

Accelerate digital transformation by getting cloud migration right the first time



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Abstract

Digital transformation is the new business mantra today, thanks to two key organizational imperatives - agility and innovation. Digital transformation, in turn is the leading driver of increasing cloud adoption; it accounts for 63% of cloud engagements. According to Forbes : 83% of enterprise workloads will operate in the cloud by 2020.¹

Unsurprisingly, the cloud migration services market is booming and is expected to be worth nearly USD 9.5 billion by 2022.² If there's one thing that most enterprises will agree on when it comes to moving to the cloud, it is this. It's pretty easy to get things wrong the first time. A cloud migration project has a one-in-three chance of going south, due to various reasons.³ For one, there are many ways of leveraging cloud service providers. For another, there is no one-size fits all solution. Add to it the people, processes, strategy, cost, and time barriers and you have a disaster waiting to happen.

The paper discusses how businesses can steer clear of the pitfalls of cloud migration and get it right the first time in order to accelerate digital transformation. We also discuss the value an experienced cloud services partner (CSP) can bring in ensuring a more cost-effective, quicker, and safer migration.

¹Forbes, 83% of Enterprise Workloads Will be in the Cloud by 2020, Jan 2018 (accessed July 2018), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolombus/2018/01/07/83-of-enterprise-workloads-will-be-in-the-cloud-by-2020/#58f17ead6261>

²MarketsandMarkets, Cloud Migration Services Market Worth 9.47 Billion USD by 2022, <https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/PressReleases/cloud-migration-service.asp>

³Infoworld, Cloud Project? Prepare for Failure, Feb 2017 (accessed July 2018), <https://www.infoworld.com/article/3174482/cloud-computing/cloud-project-prepare-for-failure.html>

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Why the cloud is an excellent fit for the digital age

In the pre-cloud era, the IT environment comprised limited number of tools and vendors, a single platform, and only few devices to manage. Data quantity was manageable as data volume was limited and IT had an iron hold on the IT application landscape and operations.

The concept of 'mobile workforce' was also unheard of. Fast forward to this day - the IT landscape is vastly different, dominated by the cloud. Multiple tools, vendors, platforms, and devices make up today's IT environment. IT's role has morphed to that of a strategic partner tasked with furthering the business agenda. Enabling workplace mobility has emerged as a critical imperative as organizations increasingly leverage a global talent pool. As organizations scramble to take advantage of the rapid technological advances and overhaul their business processes to deliver customer and employee expectations, the cloud with its enormous potential for agility, flexibility, elasticity, and economy has become their darling.

What's more, the cloud enables enterprises to store, backup, and recover data when needed. Appropriate data storage and handling, in turn, improves the compliance and security posture of the organization, and enables in-depth data analysis to derive actionable insights and predictions. Moving to the cloud also helps enterprises to roll out new applications and digital services at an accelerated pace while enabling integration with other technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning. Another significant aspect of the cloud is that it facilitates a connected experience – connecting devices, platforms, services, and touchpoints under a single umbrella for an omni-channel customer experience. While the myriad benefits of cloud are proven, the challenge lies in choosing the appropriate type of cloud (public, private or hybrid) and the right fit provider, and identifying relevant workloads to migrate.

Making the Right Choice: Why Azure Fits the 'Cloud for All' Bill

#1 Productive:

With MS Azure, developers get the freedom to build, manage and deploy applications on a massive, global network leveraging languages, tools and frameworks of their choice: no laborious task of learning new languages or dealing with errors. Azure offers end-to-end cloud application development and management tools with a choice of over 100 services to rapidly deliver features and enhancements, significantly reducing time to market and boosting competitiveness. If you are in a hurry to capitalize on a new market trend or accommodate a change in customer preferences, you can rely on Azure to do the job faster, more accurately and securely.

#2 Hybrid:

Whether your organizational needs require the support of a public or private cloud infrastructure, Azure can help you build and deploy applications seamlessly. It has the distinction of being the only consistent hybrid cloud in the market and organizations can also extend this to their on-premises environment with Azure Stack. Azure delivers a holistic operational and infrastructure view that organizations find easier to optimize and secure for maximum gains.

#3 Intelligent:

With its inbuilt Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities, Azure works as the intelligent cloud, enabling enterprises to develop breakthrough applications and deploy custom AI models on a large scale. Leveraging powerful data, intelligence services and an open platform, businesses are able to tap into new opportunities and enhance value creation.

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#4 Trusted:

Start-ups, governments, and more than 90% of Fortune 500 companies trust Microsoft Cloud to deliver on their digital transformation goals. Azure boasts of the maximum number of certifications and serves more than 50 regions across the world. Best-in-industry IP protection makes Azure the trusted choice of enterprises looking for superior compliance coverage, security, and reliability.

