

AFTER THE HANDSHAKE

MANAGING INFRASTRUCTURE COMPLEXITY ACROSS THE M&A LIFECYCLE



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01. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most large acquisitions are approved on the strength of their strategy and priced on the strength of their synergies – yet the majority underperform once the transaction closes, and the reason is rarely the thesis. It is execution. Beneath the familiar headlines about culture and talent sits a quieter, more determinative problem: the two organisations cannot easily be made to operate as one, and infrastructure is where that difficulty concentrates and compounds. This whitepaper argues that infrastructure integration is not a downstream technical chore but a first-order driver of whether a deal delivers, that its four phases – due diligence, Day 1 readiness, integration execution, and transformation – are best run as one continuous programme rather than four disconnected projects, and that continuity itself is the scarce, value-protecting asset most acquirers overlook.



02. THE OPERATIONAL GAP

Every major acquisition begins with a **strategic thesis**: that two organisations, brought together, will create more value than either could achieve alone. The board approves the investment case. The transaction is announced. The deal closes.

Then the hardest phase begins.

When deals fail to deliver value, the cause is almost always operational. A sound thesis explains why two organisations belong together. It does not ensure the combined entity can operate effectively whether that means invoicing customers, closing books, protecting data, or enabling employees to access applications across both the organisations. Those are questions of operations – and operations run on infrastructure.

At the centre of that gap, in virtually every large global transaction, sits exactly that: the networks, cloud environments, security architectures, communication platforms, and the thousands of devices and endpoints that two organisations have built, separately, over years or decades. Strategy and talent determine whether a deal makes sense. Infrastructure determines whether the combined organisation can function.

Research on M&A outcomes consistently shows that between 70% and 90% of transactions fail to achieve their projected value, with poor integration execution among the most common causes. In a PwC and Mergermarket study, 63% of transactions that underperformed relative to their acquisition value had no technology integration plan in place at signing. Within integration programmes, technology is routinely the critical path – the domain where delays run longest, costs escalate fastest, and disruption to customers, employees, and operations is most visible.



03. WHY INFRASTRUCTURE IS THE CRUX?

This challenge is structural rather than incidental. Acquiring organisations rarely inherit a clean, fully documented technology estate. They inherit years of accumulated decisions: overlapping platforms, regional variations, legacy systems, fragmented vendor relationships, and transformation initiatives at different stages of maturity. The acquired environment is seldom standardised even internally, and almost never designed to integrate with another enterprise.

This is why infrastructure integration behaves like a programme rather than a project. A project has a defined scope, a known starting state, and a foreseeable end. Infrastructure integration begins with an unknown starting state, spans multiple technology domains that each carry their own dependencies, and stretches across the full arc of the deal – from the weeks before signing to the years after close. It ultimately determines how quickly synergies are realised, risk is reduced, and value is captured.

And the meter runs the entire time. Every month that two estates operate in parallel is a month of duplicated cost, divided security posture, and deferred synergy. In practice, successful M&A outcomes depend not only on the quality of the deal thesis, but on an organisation's ability to integrate and modernise its technology foundations at both scale and speed.



The organisations that consistently close the gap between deal value and realised value are not those with the largest integration budgets. They are those with the clearest visibility across their combined estate – and the means to act on what they see.

Four phases define the arc: due diligence, Day 1 readiness, integration execution, and long-term transformation. Faced with a programme of that length, the instinctive response is to break it into manageable pieces and hand each to a specialist – procuring point solutions and separate vendors for every stage. The instinct is understandable. It is also where a great deal of value quietly disappears. Handoffs between phases lose context, and the visibility established during due diligence rarely carries into execution. The operating model built for integration is seldom the one required for transformation. And the cost of running parallel infrastructure estates compounds with every month of delay.

The more effective approach is to treat all four phases as a single continuous programme rather than a sequence of separate problems. Understanding why begins with seeing what each phase actually demands.

04. FOUR PHASES | ONE INTEGRATION JOURNEY

The infrastructure challenges of M&A do not arrive all at once. They unfold across a multi-year timeline, each phase carrying its own urgency, its own cast of decision-makers, and its own consequences for delay.

 Phase	 The challenge	What Tata Communications delivers?
Due Diligence Before close 	An unknown infrastructure estate. Invisible risk. An incomplete picture for decision-makers. 	Rapid infrastructure assessment across network, security, cloud, and end-user domains, with risk exposure mapped before commitments are made.
Day 1 Readiness Close to 90 days 	Two organisations must operate as one on a fixed date. Connectivity, identity, and security gaps cannot wait. 	Rapid network interconnect, identity-based access via ZTNA and SSE, security policy bridging, and unified operational visibility from Day 1.
Integration Execution Months 3-24 	Parallel estate costs accumulate. Migration programmes stall. Manual execution across multi-OEM environments creates risk and delay. 	Automated, platform-driven migration and rationalisation across WAN, LAN, SD-WAN, cloud, security, and CX domains.
Transformation Year 2 onwards 	The integrated estate is stable but not optimised. The business now needs to evolve, not merely be maintained. 	AI-driven operations, predictive infrastructure management, and architecture modernisation across the unified estate.

