

Orchestrating Transition Planning with Precision

A strategic perspective on challenges and best practices in transition planning

Whitepaper by

Anand Krishna Sharma, VP - Head of Transition Practice
Swaminathan Srinivasan, Senior Transition Manager

Mphasis
The Next Applied

Contents

1. Executive Summary 1
2. Data Challenges in Transition Planning 1
3. Best Practices for Running an Informed Due Diligence and Transition Planning Exercise 2
4. Conclusion 5

1. Executive Summary

Transition programs are essential initiatives that facilitate the adoption of best-in-class services and drive service transformation to achieve business goals. Transition planning is the most critical phase in a service transition, influencing the effectiveness of subsequent phases and the risk management of the entire process. However, this phase often faces challenges such as insufficient information, which can hinder flawless planning and precise execution. Using incomplete data during transition planning can introduce errors that jeopardize the entire program.

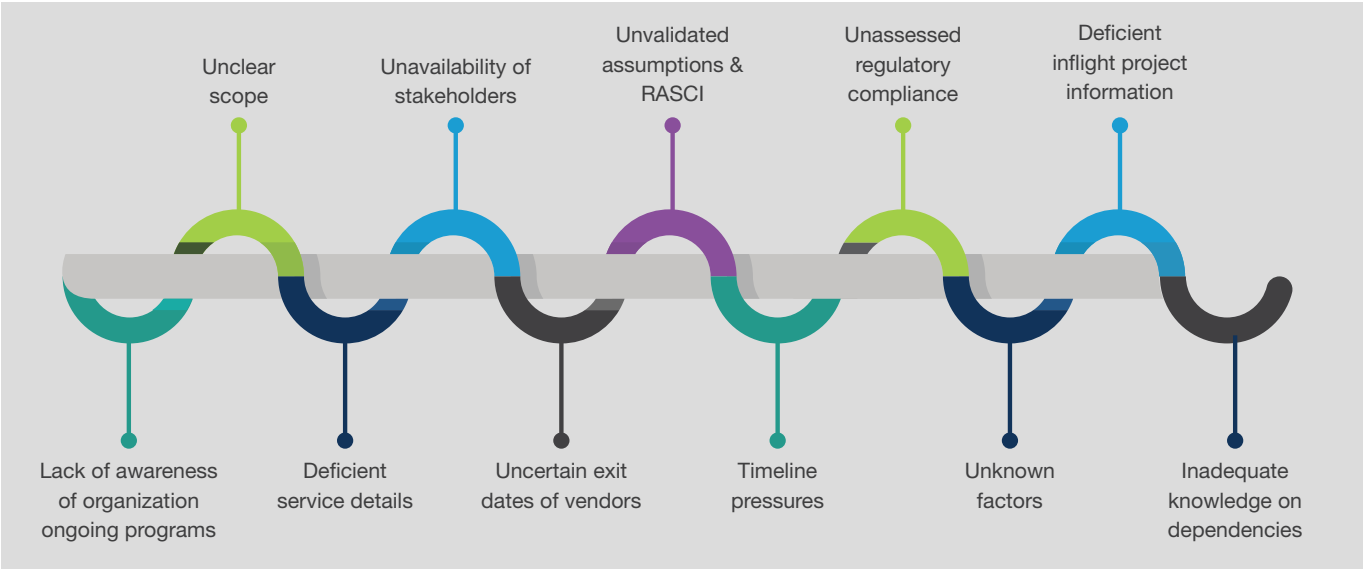
Detecting and correcting inaccuracies early in the transition planning process saves time and effort in mitigating their impact. These errors can be costly if discovered during later stages of the transition. Implementing a structured methodology to gather accurate data for transition planning, along with the right tools and techniques, is crucial for effective planning.

