



YOUR ESSENTIAL CLOUD MIGRATION STRATEGY CHECKLIST

Everyone's heard of the cloud.
But do you know what it is?



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Everyone has heard of the cloud, we're sure. But do you know what it is?

When you access something in the cloud, you are accessing information or using an application that's on someone else's servers.

Typically these are in huge buildings located around the world. It means you can access anything from anywhere on any device.

It's fast, easy and secure.

It's likely you already use it in your personal life, perhaps to store digital photos and documents or even for backing up your phone.

But, when it comes to using the cloud for your business, what exactly does that mean?

Cloud computing is about moving all of your computing services – like your databases, your systems and applications – and storing them in the cloud rather than in-house on your own servers.

It can be a fantastic business decision as it's a great way to:

- Reduce costs
- Make your IT infrastructure more reliable
- Scale your IT as your business grows
- Protect your data and keep it secure

But moving to the cloud can be complex. The biggest issue is the process of migration – physically moving all your data from your in-house servers to a remote storage facility without breaking something or losing data along the way.

It's not a decision you should take lightly and almost certainly not a move you should make without expert help.

However, with good planning and the right strategy in place, migrating to the cloud could be one of the best business decisions you make.

This guide has been created to help you.

It looks at exactly how your business can start planning and strategising, ready to move your IT infrastructure to the cloud. And because we genuinely enjoy helping with this kind of thing, we've also included a handy checklist to keep you on track throughout your planning process.

Let's get started.

These are the challenges

Downtime

Migration may take your servers down for a time. As well as the obvious implications, this can affect your applications' performance if they're not correctly backed up.



Data loss

Your data is most vulnerable during the migration process. Extreme care and adequate measures must be taken to avoid lost data or a breach.



Communication

Some of your older applications may struggle to communicate with newer cloud services. This means you may have to adapt some of your processes to fit your new cloud provider.



INITIAL PLANNING

When you've decided that migrating to the cloud is the best option for your business, you'll need to start some preliminary planning. Before doing this, you must understand your reasons for moving to the cloud and the benefits you're expecting to get from it.

It will also help if you have a basic understanding of your current infrastructure, as this will allow you to plan for your cloud server requirements and prevents you from over or underspending.

Decide who is going to head up the entire migration process. This person should have a good understanding of the whole project so that they can take the lead on everything from planning right through to completion.

This would be an excellent stage to bring in expert help.

If you already have a trusted IT support partner, they should be able to manage

the entire process. If you don't, it should be a serious consideration at this stage. There is a lot that can go wrong during the migration process. It's a good idea to have an expert team on hand to keep your data safe and your systems intact.

MAKING BIG DECISIONS

Next you'll need to decide what level of cloud integration your business will need.

This might sound complicated, but remember, if you've created a thorough plan, you'll already understand your cloud server requirements. Now is the time to make the right choices to suit your business.

There are two options:

1. Shallow integration

This option means you'll move your on-site applications to the cloud, and changes to the servers are limited. You essentially lift your applications and systems 'as is' and move them to the cloud as one. You may hear this being referred to as 'lift and shift'.

WHAT IS A CLOUD MIGRATION STRATEGY?

Essentially, a cloud migration strategy is a plan your business should make to enable you to move your data and some applications from your on-site infrastructure to the cloud.

It will help you prioritise and migrate the correct data in the proper order for the smoothest transfer and the least disruption.

The first and most important questions are: Is this the right thing to do... and the right time to do it?

Before you begin strategising, you'll need to decide if it's the right time for your business to migrate to the cloud.

A trusted IT support partner will be able to help you to make that decision based on several factors unique to your business. Here's a quick look at some of the main benefits and challenges.

These are the benefits

Decreased hosting costs

You'll no longer need to keep your in-house servers running and maintained. And there's also no capital expenditure to consider, as cloud services are usually subscription-based therefore, there is no hardware to buy.



Better scalability

Cloud-based services allow you to scale your capacity as and when you need to... automatically. That means if your business grows rapidly, you won't need to change your entire infrastructure to meet your new requirements.



It also means that maintenance and updates can be carried out remotely, making it much faster to rectify problems, which means less downtime.

Increased security

This is a huge priority for cloud service providers. Keeping your data safe is as crucial to their reputation as it is to yours. They offer greater security than you get from in-house servers, and they have additional measures in place to provide maximum security.



Environmentally conscious

While you'll still have a carbon footprint, it will be reduced. That's because you are only using the energy and resource you need at the point you need it, unlike running your own servers 24/7.



Improved disaster recovery

This is vital for any business. While you should already have a solid disaster recovery plan in place, the backup and recovery solutions you benefit from are more cost-effective and less time-consuming when you move to the cloud.



