


How deep should your cloud strategy go?

A man in a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie is holding a large, white, cloud-shaped sign. The sign contains text in a sans-serif font and a signature in cursive.

I want a cloud strategy that evolves with my business

tony darmiento ceo

Developing a business benefit-driven migration

Cloud is not an all-or-nothing strategy, it's a tool that can turn technology into a utility that serves your business. Which part of the cloud continuum you land on – from private on-premise to hosted public – depends on your organization's goals and its need for control. The good news is that cloud computing is extremely flexible, which means creating a solution that meets your current needs and your future objectives is well within reach.

How much of your IT – and which particular elements – are ripe for the cloud?

What are your deployment options and how can you develop an adoption and deployment strategy that will continue to work successfully in the long term, as your business evolves?

This Avanade Point of View outlines how to devise your cloud strategy and make the right decisions so you get cloud exactly the way you want it.

How deep can cloud go?

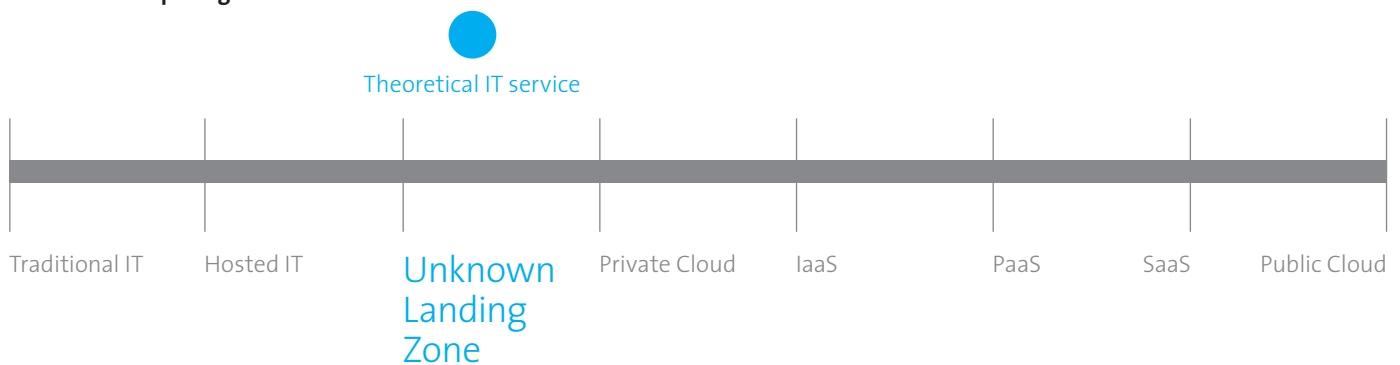
Deep integration versus layering

Cloud can either be layered on top of your IT systems or be deeply integrated into a business process. Your choice will probably depend on which process the system is supporting – and how vital, or how much competitive advantage it brings to your organization. For example, many businesses run their sales management and CRM services via the cloud – which is an intense integration. Others may use the cloud to direct web browsing activity off their corporate website and use their on-premise site to process transactions – a great example of how to layer cloud computing onto existing systems to create a more efficient business process.

Striking a balance that's right for you

The key to finding the right point on the cloud continuum for any of your systems lies in building a cloud strategy that's based on your business objectives. Different points on the cloud continuum provide different levels of flexibility, performance and cost benefit that must be finely balanced with your organization's tolerance to risk and its need for control over IT and data.

The cloud computing continuum



A traditional model of IT service provision (seen here at the far left) provides maximum control, but it's also the most expensive way to run IT. Everything is owned and managed in-house which is costly in terms of both capex and opex and the resources required to administrate and support it.

On the right lies the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) public cloud model, which delivers significant cost savings thanks to the economies of scale that mass, standardized software provision offers. But by relinquishing the management of your applications and putting them in the hands of your SaaS service provider you will have a lot less control and little ability to customize applications.

Selecting the right cloud model – the risks and rewards

If you have lots of highly customized solutions, with big storage requirements or intensive server usage, Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) will probably be best. If however, your applications are out-of-the-box, as is the case with many communication or collaboration suites, SaaS is a great option. And if your organization develops bespoke applications, continuously enhancing code while using very little, if any, personal data, Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) will work well.

Devising your cloud strategy

Avanade's Cloud Strategy Solution provides a tried and tested framework for evaluating which applications should be delivered through which cloud approach. The result is a repeatable and prescriptive guide for assessing each application in your portfolio and deciding which should be provisioned via cloud and how.

We advise identifying low-risk opportunities first. In general, moving basic productivity or back-office applications such as email, CRM or HR tools to SaaS is least risky. Secondly, if you have already begun a virtualization process, and have consolidated more than 40% of your IT estate, moving to IaaS should prove straightforward. PaaS is a more complex proposition because of the combined implications of having both your applications and systems in the cloud. In this scenario application architecture may need specialist attention.

The beauty of our Cloud Strategy Solution is that it produces cloud recommendations and a roadmap that illustrates which IT applications and infrastructures are best suited to the different flavors of cloud.