This whitepaper aims to deconstruct these challenges by offering insights into best practices for data acquisition, transition planning, tool adoption and methodologies. These practices are essential for creating a viable 'first-time-right' plan that ensures smooth transitions. Additionally, we analyze factors that influence due diligence and the transition planning process, providing actionable strategies to develop a foolproof transition plan.

2. Data Challenges in Transition Planning

Given that transition planning is a critical phase in any service transition process, it is essential to perform detailed due diligence with accurate information to ensure flawless planning. This involves understanding the transition objectives, the scope of work to be transitioned, the breadth and depth of knowledge acquisition required, identifying risks and their mitigation strategies, agreeing on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and finally, outlining a practical and agreeable approach and timeline for the transition. A well-crafted transition plan ensures a smooth, structured and effective process by minimizing disruptions and reducing risks.

During transition planning, we often encounter data availability challenges that can impede the process, making it more time-consuming and potentially resulting in an improper plan that could risk the entire transition program. Data challenges can be in the form of data availability, data quality issues or data fragmentation. Here are some potential challenges we might face during the due diligence and planning phases:



Unclear scope:

Floating scope document, lack of skills data, unclear role definitions, ambiguity in levels of support, incomplete list of stakeholders/client organization.

Deficient service data:

Insufficient application and infrastructure details, coupled with inadequate incident data, pose challenges in complexity analysis, leading to errors in assessing transition complexity and creating an inaccurate knowledge acquisition plan.

Unavailability of stakeholders:

Stakeholder unavailability during due diligence complicates determining the breadth and depth of knowledge acquisition, KT topics and trainer SMEs, leading to an inadequate transition plan.

Inadequate knowledge on dependencies:

During transition planning, we often overlook the impact of dependencies on ticketing tools, SME availability for KT, access request timelines, tools and IPs, and resource background verification timelines.

Lack of awareness of ongoing organization programs:

Unawareness of the organization-level IT change freeze period, infrastructure & software upgrades during transition planning leads to an incomplete transition plan.

Uncertain exit milestones of incumbent vendors:

Not considering contract end dates or early exit plans of incumbents can disrupt knowledge acquisition timelines and necessitate replanning.

Deficient inflight project information:

Lack of information on inflight projects affects ownership plans and decisions regarding project completion, transition or deferral.

Unvalidated assumptions & RASCI:

Unvalidated assumptions and inaccurate RASCI assignments can jeopardize milestone achievement and impede the overall success of transition.

Timeline pressures:

Pressures for a rapid transition due to business needs, application or product retirements and organizational changes may demand quick or rushed transition planning, potentially resulting in a compromised quality of the transition plan.

Impact on regulatory compliance:

Lack of understanding of government regulations, third-party audits, internal audit requirements and data privacy or data sharing rules, may lead to inconsistent transition planning.

Unknown factors:

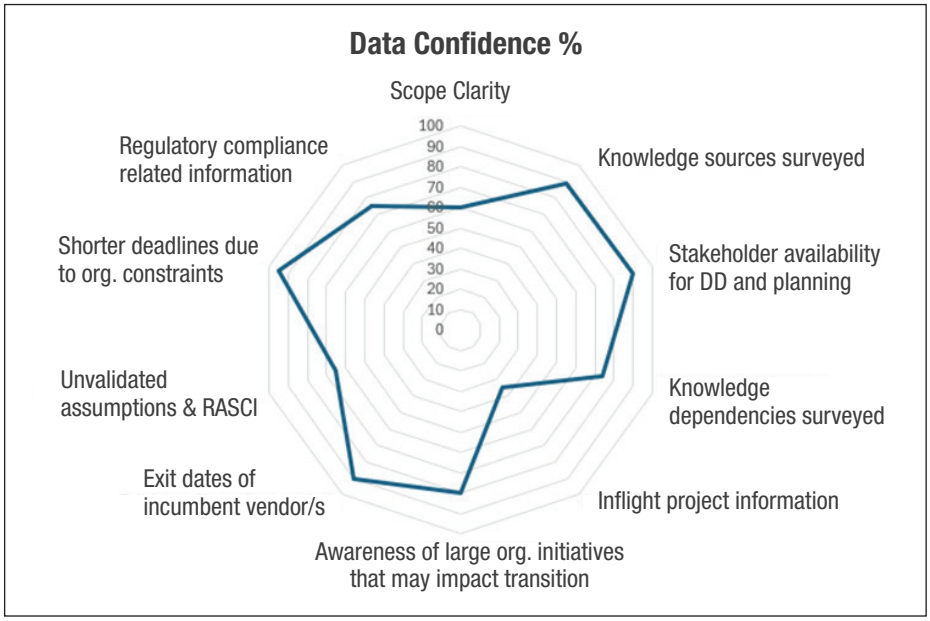
Lack of awareness of local laws, regulations, visa and hiring rules, and office setup timelines can impact transition timelines due to interdependence.