Each phase conceals its own trap.



In due diligence, infrastructure risk is systematically underpriced, because data rooms hold contracts and organisation charts but rarely an accurate inventory, a current security posture, or the vendor lock-ins that become the acquirer's problem on close.



Day 1 is a fixed, public deadline that the infrastructure team must meet for two organisations that have never worked together.



Integration is the long middle, where the synergy clock runs while parallel estates are migrated and rationalised across multiple vendors, domains, and geographies.



Transformation is the reward for getting the first three right: a consolidated estate that can finally be modernised rather than merely maintained.



05. A SINGLE PARTNER ACROSS THE ENTIRE ARC

Tata Communications brings together global network reach, multi-domain service capability, and infrastructure orchestration to support large enterprises across every phase of the M&A lifecycle. Global delivery without an intelligent control layer is simply connectivity. A platform without service depth is simply software. Together, they constitute a genuine partnership.

The platform is **ThreadSpan™**, Tata Communications' AI-powered hybrid infrastructure control layer. It runs on a decoupled control and data-plane architecture, with an adapter layer that normalises read and write operations across heterogeneous OEM APIs and CLIs — covering the customer's full estate regardless of provider or vendor. In an M&A context, that means a single control plane spanning two estates from Day 1, with no rip-and-replace on either side.

Around ThreadSpan™ sits a full professional and managed services layer: structured discovery and assessment, programme design and migration execution, and ongoing managed operations once integration is complete. For large enterprises running complex, multi-domain M&A programmes, it is this combination — an intelligent control platform delivered by a team that has run these programmes at scale — that drives the outcome.

Discovery and assessment: Knowing what you are inheriting

ThreadSpan's discovery capability rapidly maps an unknown estate, classifying devices, identifying dependencies, and building a complete infrastructure blueprint — topology, inventory, security posture, configuration drift, and vendor dependencies across every domain — without deploying agents. Applied in a clean-room arrangement during due diligence, or in the first days after close, it produces the operational picture the data room rarely provides, and the baseline against which every subsequent phase runs.

Day 1 operations: Visibility before the deadline

Tata Communications' IZO™+ Internet WAN and Managed SD-WAN connect the combined estate at deal speed, while ThreadSpan holds the unified operational view and enforces policy across both sides at once.

Managed SASE provides identity-based access via ZTNA and SSE, with a single policy engine spanning users, devices, applications, and cloud. East-west traffic is inspected from the outset rather than trusted by default, and InstaCC maintains contact centre continuity throughout. Day 1 rarely marks the end of integration; it marks the point at which the combined estate must be run safely — and ThreadSpan provides the visibility to do so from the moment the transaction closes.

Integration execution: Automation at scale

ThreadSpan's workflow orchestration and zero-touch provisioning remove the manual, error-prone work of migration and rationalisation at scale.

Working alongside Tata Communications' Multi-Cloud Networking and Managed SASE solutions, the platform moves integration off the human-in-the-loop model. Intent-driven provisioning, policy abstraction across OEMs, AI-led anomaly detection, and pre-emptive remediation replace manual change execution.

06. IN PRACTICE: NETWORK INTEGRATION FOR A GLOBAL LOGISTICS LEADER

A global logistics leader's acquisition of a regional logistics and warehousing operator gave its integration teams a textbook version of the problem this paper describes. The combined logistics and warehousing estate span 114 warehouse sites across 13 countries in APAC and China, with more than 5800 network elements. The infrastructure had been built across 27 access-point models, 16 wireless controller types, 21 switch models, 11 firewall types and 11 ISPs alongside multiple MPLS providers. The brief was not simply to move the estate, but to standardise and automate it all the way through.

Working with Tata Communications, the acquirer ran the programme as a managed engagement, with cross-domain teams coordinating across 300+ stakeholders spanning CIO, operations, business and end-user functions. The work followed a phased lifecycle that maps directly onto the arc described above.

Discovery came first: more than 30 working sessions that built a full inventory, architecture baseline, and dependency map, and surfaced over 600 devices nobody had on record. Design turned that picture into site-specific runbooks, some running to 120 steps, with rollback planned and signed off before anything moved.

Migration executed those runbooks at pace, cutting over up to 26 sites in a single day with cutover windows of roughly 16 to 18 hours per site.

Hypercare then held each site through two weeks of post-migration support before handing it to business-as-usual operations.

