



Cloud migration: Why it matters and how to do it well

NEXT-GEN TECHNOLOGY

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Cloud migration is booming. While only 17% of technology leaders surveyed by TELUS International in late 2021 reported having already migrated more than half of their current infrastructure to the cloud, 51% expect to have it done by the end of 2022.

Cloud migration is the act of moving data, applications and other business processes to a [cloud computing](#) environment. It can refer to:

- Shifting data and applications from a hosted, on-premise location onto a public cloud;
- Moving from one cloud platform to another (known as a "cloud-to-cloud" migration); or
- Changing from the public cloud to a private cloud environment (known as "cloud repatriation").

Whichever environment you choose, moving your company's data, workloads, applications and other IT resources to the cloud can bring forth lots of benefits. It provides greater security against data theft, hacking, unauthorized access and other possible intrusions. It can also mean reducing hardware expenses, which on top of cost savings, can help boost innovation agility and allow businesses to better manage customer expectations. For these reasons, more and more companies are tapping into cloud technology.

Let's take a deeper look at the drivers of cloud migration, the benefits and challenges and suggested strategies for making the move.

The pandemic and the cloud

The COVID-19 pandemic was a driving force behind the massive move to the cloud, given the sudden and urgent need for business decentralization. In fact, 70% of survey respondents reported that the pandemic sped up their cloud migration and adoption timeline.

There's good reason for that: The pandemic lockdown changed how the business world communicated with its customers. "I think many companies thought that phone conversations could keep up at first, and that they could cover spikes in their business plans, but no one saw the incredible increase in volumes that were created by the pandemic," says **Bob Ashley, senior product marketing manager at TELUS International**. "It completely changed their outlook, and I think that was the advent of really having to make major changes to their business model."

But it would be ill-advised to think that this shift to the cloud will stop when the pandemic winds down. COVID-19 has only expedited what was already trending, while simultaneously teaching businesses a hard lesson: You cannot predict the future, but you do need to prepare for its uncertainties.

Cloud migration: key drivers, benefits and challenges

Beyond the pandemic itself, key drivers behind businesses' push toward cloud migration include evolving customer behavior, expectations and preferences.

"People want to be able to resolve their issues and inquiries via digital channels," says Ashley. "They don't want to be on hold for an hour and a half just to check their balance or pay their bill online. They want intuitive, efficient self-service."

The cloud enables that sort of user [self-service](#), setting the technical foundation to enable customers to request and get access to an automated service easily and around the clock.

Another popular reason for undergoing cloud migration as reported by 23% of tech leaders, is greater operational efficiencies to maximize constrained investment dollars.

Ashley says at the start of the pandemic, he noticed some businesses spared no expense to get back up and running to take care of their customers. "But that's not a sustainable business model," he says. "Now that we're a couple of years into this, the focus is on how to get the maximum benefit to customers while also maintaining maximum operational efficiency."

For instance, maybe a company can't hire 80 more people to answer the phone, but it might be able to use three or four [chatbots](#) that can deflect customer inquiries from the contact center. Having cloud-based chatbots answering questions also means your business can serve customers 24/7. "Businesses are also looking to use artificial intelligence and other tools to handle some inquiries so the employees they already have can be better utilized and more efficient elsewhere," Ashley adds.

Benefits of cloud migration

Cloud migration benefits can include cost savings, increased flexibility, greater propensity for innovation and fewer constrictions due to resource demands. It can add substantially to a business reliability, speed and storage capacity.

It also makes sense in terms of security. "If you partner with the right people, you realize that security is a shared responsibility," says Ashley. "The right cloud partner can provide advanced security tools to augment your internal security posture and practices. They're investing all the time for the next greatest thing or to stop any newly identified security gap."

Cloud migration challenges

The demand for energy from large data centers powering cloud computing is enormous and increasing, making [sustainability](#) a significant and important challenge when it comes to migration.

"I think the hyperscalers, with huge data centers around the world that consume lots of electricity, are looking hard at sustainability," says Ashley. "While some consider computers to be clean technology, we all need to be thinking about the vast amount of energy consumed world-wide and how that energy is generated."

Many businesses also have limited internal technical resources and lack expertise in understanding and keeping up with digital trends. Moving to the cloud can require some initial expertise and elbow grease to get you up and running, but over time it does become easier and less cost-intensive to manage digital assets in the cloud, especially when compared to an on-premises environment.

Cloud migration strategy

Planning the cloud migration process starts with evaluating your company's specific needs and determining which applications and workloads to move.

Consider the differences between a "lift and shift" (or rehosting) migration — i.e. moving applications to the cloud "as-is" — versus replatforming, where you make changes to applications and processes to take advantage of the cloud platform.

Ashley says it's important to know which applications you can move without making any changes to them. "You're not really modernizing them but gaining scale and agility because you can add processing power and infrastructure instantly. Or you can containerize them and make them completely cloud-based," he says.

"Consider too that there will always be certain things that you want to leave, maybe on-site or in your particular country, because of regulations like GDPR, or for data sovereignty," Ashley adds.

When you're ready to make your move to the cloud, there are a few steps to follow that will help you plan and execute a successful migration:

1. Create a cloud migration plan
2. Determine which business processes to migrate
3. Do any necessary modifications
4. Research costs
5. Choose your cloud environment
6. Understand security risks and create a security plan
7. Do a test migration
8. Migrate

When you've finally completed your migration, you'll need to monitor your systems to make sure the cloud migration is achieving the goals you've set.

Working with a cloud transformation partner

Businesses report the greatest threats to their planned cloud expansion projects are limited internal technical resource techniques (34%) along with a lack of expertise, literacy and understanding of digital trends to formulate a comprehensive plan (22%).

Working with a third-party cloud transformation partner means getting expert help with your company's cloud migration plan and avoiding long downtimes and workload performance problems.

"Having a good game plan and a good partner will help you. It's important to know, too, about access to their resources. Can they support you around the globe? Will they follow the sun and help you with technical support? Can they monitor and optimize to help you keep pace with the technology? Are they bringing innovation to the process?" asks Ashley.

He says enterprises are generally pretty comfortable working on their cloud transformation with a third party. "I think midsize and smaller companies may not be as used to it," he explains. "It all depends on where you are now, where you want to be and how you'll get there."

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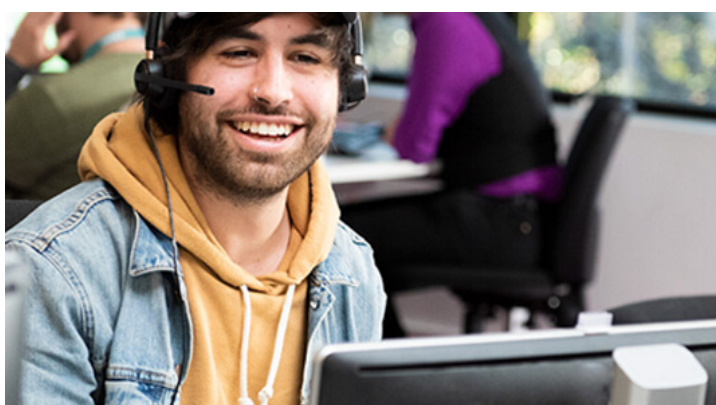
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