Bridging data or information gaps during due diligence is vital to performing an effective transition planning exercise.

3. Best Practices for Running an Informed Due Diligence and Transition Planning Exercise

At Mphasis, we consistently perform detailed due diligence before the crucial planning phase using the available data, which helps us better understand the transition context from a planning standpoint. However, we often encounter gaps in critical data needed for thorough due diligence. To mitigate the impact of these information gaps, we leverage Mphasis' extensive experience in successfully managing large transition programs by conducting an Info-Gap-Analysis. This structured mechanism assesses the quality of critical data or 'Data Confidence' for planning and creates an information index to calibrate data confidence for the data used in transition planning.

For example, we have depicted a sample data confidence view of application support and maintenance services for a complex set of applications for a large North American banking company. This view clearly shows that some critical data points are missing, which could lead to inappropriate planning.



This data confidence report provides valuable insights into missing information that needs to be acquired to perform an effective planning exercise. Mphasis also leverages AI tools in quickly identifying data gaps early in the due diligence exercise. Each missing factor would need a different mode of data collection, inference and reconciliation to validate and consume the data. Here are the various techniques that we at Mphasis deploy to acquire critical data needed for a thorough due diligence and planning exercise.

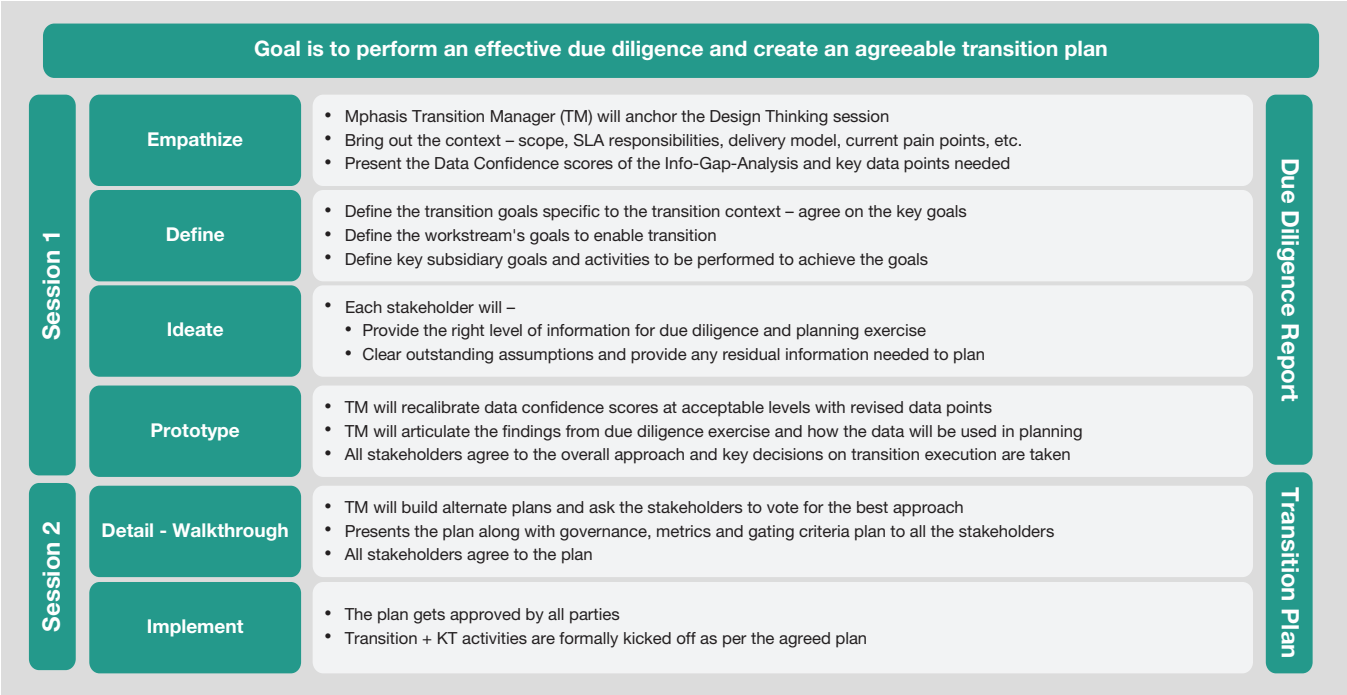
Unclear Scope	Stakeholder analysis, scope definition workshops	**Deficient Data of Inflight Projects**	Impact analysis, SME consultation, program release plan, etc.
Deficient Data	Surveys, questionnaires, historical data review & simulation and modeling	**Early Exit of Incumbent Vendor**	Stakeholder consultation, negative path projection
Unavailability of Stakeholders	Stakeholder mapping, prioritization, flexible schedule, delegation to proxy SMEs	**Unvalidated Assumptions & RASCI**	Assumption analysis, skill/RASCI mapping exercise
Inadequate Dependency Knowledge	Visual dependency map, lifecycle review and scenario planning	**Timeline Pressures**	Critical Path Method (CPM), expert consultants; scope prioritization
No Awareness of Regulatory Compliance	Compliance map & impact analysis, mock audit review with compliance office	**Lack of Data on Impact of Large Ongoing Programs**	FMEA, scenario planning, org. initiatives data from release plans

In the above diagram, we can see that one of the predominant tools for acquiring information is collaboration with senior stakeholders, SMEs, domain experts and consultants. The best practice we have observed for collaborating with key stakeholders and gathering validated information, or even performing a joint planning exercise, is the Design Thinking model of collaboration. Design Thinking is an iterative process that helps teams effectively understand challenges, validate assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions.

