“By paying one subscription fee, removing ongoing licensing and hardware costs, and reducing mail contractor support fees, we’ve cut yearly collaboration costs by 40 per cent.”

Dave Martin, Manager of the Workplace Solutions Group, Tata Steel

When Tata Steel centralised its email infrastructure with Exchange Online, its goals were to improve employee communications tools, reduce costs, and gain greater flexibility. Microsoft Services and Microsoft Partner Binary Tree migrated the complex Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and GroupWise platform to Exchange Online. The company’s 27,345 mail users now benefit from the latest collaboration tools, and costs have been reduced by around 40 per cent.

Business Needs
Tata Steel is one of the world’s largest steel companies, and the second-largest producer in Europe. The firm’s annual crude steel production capacity exceeds 28 million tonnes, generating a turnover of about US$25 billion. Part of the global Tata Group, which employs more than 80,000 people, Tata Steel operations in Europe are primarily based in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands. The company sells steel and related services for the construction, automotive, packaging, and mechanical engineering markets.

A pragmatic and creative approach to excellence is just one the reasons why the business—established in 1907—is now one of the world’s most geographically diverse and successful steel producers.

As part of its ongoing strategy, the company’s IT division wanted to improve collaboration by consolidating and centralising its mail services. Previously, IT staff had to manage several central and locally operated mail services, including Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and GroupWise. Dave Martin, Manager of the Workplace Solutions Group, Tata Steel, says: “We need to provide employees with easy-to-use communications tools that help them collaborate and work easily. We also want our
platform to be flexible and run cost effectively.

“We knew there was technology available to support our goals, so it was a question of which platform was the best fit for our business objectives. Email was our most pressing requirement because the mixed platform was increasingly unstable. But we wanted to be able to add functionality—such as instant messaging and document sharing—as needed.”

Solution
Tata Steel looked for an end-to-end solution that answered its immediate requirement for a cost-effective, centralised email solution, but that also provided it with a strong foundation for expansion. Martin says: “We looked at the main providers of cloud email services and also at hosting in-house. We chose Exchange Online because it offered the state-of-the-art email and collaboration services we wanted at the price we felt was right. It also gave us the security and control we needed.”

Exchange Online gives Tata Steel Outlook 2010 collaboration tools. It also provides Exchange Online Archiving and Exchange Hosted Encryption, which help the firm achieve a scalable, robust, and common email service across its European operations. “As we move to real-time collaboration services, we’ll expand functionality to include features such as instant messaging,” says Martin.

Tata Steel engaged Microsoft Services to ensure that the migration to Exchange Online was conducted seamlessly. Martin says: “Multiple email services, and the need to retain our Lotus Notes applications made the migration complex, and we didn’t have the in-house experience to complete such a project quickly or securely. We trusted that Microsoft Services and Capgemini had the expertise and experience to help us.”

Microsoft Cloud Vantage Services was selected to migrate Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and GroupWise mail systems. And through Microsoft Partner Binary Tree Remote Hosted Migration services, Lotus Notes users were moved to Exchange Online. This allowed Tata Steel to maintain the use of its Lotus Notes applications via its new mail platform. Martin says: “Microsoft Services showed great expertise and commitment throughout this joint endeavour. We’re very pleased with our investment.”

At the completion of the project, 16,000 Lotus Notes mailboxes, 100 GroupWise mailboxes, and 10,000 Exchange mailboxes were migrated to Exchange Online. Around 27,345 Tata Steel staff now use Exchange Online.

Benefits
Tata Steel has reduced costs, improved collaboration, and enhanced operations with Microsoft Office 365. Martin says: “With Exchange Online, our goals of delivering easier, better communications and making savings were all achieved. We’re now looking forward to adding other collaboration tools.”

- **Costs are cut by 40 per cent.** Tata Steel reduced the number of servers needed to only those required to run Lotus Notes applications. All other mail servers were decommissioned. “By paying one subscription fee, removing ongoing licensing and hardware costs, and reducing mail contractor support fees, we’ve cut yearly collaboration costs by 40 per cent,” says Martin.

- **User experience is improved.** Staff no longer have to deal with problems such as incompatible formats and stability issues. “Our 27,345 users now have access to the same address lists and a common set of calendars. This means that basic tasks such as scheduling appointments and reading documents are much easier,” says Martin.

- **Productivity is increased.** Users are significantly more productive now that they can easily share documents, view calendars, and contact each other. Permanent IT staff can also focus on valuable strategic projects.

- **Operations are enhanced.** Martin says: “We’re now in a position to rethink our stance on the provision of mail onto handheld devices. Previously, we couldn’t consider this because supporting multiple, unstable mail platforms was too time consuming and expensive. With Exchange Online, we’ve got a great opportunity to provide mail, calendar, and contacts for staff wherever they’re working.”

- **Existing investment is reused.** Martin says: “We separated Lotus Notes applications from the mailboxes and continue to run these applications with Binary Tree middleware. We’re reaping the productivity, technical, and financial rewards from the migration, while making the most of our previous investments.”