Creating your Azure cloud strategy: Four steps to success

With Azure, you get the best of both worlds – IT efficiency and business innovation that drives new revenue opportunities. However, to realize Azure's promise of scale, flexibility and pay-as-you-go pricing models, careful planning, strategizing and development of actionable roadmaps is a prerequisite. Here are four steps to circumvent the common pitfalls and create a solid cloud strategy:

#1 Develop a vision for digital transformation:

'Being digital' can mean different things to different organizations. Is your vision of digital transformation restricted to a single workload or set of workloads? Or does it encompass organization-wide digitization? Formulating a clear vision starts with knowing your goals, priorities, and market standing in terms of competition and business volatility. For those starting out on their cloud journey, partnering with an experienced cloud services provider early on, can help create and refine an effective vision for digital and cloud transformation.

#2 Prioritize cost and innovation:

Effective cost management is a significant benefit of Azure cloud. When creating a cloud strategy, organizations should be clear that they have the freedom to pay for what they use, when they use, and how much they use. For instance, why pay for peak capacity when most organizations only end up using 20% on average? While prioritizing ongoing costs is important, balancing the same with the innovation needs of the organization is a tough balancing act that an experienced partner can help steer in the right direction.

#3 Consider compliance, security, and IP:

Even though cloud computing has been around for nearly a decade, security of data and applications in the cloud continues to be a key concern. Migrating the in-house security posture as-is to the cloud is one of the biggest challenges for organizations and many businesses cite concerns over security as the biggest reason for not migrating to the cloud. In contrast, Gartner's recent 'Is the Cloud Secure' report puts the onus of cloud security failures largely on users, not cloud computing service providers. The report predicts that through 2022, at least 95% of cloud security failures will be the customer's fault.⁴ Compliance and IP protection are other key aspects to be considered when formulating a cloud migration strategy.

#4 Leverage existing expertise and skill:

With cloud technology maturing, experienced cloud service providers (CSPs) can significantly help accelerate migrations by leveraging readily available cross-industry learning and skilled resources. They also have ready access to blueprints and proven frameworks, proprietary tools and CCA recipes – all valuable assets to ensure a rapid, hassle-free, and cost-effective migration.

⁴Gartner, *Smarter With Gartner, Is the Cloud Secure, Mar 27, 2018 (accessed Apr 2018)*, <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/is-the-cloud-secure/>

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How the right-fit partner ensures first-time-right cloud migrations

For Azure cloud migrations to be effective, partnering with a cloud migration services provider who is not only well versed with Azure infrastructure but also has the capability to deliver end-to-end Azure services is a critical imperative. Planning for migration should cover three essential phases:

- **Discover:**
Assess cloud and infrastructure readiness and operational state in terms of DevOps environment, core as well as web infrastructure, and compliance.
- **Operate:**
Automate IaaS and PaaS services and enable DevOps and hybrid cloud automation.
- **Transform:**
Design, deploy, and migrate services and workloads for LOB application, disaster recovery and backup.

The right CSP helps organizations get cloud migrations right with a structured framework that encompasses:

#1 In-depth readiness assessment:

Using a standardized approach and assessment framework for faster assessment of:

- Inventory source applications, workloads, and servers along with their dependencies
- Performance statistics and other requirements that impact cost and compliance
- Migrate workloads and conduct post migration configuration, testing, and support

#2 Industrialized approach to workload migration:

Experienced CSPs can bring a factory based approach to workload migration, backed by robust infrastructure, SLAs, software-defined policies, and standardized automated processes for assessment/data analysis. Factory-based migration helps:

- Plan and schedule migration in manageable phases
- Deploy agents/processing servers and ensure communication between workloads and source servers
- Migrate workloads and conduct post migration configuration, testing, and support
- Coordinate workload owner verification, cutover finalization, traffic redirect, and ensure ongoing support

Making your cloud journey a success

Cloud migration is not without its fair share of roadblocks along the way. It requires coordination between different stakeholders in the organization along with a delicate balancing of their conflicting priorities. For instance, the IT team must stay on top of the growing complexity of evolving digital infrastructure, the compliance team cannot take its eye off the regulatory landscape, and the security team must ensure a strong security posture. Through all of this, business teams work to keep costs down. An experienced migration services provider can help organizations walk the tight rope by working collaboratively with different stakeholders to understand their demands and balance them with the organizational goals. The result: a pain-free and seamless transition to the cloud.

About Microland

Microland accelerates the digital transformation journey for global enterprises enabling them to deliver high-value business outcomes and superior customer experience. Microland has been delivering hybrid cloud adoption and migration services with a long-standing relationship with Microsoft. In addition to being a Gold Microsoft Partner and CSP direct partner for US, UK, and India territories, Microland has been conferred the Best Infrastructure Services Partner Award by Microsoft for eight consecutive years. Microland has a dedicated Azure Migration Factory based in India, where Microsoft cloud experts leverage the best in industry frameworks and methodologies to power innovation and agility in Azure cloud deployments. Microland's proprietary Now2Cloud Readiness Assessment Framework and SmartFactory tool help compare an organization's as-is state to target-state, and develop actionable roadmaps for smarter, safer, and cost-effective cloud migration.

Headquartered in Bangalore, India, Microland has more than 3,800 professionals across its offices in Australia, Europe, India, Middle East and North America. Microland partners with global enterprises to help them become more agile and innovative by integrating emerging technologies and applying automation, analytics and predictive intelligence to business processes. For more information visit www.microland.com or email us at info@microland.com

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