

Building the right Cloud for your business

by Chip Salyards, vice president Asia-Pacific, BMC Software

Planning the move to the Cloud is urgent when employees can so easily circumvent IT without aligning with the corporate security, compliance and regulatory needs, putting the organisation at risk. Planning Cloud solutions must consider the requirements of various departments, which are different and are often at odds with IT. Many companies still opt for private Clouds and mission-critical and sensitive data functions, but allow public Clouds for the rest. Users who have grown accustomed to the 'IT-as-a-service' nature of the public Cloud are demanding the same functionality in private Clouds. IT departments need to respond by building hybrid Clouds, which combine public and private Cloud models.



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With all the hype surrounding Cloud computing, organisations are struggling to understand what the Cloud means to their business. Internal and external pressures force IT departments to evaluate the migration to the Cloud in a cost-effective and efficient way.

From large enterprises to small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), it is not a question of when to move to the Cloud, but how. For the SMB, the lower cost of the Cloud and applications provided in the form of Software as a Service (SaaS) is giving companies

access to a level of computing power that was not previously an option, due to limited resources. For the larger enterprise, moving to the Cloud is proving necessary to streamline processes, preserve IT resources and budgets and increase overall productivity.

Organisations are also facing greater pressure internally to make the move to the Cloud. Some companies are finding that if they don't move fast enough to respond to employees' demand, the users will circumvent IT in order to obtain access to the public Cloud services they want. Because gaining access to these

services can be as easy as signing up with a credit card, users don't need to depend on IT to deploy it for them. This consumerisation of IT is forcing many companies to rapidly build their own Clouds to protect their assets and make sure that they can offer the services that users are demanding while aligning with the security, compliance and regulatory requirements of IT.

How can a company ensure that the Cloud they are using is satisfying the needs of their users while aligning with the IT department's technical needs, and achieving

the intended business goals? Although there is no simple answer, there are questions to ask and processes to follow to help ensure that the needs of your organisation are being met. Just like the ones in the sky, no two Clouds are the same. It is important to keep in mind that what works in the Cloud for one company won't necessarily work for everyone. Similarly, what works for one department in your organisation may not work for others and you may find the needs of marketing competing with research and development (R&D) and both at odds with the IT department.

With so many options to choose from when planning a Cloud initiative, it is easy to lose focus and expand far beyond the original scope of work, timeline and projected budget. It is crucial to carefully plan out your Cloud to ensure successful implementation and adoption, and to make sure that your organisation is addressing the technology needs of the present without neglecting the business goals of the future.

What is the Cloud for and who is using it?

First, decide why you are building a Cloud. Many organisations are adopting the Cloud to increase productivity, drive down service delivery costs and minimise risk. Determining what business objectives/goals you would like to achieve by deploying the Cloud will provide the focus that will ultimately help develop a successful roadmap for your Cloud.

When your business goals have been defined, it is important to think about who in your organisation will be using the Cloud and what they are trying to achieve by using it. In order to make an informed decision about the direction of your Cloud initiative, both business and operational needs should be considered against benefits. Depending on your organisation, the spectrum of users can range from human resources to marketing, to developers and R&D. Whether it is the marketing department investing in SaaS for a social media initiative, research needing more power to run massive calculations or developers needing testing environments, all of these demands need to be addressed in order to prevent end-users from circumventing IT and putting the organisation at risk.

Public, private or hybrid?

According to a recent report from Gartner entitled Hybrid IT: How Internal and External

Cloud Services are Transforming IT, many organisations are adopting public Clouds for non-critical IT services and using private Cloud models to serve critical and sensitive information in order to retain more control. The report also showed that many users have grown accustomed to the 'IT-as-a-Service' nature of the public Cloud and are demanding the same functionality in private Clouds. To meet this demand, IT organisations are building hybrid Clouds, which combine public and private Cloud models. By using this approach, IT can manage some resources internally while other services are provided by an external vendor. This model can also enable businesses to leverage the scalability and cost-effectiveness of a public Cloud while minimising the risk to critical or sensitive data and applications.

For example, Asia-Pacific is one of the fastest-growing telecom markets, and one of the biggest benefits being realised by this solution is the agility and scalability of the Cloud environment. Many companies in the region, especially those in the mobile industry that add millions of new users each month, are finding that hybrid Clouds provide them with the level of flexibility they need to address this rapid growth at a more manageable cost.

How do you measure success?

Once you have decided what type of Cloud to implement and how to do it, it is equally important to decide how to measure success. To help determine your return on investment, weigh the benefits - whether it is increased productivity, minimised risk or reduced IT costs - against the cost of adoption, building and deploying the Cloud. Also, take into consideration the business goals identified at the outset and evaluate whether or not your organisation has been able to achieve those goals.

Make the move

All in all, organisations and IT leaders can no longer afford to ignore the Cloud. The overall business benefits realised by implementing scalable, agile and cost-effective Cloud architecture are too valuable to be overlooked. Combined with the fact that many users will put their company's confidential or sensitive data at risk by going around IT to obtain the Cloud-based services they want, makes it increasingly important to adopt these new technologies quickly.

By carefully mapping your Cloud implementation to business goals, IT objectives and end-user demands you can build the right Cloud for your business, which will ultimately help you and your organisation succeed in today's IT landscape.



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