeping training modules up-to-date and staying on top of new functionality may sound like a daunting process - but it doesn't have to be! Pythian's Google Workspace managed services can provide [regular training](#) and updates to your team to ensure everyone has access to the most current information, so your organization can get the most out of Google Workspace.

How secure is your Google Workspace environment?

It's an IT manager's worst nightmare: a breach of sensitive corporate data. But when it comes to securing data in the cloud, traditional loss prevention solutions aren't going to cut it anymore—especially with hybrid workforces using multiple applications and platforms (including shadow IT). While Google secures its underlying cloud infrastructure and offers native security controls in Google Workspace, it also runs on a shared responsibility model.

That means you're responsible for implementing policies and procedures such as access controls and permissions. If this isn't set up, a malicious actor could gain access to an employee's workspace and view, edit, download or copy data. Or, a misconfiguration could result in a security gap that leaves data exposed to theft or loss. Gartner [predicts](#) that, by 2025, 99 percent of cloud security failures will be the customer's fault, in large part due to misconfigurations.

Organizations in highly regulated industries or with highly sensitive data in the cloud may require more robust security controls, as well as a compliance framework to manage data sprawl in Google Workspace. IT managers will also need to conduct regular security audits on Google Workspace and its components, including Accounts, Apps, Calendar, Chat, Drive, Gmail, Groups, Sites and Vault, as well as identity management, administrator account management and endpoint device management.

“As remote and hybrid workplaces become standard, organizations are challenged with providing multiple access points to data to maintain necessary levels of productivity and collaboration. But ensuring Google Workspace adheres to a company's compliance and security framework is paramount to reducing risk,” said Aric Bandy, executive vice-president of cloud and corporate development with Pythian.

Interested in seeing where your organization stands today with security and Google Workspace? Pythian's [Google Workspace Security Assessments](#) can help by thoroughly reviewing role-based access control for Google Workspace data and application services, ensuring all data is protected in accordance with your organization's desired configuration. Or [get started with a free consultation!](#)



Managing shadow IT in a hybrid workforce

Shadow IT isn't new—it's been a problem plaguing IT managers for years—but it's been exacerbated by the rise of remote and hybrid workforces. Even prior to the pandemic, Gartner predicted that data located in shadow IT resources would be the underlying cause of about [one-third of successful enterprise security breaches](#).

Whether employees are giving a presentation or collaborating with team members, they can do that from home—or anywhere, for that matter—and some will choose to use the device or application they're most comfortable with, whether or not it's authorized by the IT department. Line-of-business managers are also deploying cloud-based applications outside of IT processes and procurement, which creates security, privacy and compliance risks including malware infections and data theft.

But simply blocking employees from using unauthorized apps doesn't typically go over well. A better approach is to educate them about the risks of shadow IT while providing them with a better set of tools. [Pythian's Managed Google Workspace Administration](#) service can help by supporting your Google Workspace environment and your users, ensuring adoption with change management services provided by our PROSCI-certified experts and weekly live instructor-led virtual training sessions to empower both new and experienced users.



Boost HR compliance with Google Workspace

Organizations are responsible for storing and processing employees' personal data, including social insurance numbers, banking information, salary details, benefit details and background checks. Non-compliance with data privacy regulations could result in penalties, fees or—in the worst-case scenario—legal action. From the moment a new employee is hired to the moment they leave, IT managers must ensure HR administrative processes are secure and compliant.

In Google Workspace, you can create organizational units to separate users who manage sensitive employee data (such as HR managers) from those who don't (such as HR administrative staff). With access control, only those who need access to certain types of sensitive files would be granted access. You can also build a shared Drive structure for your HR team, but it's important to review this on a regular basis and audit how files are being shared.

Did you know?

Google Workspace comes with dozens of integrations specifically designed for HR and legal in the [Google Workspace Marketplace](#).



How to boost legal compliance with Google Workspace

Google Workspace is designed with legal compliance in mind. For example, a company's legal team can edit shared documents in real-time and chat directly in files, even on their phone—whether at a deposition or working from home. Even if they don't have internet access, they can still work on case files by setting up offline access in Drive. And they can set up permissions so only authorized team members have access to certain shared documents. With Gmail, they can turn on “confidential mode,” which prevents an email from being downloaded, forwarded or even printed—ideal for sensitive legal documentation.

By default, data stays in Google Workspace accounts until a user or admin deletes it, so you can keep data for as long as you need it. Google Vault can be configured for data retention and e-discovery—so you're prepared in the case of an audit or legal inquiry—and you also can set retention rules and holds on data for certain Workspace apps. Google Workspace also offers Data Regions functionality, allowing fine-grained control over the location of your data to maintain regulatory compliance.

Did you know?

Google Workspace is GDPR compliant, so it meets or exceeds all requirements related to data protection regulation at a technical level.



Optimizing Google Workspace with data analytics

Google Workspace includes advanced data analytics tools to help you get the most out of your investment. For example, Work Insights lets IT managers track how often users, departments or lines of business are accessing Google Workspace apps and which features they're using most often (or not using). This can help you understand where additional training may be required to boost adoption or improve Google Workspace literacy, or where legacy licenses may no longer be needed.