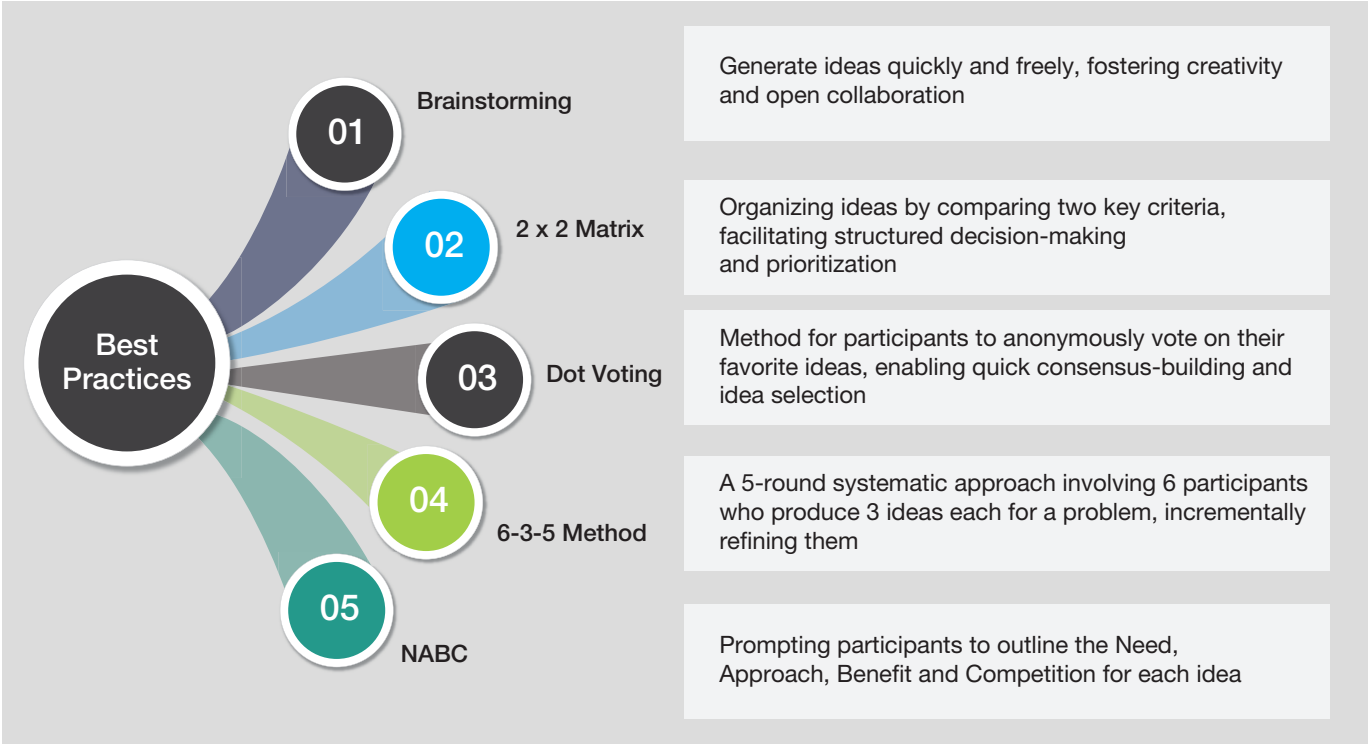
While the Design Thinking model may not be necessary in all cases, it is particularly beneficial for complex transitions involving multiple stakeholders. Bringing them onto a common platform to acquire data and make critical decisions is an ideal scenario for conducting due diligence and planning using the Design Thinking approach. The goal is to optimize the cycle time needed to gather information, achieve consensus on the approach and finalize the transition plan. The diagram below illustrates the 'art of possible' by leveraging the Design Thinking approach.

Unclear Scope	• When we need information and responses from client stakeholders in planning/resolving issues/addressing risks • When we have hostile transitions to get commitment from all parties • When we have large complex apps – that need a different KT approach • To walkthrough the RASCI and get a common agreement from the client and incumbents
Why ''Design Thinking' Workshop?	• To collect data points that are needed to perform transition criticality and complexity analysis • To get all decision-making stakeholders on a single platform to collaborate and agree on the transition approach • Ideate on specific solutions that need suggestions from specific stakeholders who are responsible or contributors for the specific actions • Discuss obstacles, issues and risks and arrive at possible resolutions
What is the Result of this Workshop	• Acquire the right level of information for an effective due diligence and planning exercise • Get consensus on the transition approach/plan • Walk through the transition approach/plan and all the stakeholders are familiarized with the process • Get commitment from all stakeholders on their respective responsibilities, time, effort and quality standards

Orchestrating a Design Thinking workshop requires an experienced transition manager who has a comprehensive understanding of the transition program. This manager will plan, orient the stakeholders and run the workshop in collaboration with them. Below is a sample process of how a Design Thinking workshop is conducted by Mphasis, provided as a reference. The specifics of the model will need to be customized to fit the transition context and needs.



