



# 5 KEYS TO PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL CLOUD IMPLEMENTATION

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## Introduction

Today, the cloud seems to be everywhere, and it is being touted as the silver-bullet solution to everything from backup and disaster recovery to infinitely scalable mobile applications to inexpensive storage and nearly everything in between.

While the cloud shows promise to finally solve certain problems that have vexed corporations for decades, implementing the cloud successfully within a business takes leadership and a sound, carefully considered strategy.

## #1 Have a Vision

The first key to any successful cloud implementation is understanding the business need and business case for the cloud within your particular organization. This may seem obvious, but as I warn in my book, *Achieving Process Profitability, Building the IT*

*Profit Center*, too often technology is implemented for the sake of technology. The cloud, as the new shiny object, is a temptation for technologists and individuals who want to follow the crowd. Therefore, bear in mind **the single, universal and undeniable mission of IT** within a business is to make that business operate more **efficiently, effectively and profitably**.

With this mission in mind, there are definitely areas where the cloud can increase the efficiency, effectiveness and profitability of a business. However, these will vary depending upon the business. Some corporations may wish to reduce capital expenditures on technology. Others might wish to increase the agility or flexibility of the business. Still others might desire to increase IT's responsiveness to the business.

## Pay Now or Pay Later: Take Time to Develop Your Cloud Implementation Plan

*Done right, the cloud will deliver on its promise to transform your organization into an efficient, effective, profitable competitor. Done wrong, increased overhead, duplicate systems and other issues could develop, preventing you from getting the results you expected.*

*What's the key to success? Carefully develop a plan of action before you execute. This paper will arm you with sound advice to make sure your company's implementation is one of the success stories.*

Additional business needs might include increasing security and compliance, advancing corporate green or mobility initiatives, or future-proofing systems by making them easily scalable. The exact mix of these needs are important and should be agreed upon by the corporate officers. These business needs ultimately form the vision for the use of cloud computing within a corporation.

## #2 Develop a Sound Strategy

Once the needs are fully understood, document them in a strategic plan. These become the guiding vision and mission of the cloud within the business. The objective is to state in plain language how the cloud can help the business be more efficient, effective and profitable and achieve the overall goals and vision of the company.

Next, perform a SWOT analysis with regard to the cloud. A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method that analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a particular project or business venture. See the example on the right.

Using a SWOT analysis allows you to get specific about your organization's cloud readiness and what threats exist that could prevent utilization of the cloud to achieve the stated business objectives.

Any good strategic plan must include specific, measurable goals or actions. These goals should be tied back to the SWOT analysis and business objectives identified earlier. Again, be specific with these goals. Instead of a goal such as "acquire new skills," list the specific skills to be acquired.

The final part of the strategic plan is to create one-year, two- year and three-year roadmaps on how to move the organization down the path of cloud adoption while achieving the stated goals and objectives. The roadmap should list specific projects, training, strategic hires, etc. that, as completed, make a measurable impact on your strategic goals.

## #3 Establish Governance Now

It seems that no new technology can be adopted in an organization

# SAMPLE SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Significant virtualization experience
- IT systems management and governance
- Strong, trusted offshore partner
- Strong, collaborative, supportive leadership

### Weaknesses

- Cloud expertise is lacking overall, skills retooling required
- Network connectivity at satellite locations

### Opportunities

- Leverage cloud to reduce corporate costs, especially SaaS and PaaS solutions
- Leverage cloud to increase responsiveness to the business
- Offload compliance and auditing burden
- Foster innovation

### Threats

- Increasingly competitive industry
- External regulators are introducing new revisions to their compliance requirements in the next two quarters
- Recently lost our primary enterprise architect

without the topic of governance coming up. Cloud is no exception, and governance is, in fact, even more critical to get right with the cloud than most other technologies. The reason is that the cloud makes buying and deploying technology cheaper and easier than ever before.

Business units that control their own budgets can choose a cloud technology, buy it, implement it and bypass IT completely. The cloud is so inexpensive in some cases that the charges can be applied to a credit card and expensed.

In general, allowing business units this much leeway in technology buying decisions is generally a mistake, providing short-term benefits to that particular business unit, but adversely affecting the organization as a whole over time.

Start by integrating cloud governance into existing technology steering committees or enterprise architecture groups in order to provide ongoing governance in which workloads make sense for the cloud. But don't stop there. Proper governance for the cloud needs a holistic approach.



Engage the finance department to monitor business expenses and departmental expenditures for rogue cloud activity.

In addition, consider modifying existing bonus structures such that a portion of management bonuses are based upon making decisions that benefit the organization as a whole, not just a manager's particular business unit.

#### #4 Manage Organizational Change

Forbes has tagged the cloud as potentially “the most disruptive technology ever,” and this includes the internet, which essentially made the cloud possible. That kind of disruption does not come without impacts to an organization and these impacts should not be underestimated. New skills need to be learned, new groups must be organized and new ways of thinking need to be adopted.

However, change often brings fear – fear of the unknown, of being replaced, of losing control or not being able to keep up – all of which lie at the root of resistance to adoption. With something as transformative as the cloud, managing the “people” side of the change is imperative to getting your employees on board. Organizational change management (OCM) does just that.

OCM defines the steps, processes and cultural changes necessary for your employees to embrace the technological and cultural changes you are setting forth as you implement the cloud. It doesn't matter how much time, money and effort you have invested into the technology; a lack of widespread adoption by the people of your organization can lead any technological project to be deemed a failure.

#### #5 Innovate

Of all the benefits the cloud brings to businesses, the ability to facilitate innovation is perhaps the most overlooked. The cloud provides a “fail-fast, succeed-fast” environment that allows businesses to experiment with new technologies and new ways of doing things at a less expensive price point than ever before.

Businesses should form a cloud innovation group that experiments with ways of using the cloud to make the business more efficient, effective and profitable. Small investments in cloud innovation can bring big rewards for companies that are not afraid to adapt to the new reality of cloud.

Organizations that do not embrace the cloud, change and innovation would do well to remember that entire industries were disrupted and largely snuffed out by the internet and mobile revolutions. Consider the failure of newspapers to understand how the internet would destroy profits in an over-100-year-old industry or how mobile computing disrupted the taxi industry. The issue with the cloud, as Forbes points out, is that the cloud impacts every industry on earth, so ignoring is done at one's own peril.

#### Conclusion

As with any complex technology, the cloud requires an investment in crafting a clear vision, strategy and plan in order to provide the most return on investment and avoid the pitfalls of increased overhead, rogue IT and duplicated systems. Making this investment and avoiding the common pitfalls of cloud adoption will ensure that the cloud helps make your organization **more efficient, effective and profitable.**



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