Pythian can help you unlock more business value out of Google Workspace with our analytics strategy and planning services, from initial planning to ongoing management to the application of advanced data science. For example, we'll fine-tune every element of your cloud analytics, from ingestion and data preparation to storage and real-time analysis. We can also help you unlock insights across different Workspace apps and legacy applications at any level of the organization, so you can understand the impact of transitioning to Workspace.

Managing devices in hybrid work environments

Employees want to work anytime, anywhere, from any device—but IT managers need to ensure this isn't putting the organization at increased risk of malware, data loss and theft, regulatory non-compliance or even corporate espionage. Basic mobile management (such as hijacking protection) is included with every Google Workspace plan, accessible via your Google Workspace Admin console. But advanced mobile management offers more control over your organization's data across endpoints, including desktops, laptops and mobile devices.

But creating a mobile device management policy—and enforcing it—can be difficult when managing Google Workspace across multiple devices. For example, you may need to configure context-dependent access settings or the automatic blockade of Android devices that don't comply with your organization's policies. You'll also need to set policies for bring-your-own-device (BYOD) and set conditions for each organizational unit (since settings will differ across the organization).

Pythian can help to create, deploy and maintain a mobile device management policy specifically tailored to your organization's needs. This could involve best practices such as:

- Enforcing software updates
- Allowing only approved apps
- Requiring users to create stronger passwords
- Managing iOS devices in a Google Cloud environment
- Forcing backups



Managing Microsoft 365 in a Google Workspace environment

Many organizations have a mix of Google Workspace and Microsoft 365, either between different users, departments and lines of business or external partners, vendors and customers. That's why Google has invested in "conversion fidelity," which means Google Workspace users can collaborate with anyone using legacy files in Office formats.

With Office editing, for example, users can view and edit Office files directly in Google Docs, Sheets and Slides without converting them or installing Office. In Google Drive, they can work with more than 100 different file formats, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint, as well as PDFs, images and videos.

Pythian can help you migrate to Google Workspace and/or manage environments that use both Workspace and Microsoft 365. That means even if you migrate away from Microsoft 365, legacy data and documents won't become obsolete, and you'll be able to create a more seamless transition for users. You can also better manage shadow IT by allowing employees to safely access the right data and applications from any device.



Get more value from your Google Workspace licenses

When making the change from G Suite to Google Workspace, Google introduced a new licensing structure—and it's possible your reseller didn't fully explain these changes. That's because many resellers are focused on selling licenses, not managing those licenses. Staying on top of licensing can be a tedious, time-consuming task—but if you don't do it, you could be paying for licenses that you're no longer using.

Partnering with Pythian for Google Workspace license management and optimization gives you more than just affordable pricing—it gives you a balance of support and services that will help you get the most out of your investment with Google. And you can port your current licenses over to Pythian and gain this extra support at no extra charge. If you have licenses for both Google Workspace and Microsoft 365, we can also help you manage a mixed licensing environment.

Did you know?

With [Pythian Google Workspace managed services](#), you'll get fast access to experts that can provide customized support for all your Google Workspace issues!



Getting the most out of Google Workspace

Many IT managers don't have the direct experience, resources or time to properly manage their Google Workspace environment, and they may not be getting the help they need from their Google reseller. But it's okay if you're not a Google Workspace expert—with the right support, you don't need to be.

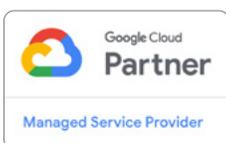
There are better ways to manage Google Workspace. Whether you're down team members or looking to power up your Google Workspace initiatives, Pythian can help. We offer far more support for Google Workspace than typical resellers. With personalized support and training, regular check-ins and lightning-quick response times, you can stay ahead of the curve while leveraging your productivity and collaboration capabilities to the fullest.



Support is our differentiator. We have the ability to support our customers in many different ways—we're not a one-trick pony. But we help all of our clients the same way, regardless of seat size.

Pythian can help you get the most out of Google Workspace with our [Managed Google Workspace Administration](#) service, which provides best practices, support, training and more. Our team of Google Solution Experts can also provide a fixed-fee [Google Workspace Security Assessment](#) of your current configuration and security settings. Even if your company bought Google Workspace licenses from another reseller, we make it easy to move licenses over to Pythian, and you'll access far more robust and dimensional support—at no extra cost.

With more than a decade of Google Workspace administrative and engineering support expertise, Pythian has worked with hundreds of organizations to make best practices, security and key processes standard operating procedure—and will do the same for your organization. While Google Workspace is great on its own, it's even better when you combine it with Pythian's expertise and always-available support team.



[Talk to a Google Workspace expert today](#) to see how we can help.

[in linkedin.com/company/pythian](https://www.linkedin.com/company/pythian)

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ABOUT PYTHIAN

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT services company that helps organizations transform how they compete and win by helping them turn data into valuable insights, predictions and products. From cloud automation to machine learning, Pythian designs, implements and supports customized solutions to the toughest data challenges.

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