2. Deep cloud integration

With this option, you modify your applications during the process of migration to take full advantage of the key cloud capabilities on offer. This may be relatively simple, or it may involve a more sophisticated modification.

Then you'll need to decide if a single or multi cloud solution is best.

Choosing a single cloud provider makes for a simpler migration. There's only one set of APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) to learn, and it's clear what's on offer across the board.

However, the downside is that you're locked in with just one provider. For any future migration, you're essentially starting the entire process again. It could also make it harder for you to negotiate terms, like pricing or service level agreements (SLAs).

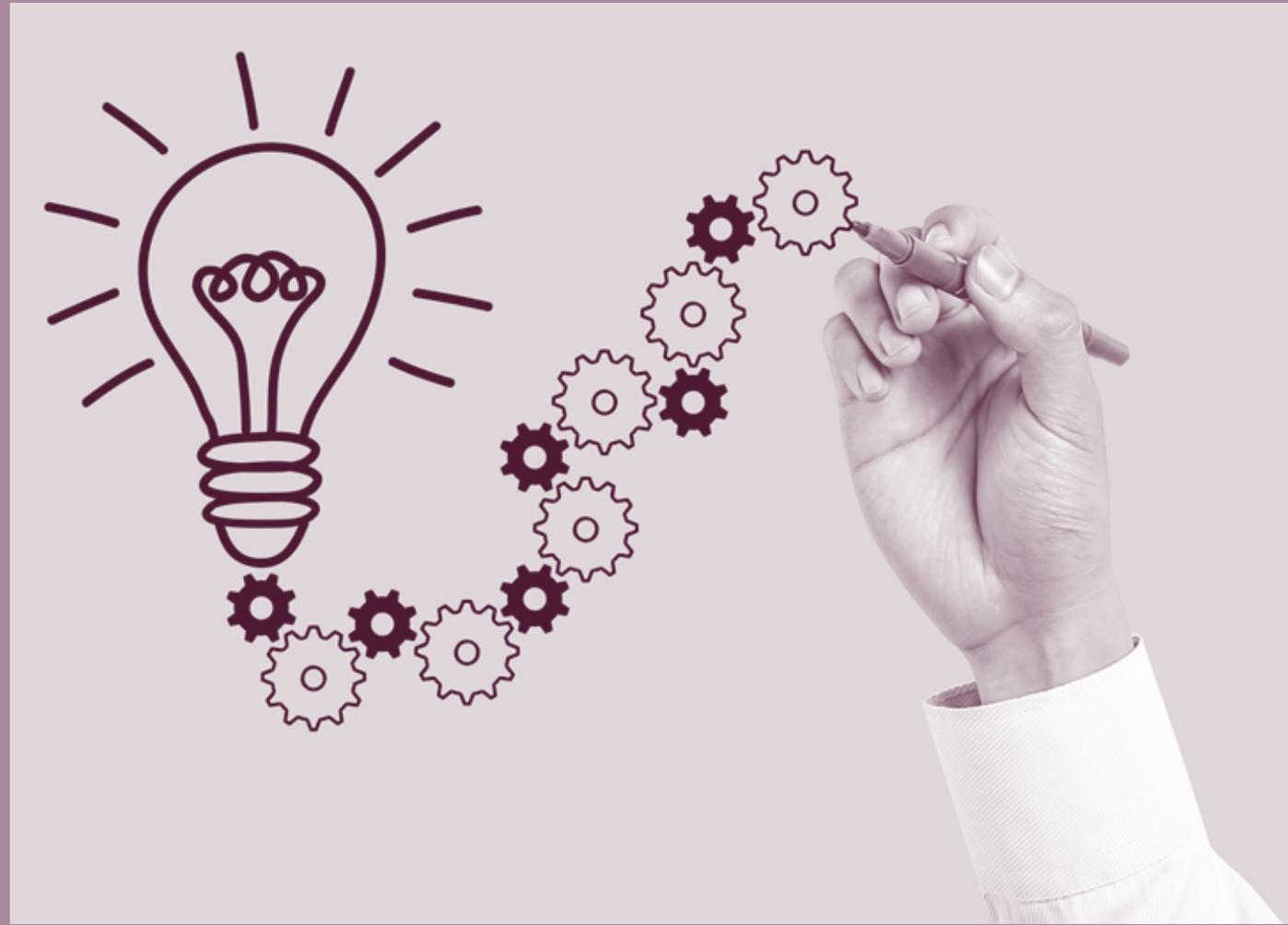
A multi-cloud solution means you use two or more cloud providers. This effectively means you can take advantage of several different benefits simultaneously.