Underneath it all sat ThreadSpan™. Automated pre- and post-migration checks validated 100% compliance, a migration cockpit gave 300-odd stakeholders real-time visibility, and a digital twin lab let the team rehearse Fortinet firewall, VPN, and BGP cutovers before touching production.



What the automation-led approach delivered?



2.5 hrs →
30 min

MIGRATION
TIME PER SITE



26

SITES CUT
OVER IN A DAY



0%

DEFECT RATE
IN VALIDATION



>80%

GAIN IN EXECUTION
EFFICIENCY



2,000+

DEVICES MIGRATED
BY AUTOMATION



100%

COMPLIANCE AT
EVERY CUTOVER

The same relationship reached beyond the network. The acquirer also moved its fragmented, on-premises contact centre estate to a single cloud platform, bringing 15,000 agents across 130 countries onto Cisco Webex Contact Centre, with Tata Communications as the delivery partner. Handling the network and interaction layers through a single partner kept the two strands of the integration aligned.



07. THE PORTFOLIO BEHIND THE PLATFORM

ThreadSpan's orchestration layer draws on Tata Communications' full portfolio. In an M&A context, the relevant capabilities span all four phases and every primary infrastructure domain.

M&A requirement	How it is answered?	Capability
Day 1 secure user and application access	Identity-based access to named applications across entities	Managed SASE, ZTNA, SSE
Day 1 site and data centre interconnect	Overlay interconnect over any underlay – internet, MPLS, or LTE – at deal speed	IZO™+ SD-WAN, Global VPN, IZO™+ Internet WAN
Overlapping IP addresses	Overlay-level translation and per-entity segmentation, removing the need for forced re-addressing	IZO™+ Multi Cloud Network
Two cloud estates, one network	Intent-based interconnect of both companies' VPCs and VNets, with private on-ramps to all major cloud providers	IZO™+ MCN, IZO™+ MCC
Inherited threat exposure	DDoS protection with ingestion capacity exceeding 35 Tbps, NGFW service chaining, and micro-segmentation against lateral movement	Advanced Network Security
Consistent security policy	Automated policy that follows workloads across clouds and entities	IZO™+ MCN, Managed Firewall, ThreadSpan
Unified visibility and control	A single view across the underlay, overlay, security, and cloud infrastructure of both estates	ThreadSpan
Egress and duplicate infrastructure costs	Optimised inter-cloud routing that bypasses costly native gateways, typically saving 30%+ on egress	IZO™+ MCN, IZO™+ MCC
Carve-out or TSA exit	Segment removal and policy de-linking as a templated, auditable operation	IZO™+ MCN segmentation, NaaS model

This portfolio is delivered through a four-layer reference architecture that connects any acquirer estate to any target estate – and unwinds just as cleanly for a carve-out.



The global underlay – Tier-1 backbone, Global VPN, and IZO™+ Internet WAN – provides deal-speed interconnect over 1,500+ PoPs across 190+ countries on a 100% uptime SLA backbone, backed by 500,000 km of wholly owned fibre with direct access to 35% of the world's internet routes and 80% of global cloud providers.¹



The multi-cloud overlay – IZO™+ Multi Cloud Connect – absorbs overlapping IP space and joins both companies' cloud estates through intent-based automation, in clicks rather than months.



The security layer – Managed SASE, ZTNA, and DDoS protection – grants identity-based access to named applications instead of bridging networks wholesale, so the target estate is treated as untrusted until proven otherwise.



ThreadSpan sits across all three as the observability and governance layer, giving both organisations one operational view from Day 1.

Each transaction adds or removes a single segment. The platform, the policies, and the operating model stay constant – which is what makes the architecture repeatable rather than rebuilt deal by deal.

The same architecture that connects two estates during integration separates them just as cleanly during separation. Because every entity and carve-out lives in its own governed segment, isolating a divested unit, brokering TSA-period access, and exiting from a transition service agreement become templated operations rather than separate projects.

¹ A Leader in the 2026 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Global WAN Services for the 13th consecutive year



08. CONCLUSION - CASE FOR CONTINUITY

M&A infrastructure is usually built in phases. Every specialist involved – the network integrator, the cloud consultant, the security adviser – brings real expertise to their moment. However, the lack of continuity across the lifecycle leads to handoff delays, loss of knowledge between phases, and parallel tools that create unnecessary complexity.

This is where a single partner across the arc earns its place. An integrated approach ensures that enterprise context, operational history, and policy intent carry forward through every phase rather than being rediscovered each time.

For global enterprises navigating M&A at scale, the partner worth having is the one still in the room when the work shifts from connecting two estates to running one estate well, and then to making it better.

This is the kind of partnership Tata Communications is designed to deliver.

09. CONTRIBUTORS

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