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# Device Choice as an Enterprise Strategy

Reducing Friction and Preserving Productivity During Organizational Change

## Executive Overview

Following the merger of two national healthcare nonprofits with a combined staff of several hundred employees, the leadership of the combined organization faced a familiar but high-impact enterprise decision: How can we unify technology platforms while maintaining efficiency and continuity? One organization operated primarily on Windows. The other relied entirely on the Mac. Both groups had valid reasons for their preferences, and both environments were effective.

During the merger, leadership engaged Virtua to help evaluate the implications of standardizing on a single platform. Through that process, it became clear that a platform mandate would disrupt workflows for a significant percentage of employees. Instead, the organization adopted Virtua's recommendations for a device-choice strategy that preserved existing workflows.

The result was a supportable, scalable operating model that continues to serve the organization as it grows—one where Apple devices are chosen confidently and supported intentionally. As headcount increased from approximately 100 employees to roughly 250, Mac usage scaled alongside that growth rather than being displaced.

## The Core Challenge: Productivity During Change

In mergers, technology decisions often become proxy battles for culture, cost, and control. For this organization, the question of device standardization threatened to cause disruption at a moment when stability mattered most.

Like many nonprofits, the organization operated under tight practical constraints. Devices were expected to remain in service longer than in typical enterprises, IT resources were lean, and large-scale retraining would have diverted time and attention from

mission-critical work. Thus, any platform decision made during the merger carried disproportionate risk because change itself was costly. However, at this stage, the discussion remained framed as a binary platform decision.

## Virtua's Role: Reframing the Decision

Virtua was engaged at this stage to provide an outside perspective. Rather than treating platform selection as an ideological decision, Virtua redirected the conversation toward operational outcomes—specifically, how forced platform changes affect employee effectiveness, retraining demands, and momentum during a merger. This approach shifted the discussion away from platform preference and toward productivity, laying the foundation for a device-choice strategy.

Leadership was then able to evaluate the technical decisions objectively and agree on a solution that balanced user effectiveness with organizational needs.

## Building Organizational Alignment

To ensure the approach was practical and sustainable, Virtua worked closely with stakeholders across IT, finance, and executive leadership:

· **IT teams** focused on long-term supportability and ensuring macOS and Windows could be managed securely within the same environment.
· **Finance leadership** evaluated device costs based on lifecycle value, longevity, and residual value, rather than just upfront cost.
· **Executive leadership** prioritized minimizing disruption and maintaining momentum through the merger.

This collaborative process helped ensure device choice was implemented as a deliberate strategy that would serve the organization better than a platform mandate

## A Unified Collaboration Layer

To reduce fragmentation across newly merged teams, the organization standardized collaboration and identity services independently of hardware choice. Microsoft 365 became the shared platform for email, calendaring, and communication, ensuring consistent workflows regardless of whether an employee used a Mac or a Windows PC.

Most users adopted Outlook, Teams, and SharePoint without issue. In a few cases, users continued to use Apple Mail with Microsoft 365 accounts and were supported accordingly.

This separation—standardizing services while allowing hardware flexibility—proved critical. It allowed the organization to support device choice and create a consistent collaboration experience without compromising management, security, or supportability.

## Managing Macs and PCs as Peers

Apple devices were treated as first-class endpoints alongside Windows systems. Macs were centrally managed using Addigy, secured to organizational standards, and supported within a clearly defined operational model.

Initial concerns about macOS support were addressed by defining clear operational boundaries. All Apple-related support requests—Macs and a few other Apple devices—were routed directly to Virtua through the organization's existing ticketing system. This approach eliminated extra work and complexity for the internal IT team and ensured that Apple devices were consistently supported by specialists.

## Organic Adoption Through Support, Not Policy

Notably, device choice was implemented without mandates or incentives. Employees were asked what device they worked best on.

In some cases, users explored a different platform out of interest, with light training to ensure that operational effectiveness remained consistent.

Over time, platform distribution stabilized organically. As headcount increased, both Mac and Windows usage grew in absolute terms, reinforcing that device choice tends to self-regulate when employees are supported rather than constrained.

## Operational Impact of Device Choice

The impact of the device choice model became clear quickly and continued after the transition:

· **Reduced disruption during a time of change**: By avoiding a forced platform decision, leadership reduced internal resistance during the merger and helped teams remain focused on their work.
· **Sustained productivity**: Employees continued using tools with which they were already familiar and effective, minimizing disruption.
· **Scalable, repeatable model**: As the organization grew, onboarding new employees became more straightforward and consistent, while simultaneously supporting user preference.

## Lessons for Enterprise and Apple Teams

What can we learn from this example?

• Forcing a single platform during a merger risks complicating day-to-day operations and reducing productivity, especially in mission-driven organizations.
• Standardizing identity, security, and collaboration matters more than standardizing the hardware platform.
• When macOS is supported intentionally and operationally, adoption remains stable without mandates.

For Apple teams and partners, this example illustrates an important enterprise pattern: when Macs are integrated into standard identity, collaboration, and security frameworks—and supported with clear operational ownership—they scale naturally alongside Windows without increasing complexity.

## Contact

Are you working with an enterprise client facing a merger, platform consolidation, or rapid growth with a mixed environment? Refer them to Virtua Computers for a strategic device choice assessment.

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