Cloud Migration Checklist

The scalability and flexibility of the cloud allows businesses to expand the functionalities and capabilities of their existing network infrastructure. By migrating to the cloud, businesses can save money on infrastructure costs and increase productivity though the ability to access their important data at anytime, from anywhere. Pay only for the services you need and use and scale services up and down as needed.

Moving to the cloud can be a complex undertaking. Outlining steps and developing a plan that everyone can understand is one of the best ways to know where your business is going how to get there successfully. This checklist is intended to be used as a starting point for planning the move of your business operations to the cloud and should be used as a decision-making checklist, not a complete migration plan. Consider it a first step toward a cloud migration plan.

This list will help you identify your needs and the services and infrastructure that will support your business. The items and questions below apply to most organizations regardless of what or how much they're moving to the cloud.

BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

☐ Specify the gains (and amount of each) that you hope to achieve in the cloud, for example:
  • Speed
  • Scalability
  • Efficiencies through consolidation of services
  • Financial savings
  • Enhanced customer experience

☐ Understand why you can’t achieve these gains currently, for example:
  • Capital expenditures
  • Shortage of internal expertise
  • Other reasons

☐ Rank the infrastructure, platforms, and services that you plan to move to the cloud in order of anticipated savings or efficiencies gained. (This can help you prioritize your migration if you discover roadblocks later in the process.)

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Identify which business practices and internal teams will be affected by the move and to what degree, and include them in the planning process.

- What are their major concerns?
- How are they planning for the move?

Create use-case scenarios that describe how business practices and customer experiences will improve after you move to the cloud, and compare them with your current practices and customer experiences.

- Are the benefits of the change in line with your expectations?
- Are they worth the cost?
- Should adjustments be made?

TECHNOLOGY ESSENTIALS

Based on your business needs, determine what kind of services you plan to use from a cloud hosting provider, for example:

- Infrastructure only (IaaS)
- Platform/dedicated hosting (PaaS)
- Managed hosting and software services (SaaS)
- Do you need your own dedicated servers, or is a VM environment (with the benefits it provides) suitable?
- How much storage will you require?

Perform an inventory of the software and services you currently use, for example: .NET, PHP, databases, online transactions, etc.

- What services do you plan to move to the cloud, and what services do you plan to keep in-house, if any?
- How do you plan to integrate them?
- Have the applications you plan to move been optimized for the cloud?
- What is your testing plan?

Determine the level of performance you and your customers require.

- How have you determined this level? Is it accurate?
- Can you identify the line between what you can live with, and what you absolutely need?

Explore whether optimizing your current hardware infrastructure before you move is sensible.

Begin creating a migration plan.

- How will you ensure business continuity during the move?
- How will tech responsibilities change post-migration? Have roles been assigned?
- Are you going to have downtime? If so, how will you adjust?
CLOUD HOSTING PROVIDER: BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY ESSENTIALS

☐ Determine the pedigree of the provider.
  • How long have they been in business?
  • What is the current state of their business financially? Are they on solid footing?
  • Are they a candidate for purchase by someone else (and potentially disrupting your operations)?
  • How equipped are they to keep up with demand?

☐ Ask about how they choose their clients.
  • Do they specialize in providing for a core set of industries (e.g. medical, financial, etc.)?
  • Inquire whether you can contact some of their other clients for testimonials.

☐ Understand how their fee structure works.
  • What kind of billing options are available?
  • How flexible are their packages? Can they vary dynamically based on demand?

☐ Find out if the provider partners with other companies to provide their services.
  • If so, to what extent?
  • How secure or trustworthy are these partners?

☐ Arrange an onsite visit and tour of their facilities if practical.

☐ Know how the provider arbitrates disagreements or other issues.
  • Are they accommodating? Defensive?

☐ Get a sense of the providers flexibility
  • What kind of questions do they ask you? Do they listen to and understand your business requirements?
  • Are they a “one size fits all” company?
  • Are they willing to work with you to provide a solution tailored to your business?

☐ Determine what type of hardware they use.
  • How modern is it?
  • Is it compatible with your business and software needs?

☐ Evaluate the level of scalability they provide for their services and infrastructure.
  • Is it adequate to fit your current needs as well as your future needs?
Assess their availability record.
• How many times have they gone down in the last two or three years?
• For how long?
• How often have they had to give an uptime refund?

Determine the flexibility of their offerings as it relates to your business operations.
• How locked in will you be to their services?
• Will it be possible to migrate to a different provider in the future? If so, how easy or difficult will it be?

Find out how the provider ensures security and privacy.
• What kind of monitoring and testing do they perform?
• Can you review results of security audits?
• Have they had any security breaches?
• How secure is their physical premises?
• How do they regulate access? Could an administrator or another client gain access to my data?

Verify whether and how they comply with any regulations that your business requires, for example PCI DSS or HIPAA.

Examine their disaster recovery plans, and how they provide for potential data disruptions.
• Do they perform incremental backups of your data?
• How fast can they recover from a disaster?

Determine the level of support you can expect from the provider.
• Do they have an on-site support staff?
• What is their response time? Are they available 24/7?
• Will there be a dedicated point of contact for your business?
• How committed are they to customer service?

Through our closely-vetted technology partners, ACE IT Solutions is able to offer best-of-breed cloud solutions that are secure, cost-effective and flexible enough to meet the specific needs of any business.

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