IaaS, PaaS, SaaS: the benefits and differences

Infrastructure-as-a-Service

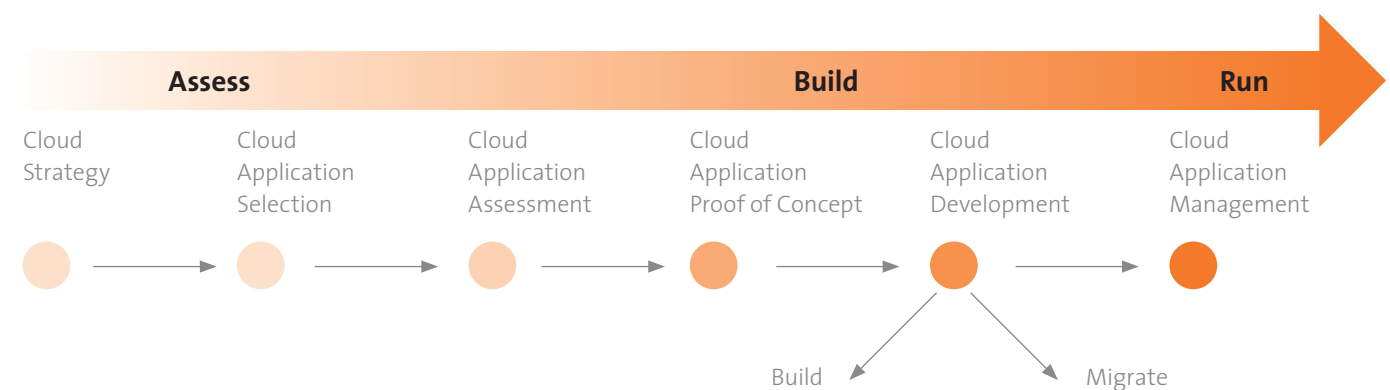
Your virtual server and storage requirements will be hosted in your IaaS provider's physical servers. You access them on demand paying for them only when you use them. Storage and networking can also be provided. You retain control and responsibility for your platforms, database platforms, run-time environments and applications. Time to value, a flexible pay-per-use model, and the ability to shift from capex to opex are the main benefits.

Platform-as-a-Service

As well as the benefits of IaaS, PaaS manages your environment all the way to the application layer. The application platform, databases and run-time environment are all managed for you. PaaS benefits include fast scalability, time to value, an even more flexible pay-per-use model, reduction in capex, and lower operational costs.

Software-as-a-Service

You get fully functional applications delivered to your organization over the internet, paid for on a per-use basis. You have no management responsibilities for these commodity applications – which means you'll be charged a commodity-level price. You forego management access and will be unable to customize any applications you run via SaaS. The benefits include fast time to value, commodity pricing, shifting capital expense to operating expense, lower operating costs, and better standardization across the enterprise.



The Avanade advantage

Based on our proven thought leadership and with the practical experience of thousands of implementations we have devised a unique business-led approach to cloud migration. But our support goes much deeper: our expert consultants and engineers can take care of building, deploying and running your service too. Take as little, or as much of our help as you require. Join us at any point on your journey and see the benefits of our specialist knowledge and practical support, fast.

Our Cloud Strategy Solution comprises three phases: assessing your business objectives and your IT portfolio; building your cloud solution, including running proof of concepts and migrating your chosen apps from legacy systems to the cloud; and finally, managing your cloud to create a robust, high-availability environment. We'll leave you with a more efficient, more cost-effective and certainly more flexible way to deploy and utilize IT services, plus a cloud strategy and roadmap that will help you continue to select the right applications and the right cloud services with total peace of mind.

Streamlining workloads and reducing IT costs by moving to the cloud

We worked with a global entertainment company to reduce its application development costs so that it could accelerate speed to market and streamline its operations.

Using our Cloud Strategy Solution methodology, we worked with the company to assess a number of existing .NET applications that could be migrated to a PaaS service. Following our evaluation, the firm chose two applications for transition to Microsoft's Windows Azure Platform. Together with Accenture we undertook some custom development and migrated them successfully.

Both the applications now operate on the Windows Azure Platform which has also proved viable for this company's .NET development practice, and as a platform to manage their plans for a hybrid cloud.

The Avanade approach

Avanade has a proven track record of devising cloud strategies and deploying tailored cloud-based solutions to help customers realize better business results – faster, at lower cost and with less risk.

Born from a partnership between Accenture and Microsoft we have the strength of both in our business consulting and technology expertise.

Our people work with customers in more than 25 countries to help them achieve their business goals through the innovative use of technology. We are dedicated to using the Microsoft platform to help you embrace change and it shows. We are Microsoft's worldwide 2010 Enterprise Partner of the Year, an award we have won for the last three years running.



About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results.

Avanade consultants apply unsurpassed expertise in the Microsoft platform to create innovative solutions that enable large organisations across all industries to improve performance, productivity and sales.

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