



**Make a cultural  
shift to unlock  
cloud gains**

## **Practical Guide**

Unlocking the true benefits  
of your IT estate with the cloud.

The future is exciting.

**Ready?**





## Unlocking the true benefits of your IT estate with the cloud

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**The cloud promotes a different way of thinking about your IT estate to unlock its true benefits – but old habits can be hard to break.**

Shifting some, or all, of your IT, data, apps and business processes to the cloud has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary for most. And that's probably how it should be – businesses test the water, figure out what works easily, what requires tweaking and what isn't ready to move yet. A wholesale overnight cloud shift sounds improbable and impractical for most organisations – regardless of their size and budget.

Certainly, there will be changes, and some may be quite radical, for example changes to and the potential loss of some job roles, together with the creation of new ones. But every step in the cloud journey needs to be carefully considered – something which the speed, ease of deployment and disruptive nature of the cloud doesn't always allow.

Organisations need to evolve to be able to embrace new ways of working and thinking, breaking long-ingrained behaviours and old habits. New processes will need to be embedded, new skills developed and a new cloud-first mind-set adopted that enables you to enjoy the opportunities, potential cost-saving and efficiency benefits that the cloud offers if used in the right manner.



### It's not 'why the cloud?' – it's 'what cloud?'

We're beyond the point of discussing whether or not the cloud is a good idea; it has already proven its worth and most businesses have already adopted cloud technology in some form. The challenge now for many organisations (even those fairly advanced along the cloud journey) lies in making the 'emotional' shift – detaching yourself from the old ways and the IT skills that aren't quite aligned with the cloud-speed and cloud possibilities. Moving towards a different culture that lets you act quickly with confidence and can enable the organisation to transform. Consider the cloud-first and see how many new ways of working can be uncovered.

### You're already a convert, but did you do it right?

There's always a 'but'. Now the nagging doubt is this: has a wide-scale migration to the cloud over a prolonged period, with multiple stakeholders, vendors and technologies led to a lack of cohesion and oversight, diverse cloud silos, inefficiencies, variations in standards and waste? In short, did it lead to all the things the cloud proposes to help you tackle? This is a situation that many organisations find themselves in to some degree.

An organisation needs to create a set of guidelines that ensure a consistent approach across the whole estate. But more than guidelines, there needs to be a shift in culture and behaviour to recognise and adapt to the flexibility of the cloud's potential and how it might shape the organisation's future. After all, cloud is there to permeate all parts of the organisation. It can actually be a great catalyst to break down the organisation's silos first, then act as a glue afterwards. It can empower teams to embrace agility and create 'better together' propositions which leverage the company's strength and leadership. In short, it's about making sure your people have the knowledge and skills to make the most of it.

What should those guidelines look like? They will be different for every organisation depending on your business and objectives, but there are some areas of your business culture you might consider reviewing.

**We'll explore some of these areas over the next few pages.**



# 1

## Do you have an organisation-wide cloud strategy?

You have to ask yourself – how did you get to where you are today with your cloud estate? Was there a master plan, or in the process of cloud migration, were there silos in your organisation who were effectively doing their own thing, spinning up resources on credit cards, without reference to what was going on elsewhere? Whether it's someone from marketing, test and development or a line of business subscribing to a cloud-based tool or service, cloud sprawl is common.

It might sound like an accusation, but anecdotal evidence does suggest there are many organisations that operate on multiple cloud platforms for different processes without a central strategy. There are cloud management and orchestration tools that can clearly help you see the whole picture, but this data can be hard to collate and analyse, particularly when there is a range of providers and platforms involved.

The first part of a central cloud strategy must be to acknowledge that it's an area of interest across the organisation, and that there may be conflicting views and requirements that need to be addressed. Obtaining an organisation-wide agreement on the strategy is important because it lets everyone involved – from executives to engineers – understand the rules and expectations.

The cloud strategy should also be open to challenges and be adaptable to meet a range of needs. Technologies will continue to develop; mistakes will be made. But change and disruption are essential parts of staying competitive: fail fast and learn the lessons. So although you may develop a centre of excellence for cloud issues, where the absolute technical expertise lies, other teams and groups of users must also be involved to make it a true success and keep it aligned with your diverse requirements throughout the business.



# 2 Review your supplier selection process

What agreements do you have in place with suppliers, and how will that help you achieve your objectives? Your current set of infrastructure providers might not be right for your business any more – from a knowledge, choice and perhaps even a cost-efficiency perspective. In particular, we're thinking about application developments and the capacity for the cloud to facilitate DevOps and CI/CD (Continuous Integration, Continuous Delivery). We believe that providers should be able to add value to your processes in these areas and others.