But while a multi-cloud solution does give you more flexibility and leverage when it comes to negotiating your terms, it also means the efficiency of your application is linked to the performance of both of your providers.

The other alternative is to be cloud-agnostic. This is where your application is built to be run using any cloud provider or even several providers at the same time.

It gives you the ultimate flexibility in negotiations, but using some key capabilities becomes more difficult.

Don't let these decisions hold you back. Your IT partner will recommend the best course of action based on your business's complexity and goals



IMPLEMENTING THE MIGRATION

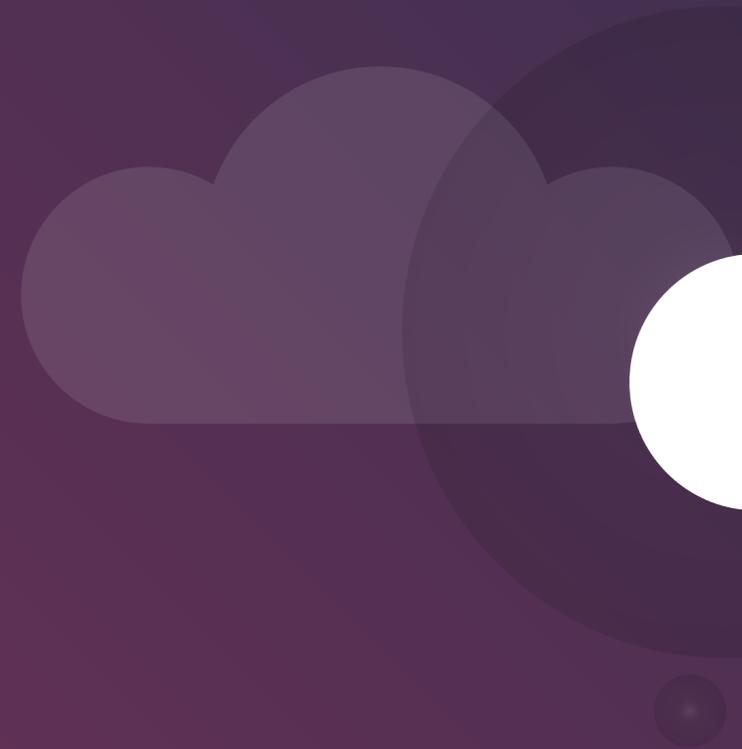
While you probably won't be handling the physical migration yourself, you do need to plan how it will happen. For example, will you switch your entire system to your new cloud version all at once, or will you do it a little at a time?

Each method has pros and cons, but realistically, moving it piece by piece allows you to test that things are working as they should be without risking downtime in the process. But it also means there will be a period where you'll be working between two systems.

Moving everything in one go gives you a solid goal for migration, but it leaves you open to risks if something should break or go wrong along the way.

There is no right or wrong answer to this question. It will simply be a case of you (with the help of your IT support partner if needed) deciding which is the biggest risk to your company or how quickly you want to make the move to your new cloud system.

Whichever method you decide on, a target completion date for finalising migration should be part of your plan.



FINAL REVIEW

Nothing can be declared a success without proof it works as anticipated.

Create a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help you see exactly how well your new cloud-based system is performing. If you already use KPIs to measure your system and applications, they may need updating.

Your KPIs will measure success but can also be a fantastic indicator or pre-warning there's a problem on the horizon.

Consider elements such as performance, infrastructure, business engagement and your staff's technology experience

And don't forget to set baseline metrics for each measurement. This is where you measure pre-migration performance to determine if post-migration performance is meeting your expectations.

Remember, there will be a period of adjustment when adopting any new system. It may take time for some of your team to get used to your new systems, and there may also be an element of troubleshooting before things are running as smoothly as you'd like. Initially, that means your KPIs may not look good, but after a settling in period, you should expect to see a vast improvement.



YOUR CLOUD MIGRATION CHECKLIST

- Set out your expectations
- Assess your current infrastructure
- Understand your cloud server requirements
- Choose someone to lead the project
- Seek expert assistance
- Decide on your level of cloud integration (shallow or deep)
- Choose between single and multi-cloud solutions
- Decide whether cloud agnostic is a better option for your business
- Decide whether to migrate in stages or all at once
- Weigh up the pros and cons for your business
- Set a firm completion date
- Create a set of KPIs that will allow you to measure your new system
- Update any old KPIs to reflect your new system
- Set baseline metrics for each measurement
- Account for an adjustment period

Would you like to talk this through with one of our cloud migration experts?

LET'S TALK.

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