



Case Study: Strategic IT for Biotech Growth - Ascend Advanced Therapies

After a series of acquisitions, Ascend Advanced Therapies, recognised the need for a strategic technology partner to help guide its next phase of growth. To support this, the company partnered with Krome Technologies to deliver a programme of transformative IT infrastructure, compliance, and operational projects across its international sites.

Ascend Advanced Therapies

Ascend Advanced Therapies was established in early 2023 following the acquisition of Freeline Therapeutics' Munich manufacturing assets and development team. This was followed by the acquisition of GMP manufacturing assets from Beacon Therapeutics in Alachua, Florida in early 2024, and a strategic partnership with ABL, Inc. later that year to further expand capabilities.

While Ascend initially engaged with another technology partner, Krome Technologies was brought in to provide a more consultative and strategic approach. Acting as strategic advisors, Krome has worked in close collaboration with Ascend's internal teams to deliver tailored solutions that meet the unique demands of the biotechnology sector.

Ascend is a gene-to-GMP development partner dedicated to supporting next-generation life science innovators in bringing advanced therapy products to patients. With deep expertise across process development, analytical services, and GMP-compliant manufacturing. Operating from three strategically located facilities, Rockville, Maryland (home to ABL, Inc. and now, Ascend Group headquarters), Alachua, Florida, and Munich, Germany, Ascend's global footprint enables seamless support across the full lifecycle of gene therapy development.

"Krome has been a trusted partner throughout our journey. Their ability to adapt, advise, and deliver has made them an extension of our internal team. They're not just a vendor; they're part of our strategic thinking."

Ali Khan, Senior Director,
Information Technology, Ascend Advanced Therapies

Key Project Highlights

- M&A Systems Integration Consultancy
- VMware to Hyper-V Migration
- Global WAN Connectivity with Palo Alto Networks Firewall Refresh
- Veeam Immutable Backup and Disaster Recovery
- SharePoint Data Migration
- Microsoft 365 Migration & Licensing Strategy Review

Customer Details

Global Biotechnology company with approximately 250 employees.

Business Challenge

Integrating new sites and teams internationally while ensuring compliance, security, and efficient IT operations in a highly regulated biotech environment.

Benefits Experienced

- Smooth integration of acquired sites and systems
- Stronger security and regulatory compliance
- Streamlined Microsoft licensing
- Reliable backup and disaster recovery
- Proactive cost savings and innovation
- Strategic partnership supporting growth

“Krome’s support during the M&A process was invaluable. They didn’t just look at the tech, they understood the operational and compliance implications, and helped us make informed decisions at every step.”

Ali Khan, Senior Director, Information Technology, Ascend

Strategic Advisory & Programme Management

Krome played a pivotal role in shaping Ascend’s IT strategy, proposing tailored programme vs. project management models to support C-level engagement. Their strategic input helped formalise global IT helpdesk support and guide infrastructure design decisions.

“We worked closely with Rupert and the Krome team to set a vision and secure funding. Their strategic guidance helped us align our infrastructure roadmap with business goals. They’ve been instrumental in helping us think long-term.” Stated Khan.

Biotechnology-focused Infrastructure Projects

Krome’s deep understanding of biotechnology and pharmaceutical IT environments has enabled successful infrastructure deployments across regulated sites:

- Migrated Munich infrastructure from VMware to Hyper-V, driven by licensing changes and cost increases following Broadcom’s acquisition.
- Replaced legacy firewalls with Palo Alto firewalls globally, building a global WAN to connect the entities, enhancing security and network visibility.
- Installed new Cisco core and Meraki edge switches with Wi-Fi, improving throughput and performance.

In Munich, the firewall upgrade revealed that the site had been operating on a backup Internet line. Krome’s intervention enabled the transition to the full Gigabit line, significantly improving both performance and security.

“The VMware to Hyper-V migration was executed in batches during evenings and weekends. It was seamless and significantly improved our network performance and security posture. We’re also now using our full Gigabit line in Munich, which made a huge difference,” noted Khan.

Compliance & Qualification

Krome’s biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry knowledge was instrumental in ensuring compliance with GXP and GMP regulations. Their support included comprehensive documentation, system testing, and audit preparation.

“Krome’s understanding of biotech regulations and their documentation support during audits was crucial. They helped us pre-plan and test everything needed to ensure we met compliance standards. Our QA team was impressed with the level of detail,” recalled Khan.

M&A Support & Systems Integration

As part of Ascend’s strategic growth, Krome Technologies played a critical role in supporting the IT aspects of Ascend’s M&A initiatives. Krome assisted Ascend IT with the evaluation and integration options across a number of opportunities. For example, with the Beacon Therapeutics M&A initiative and then the ABL partnership, this involved evaluating and integrating systems across multiple sites, including Princeton and Florida.