Based on our experience in planning multiple large transitions using the Design Thinking approach, here are some best practices and techniques to extract quality information as a quick reference. Each technique has its own advantages and pitfalls, but a combination of these methods has proven to be very effective depending on the transition context:



Here we present a case study of a complex transition program that involved a company spin off and technical de-merger where we deployed the Design Thinking model of data acquisition and planning.

Customer	Background & Challenges	Approach	Outcome & Benefits
Customer: A Global condiment major, and one of the largest suppliers of snack food serving worldwide. **Transition Scope:** AMS and infrastructure services for 30+ critical applications. **Technology Spread** SAP • ECC, PO, EPM/BPC, BW • Prometheus (Add-on) JDA, BPCS	**Background:** The customer had newly spun off with technical carve out running in parallel with transition to managed services engagement model. **Challenges:** Developing an effective carve-out strategy and execution plan was challenging due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders from applications and infrastructure in a hostile environment.	• Leveraged Design Thinking approach, conducting DT sessions with all the key stakeholders in view of low data confidence in planning. • Techniques like brainstorming, negative path projection and NABC were used to understand the current state, dependencies and to develop and approve a carve-out strategy. • Strategize on greenfield and adopted apps along with the necessary tools.	• Collaboration and participation among stakeholders were highly effective. • The first time-right-fit carve-out strategy, its dependencies and the overall transition plan were finalized in an optimized duration (~15% reduction). • A low-risk carve-out was achieved with no business disruption, ensuring 99.99% application availability. • A 35% reduction in TCO was achieved, earning customer appreciation.

4. Conclusion

Transition planning is crucial for ensuring a smooth, effective and disruption-free transition. In this white paper, we have elucidated the challenges in data acquisition for the planning exercise, which can otherwise lead to delays and inadequate transition planning. We have demonstrated that a structured fact-gap-analysis, combined with the Design Thinking model of collaboration and data acquisition techniques, helps identify and fill data gaps, enabling effective due diligence and planning exercises.

The Design Thinking model of collaboration optimizes the cycle time needed to gather information, reach consensus on the transition approach and finalize the transition plan. By leveraging this structured methodology, we have observed a significant reduction in due diligence and transition planning efforts. Moreover, these methods are advantageous not only during transitions, but also in maintaining steady-state operations. They play a crucial role in resolving issues, managing conflicts, identifying and mitigating risks, conducting root cause analyses and even brainstorming for major transformation projects.

As Mike Bugembe aptly stated, “If you don’t have a strategy for data, you don’t have a strategy.”

About Mphasis

Mphasis’ purpose is to be the “Driver in the Driverless Car” for Global Enterprises by applying next-generation design, architecture and engineering services, to deliver scalable and sustainable software and technology solutions. Customer centricity is foundational to Mphasis, and is reflected in the Mphasis’ Front2Back™ Transformation approach. Front2Back™ uses the exponential power of cloud and cognitive to provide hyper-personalized ($C = X2C^{2}_{TM} = 1$) digital experience to clients and their end customers. Mphasis’ Service Transformation approach helps ‘shrink the core’ through the application of digital technologies across legacy environments within an enterprise, enabling businesses to stay ahead in a changing world. Mphasis’ core reference architectures and tools, speed and innovation with domain expertise and specialization, combined with an integrated sustainability and purpose-led approach across its operations and solutions are key to building strong relationships with marquee clients. Click here to know more. (BSE: 526299; NSE: MPHASIS)

For more information, contact: marketinginfo.m@mphasis.com

USA
Mphasis Corporation
41 Madison Avenue
35th Floor, New York
New York 10010, USA
Tel: +1 (212) 686 6655

UK
Mphasis UK Limited
1 Ropemaker Street, London
EC2Y 9HT, United Kingdom
T : +44 020 7153 1327

INDIA
Mphasis Limited
Bagmane World Technology Center
Marathahalli Ring Road
Doddanakundhi Village, Mahadevapura
Bangalore 560 048, India
Tel.: +91 80 3352 5000

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