One of the fundamental advantages of cloud computing is that it moves the financing of IT from CAPEX to OPEX. It will be far easier to get your finance team behind your plans if you can illustrate these cost efficiencies. In short, it could be worth shopping around – considering your overall cloud strategy, the skills you have (or potentially the lack of them) in your business and mapping the right clouds to the right applications – in order to find the most suitable cloud partners without compromising on your needs.



# 3 Take a short-term view

IT managers have traditionally quite rightly had an eye to the future, building in the capacity that would allow for future growth. That meant buying more than you need now to ensure you were able to easily scale up at some point in the future.

Now, with the appearance of the cloud, the rulebook has changed – but old habits are hard to break. The premise of the cloud is that you pay for what you need right now. If you need more, you simply switch it on. Similarly, you can scale down at short notice. The point is to change your mind-set – you don't need to scale your infrastructure to cope with expected future peaks in demand, while paying

for unnecessary capacity in the present. With cloud, you're still ensuring that you have the computing power you need today and the capacity to react quickly to changes. The difference is that you're not paying for the computing power you don't need.

When you're paying for what you actually use, computing resources that are dormant during the evening or at weekends shouldn't constitute an unnecessary cost. Again, this works best when combined with having an overarching cloud-view across your organisation to help you right-size your cloud estate.





# 4 Cloud and agile go hand in hand

The cloud is the catalyst that assists organisation to become more agile. Multi-platform legacy IT estates can be a barrier to agile working, as different systems, platform and processes can slow down developments.

On the other hand, cloud is most certainly a facilitator for agile working. It can help organisations enter new markets, accommodate new customers or just move fast when they need without constraints.

The speed and flexibility of the cloud lets you conduct Proof of Concept projects, experiment and innovate where it previously might not have been viable or cost-effective due to speed and resource implications. Most importantly, it enables you to fail fast so that you can minimise wasted time on ideas that go nowhere and focus on the next candidate. It's another cultural change that is driven by the possibilities of the cloud.



# 5 Review roles

We mentioned at the start that some roles could change or be lost and others created as organisations really embrace the cloud. It's vital to understand which roles and which people in your teams will be affected. It might be that your current workforce doesn't include the right skillsets; you can cope with that through training, recruitment or supplementing your cloud skills through external partnerships or suppliers – or more likely all of these.

But it's not just about individual roles. Your processes and ways of working may also need to change. For example:

- At which stage do different areas and specialists need to become involved in the development life cycle?
- Will responsibility for current tasks remain with their current owners?
- Who will take charge of cost optimisation across the whole business?

There will be other, unique questions you need to ask yourself to complete this part of the process. How will you discover what they are?

Ultimately, the speed of cloud adoption and cloud sprawl has left many businesses needing to take a step back and consider their approach. Looking critically at your use of cloud and tackling these four steps can unlock and highlight waste and inefficiencies, while evolving your organisation's culture poised to take further advantage of the benefits of cloud in the future.





## Conclusion

We've listed a number of practical steps you can take to advance on your cloud journey. Before doing anything else, bear in mind that it's an area of interest for the whole organisation, so it's a central cloud strategy that you have to develop. Adapting to the cloud involves more than simply changing the technological surroundings of your business. It's a shift in the organisation's culture and behaviour, which makes it inevitable to think about your people first. While keeping an eye on your teams' needs, you also have to step outside and have a look around the market. Do your research to ensure that you find the most suitable cloud partners to fit your specific outcomes.

What lies at the core of an effective and efficient cloud solution is having the right mind-set. From now on, you don't always need to scale your IT infrastructure to cope with the unspecified levels of demand in the future, while paying for the redundant capacity in the present. Used correctly, the cloud ensures you pay only for what you use today and enables you to be adaptable to changes tomorrow. As technologies evolve, mistakes are made – there is no question about that. But with the cloud at hand, you don't need to be afraid of failing – now it's all about learning the lessons about how to be better next time. In the sphere of cloud, change is everywhere and change is welcomed.

Most probably the biggest challenge about capitalising on cloud is making the 'emotional' shift. Detaching yourself from the old, familiar ways is not an easy, yet a necessary step to take to be able to exploit the possibilities this new technology comes to offer.

Find out more about how  
cloud services can fit into  
your strategy and unlock  
greater agility.





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