Krome conducted a thorough assessment of ERP, CRM, and other core platforms to determine which systems should be retained, re-licensed, or replaced. Their findings were presented to Ascend’s SteerCo, outlining the cost, effort, and timeline required for a smooth transition.

“Krome helped us navigate the complexities of the carve-out. Their evaluation and migration planning were key to a smooth transition. They understood the business impact and worked with us to minimise disruption. Their support during the M&A process was invaluable. They didn’t just look at the tech, they understood the operational and compliance implications, and helped us make informed decisions at every step,” Khan shared.

Backup, DR & Security

Krome implemented Veeam for immutable cloud-based backups and conduct quarterly restore tests to meet quality requirements. A centralised server was deployed for local and cloud-based backups, with agents installed across labs and PCs, this then sends the data offsite to Krome to deliver a managed Backup and DR environment for Ascend.

“We now have a robust DR setup with quarterly testing and immutable backups. Krome’s approach gives us confidence that our data is protected and compliant.”

SharePoint & Data Migrations

Krome executed a phased SharePoint intranet migration, overcoming challenges with data volumes and permissions. Continuous syncing ensured complete data transfer, and the new setup received positive feedback from users.

“The SharePoint migration was challenging, some tools didn’t copy permissions properly, so we had to re-engineer parts of it. But Krome stuck with it, syncing data day and night. The end result was a clean, well-structured environment that users love,” said Khan.

“Krome’s guidance on Microsoft licensing and compliance has been invaluable. They’ve helped us reduce costs by consolidating tools and helped us to get more from our Microsoft investment by using E5.”

Ali Khan, Senior Director, Information Technology, Ascend

Microsoft 365 Migration & Licensing Strategy

As part of Ascend’s post-acquisition integration strategy, Krome also supported the migration of users from the three acquired entities and their distinct tenants, into Ascend’s Microsoft 365 environment. These migrations were critical to unifying collaboration, security, and compliance across the organisation.

Each migration presented unique challenges, including user provisioning, licensing reconciliation, and data access continuity. Krome worked closely with Ascend’s internal teams to ensure that users were onboarded efficiently and securely, with minimal disruption to day-to-day operations.

Khan explained, “we had three separate migrations following acquisitions, and Krome handled each one with precision. They understood the nuances of each environment and helped us bring everything into a single, secure Microsoft 365 tenant.”

In parallel, Krome guided Ascend through the transition to an E5 licensing model, consolidating disparate software requirements and enabling access to advanced security and productivity tools. This included support for other applications such as Visio, Project, and some non-Microsoft platform products.

Multi-factor authentication was implemented on the central tenant, as well as the implementation of Purview for centralised monitoring of security logs and events.

“Krome helped us assess licensing in Florida and Munich. With their help, we streamlined compliance and improved visibility with Purview. They also helped us reduce costs by consolidating tools and helped us to get more from our Microsoft investment by using E5.

Krome’s guidance on Microsoft licensing and compliance has been invaluable,” remarked Khan.

Domain Migration & Hybrid Setup

Krome supported a domain migration and helped revert to a hybrid setup after business requirements became apparent for local authentication, giving cloud-only access challenges. They established local domain controllers and segregated domains for lab and operational users to maintain GxP compliance.

“We initially went cloud-only but ran into access issues. Krome helped us pivot to a hybrid model with local domain controllers. It’s now stable, secure, and tailored to our needs,” explained Khan.

Onboarding & Operational Readiness

Krome delivered structured onboarding, including access provisioning, ServiceNow templates, and patching schedules. Their collaboration with Ascend’s internal teams ensured smooth operational readiness.

Khan reported: “The onboarding process was well-structured and collaborative. It helped us scale quickly and securely. Krome’s attention to detail and collaborative approach made a real difference.”

Flexibility & Innovation

Krome demonstrated flexibility when projects stalled due to internal challenges and helped reduce costs for example with GPU-driven servers for genomics systems in Germany, insourcing a previously external service and reducing running costs by negotiating with Dell.

“Krome’s ability to pivot and support us through internal delays was appreciated. They also helped us save significantly on GPU servers for our genomics work in Germany. That kind of proactive support from a is rare,” remarked Khan.

Summary

The partnership between Ascend Advanced Therapies and Krome Technologies has evolved into a strategic alliance built on trust, expertise, and shared vision.

From infrastructure transformation and compliance assurance to M&A integration and Microsoft 365 migrations, Krome has consistently delivered solutions that align with Ascend’s operational and regulatory needs.

Krome’s ability to adapt to complex environments, support critical transitions, and proactively manage challenges has made them an indispensable part of Ascend’s IT strategy.

“Krome doesn’t just deliver projects, they help us to shape our future. Their team understands our industry, our challenges, and our ambitions. They’ve become a true extension of our organisation.”

Ali Khan, Senior Director, Information Technology,
Ascend Advanced Therapies