

When is the right time to transition to the cloud?



I want to get to the cloud before my competition

anna eberstark cio

Understanding cloud drivers and spotting migration opportunities

Cloud is often talked about as the new revolutionary force in IT. It's certainly well placed to deliver some compelling business advantages by transforming the model of IT service provision from traditional high-cost, in-house ownership to lower cost, pay-per-use computing. And with other benefits that include increased business agility, better inter-organizational collaboration, and the ability to reduce capex and move to opex, cloud is certainly a powerful tool that, when used appropriately, can deliver sustainable competitive advantage.

How will you know when it's the right time to move to the cloud?

There's some great news here: it's completely up to you. Cloud computing isn't an all-or-nothing strategy; it's a journey, not a destination, and where you start and stop on that journey should be defined by your organizational objectives. So there's no pressure to make a wholesale transition. And while cloud certainly delivers the kinds of competitive benefits every business seeks, CIOs won't be left behind if they don't make an all-encompassing move to the cloud.

This Avanade Point of View shows you how to spot opportunities to move to cloud while making the most of your investments.

What kinds of organization should start thinking about cloud?

Any kind of organization, in any industry sector, will gain an advantage from moving to the cloud. That might be something simple like sending standard applications such as email, to the cloud via Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). This would free-up internal IT resources to focus on user support rather than on time-consuming application management. Or, it could be a life-changing benefit such as a medical research company using Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) to make its proprietary analytics tools available for faster, wider clinical collaboration.

Some organizations may be structured to adapt faster to changing market conditions using a traditional IT model – and perhaps their cost base is already low. In this case, the advantages of moving to cloud might not be as great as for a start-up which differentiates itself based on agility, and which needs to keep investment levels and operational costs to a minimum. Similarly, organizations that operate in less regulated industries can move further and faster to the cloud. For those where security, privacy and regulatory concerns have to be built deep into a cloud strategy, migration might take longer, so ‘planning’ time must be factored in early.

Watch out for signposts to the cloud

Making rushed decisions about migrating elements of your IT to the cloud could potentially be harmful. We advise taking your time, moving applications, processes or workloads to the cloud when it makes sense to your business – based on financial, efficiency and strategic goals.

That’s why, at Avanade, we take a business objectives-based approach to developing your cloud strategy which balances your need to achieve certain cloud benefits with your taste for risk. What this delivers is a prescriptive and repeatable guide to selecting and testing which IT components are right for cloud transition.

Move organically

Use your personalized cloud strategy to look for new opportunities to organically integrate cloud into your IT plans. A quick, tactical move to a cloud service might be a good short-term manoeuvre to help free resources or budget to set your business in a new direction. But if powerful results are delivered, it might also prove right for your long-term goals too.

For example, you could consider moving your standardized CRM application to SaaS when your license agreement is up for renewal. You may have some additional cloud set-up costs, but you will save money in the long term.

Why not move your test or development environments to Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) rather than buying new infrastructure to support them? Plan the migration to synchronize with end-of-life for your existing kit and you’ll be able to make the transition while also extracting maximum value from your current investments.

Similarly, move your customized applications to PaaS when you have the time, resource and optimum marketing conditions to invest in redesigning your platform to maximize all the benefits PaaS offers.

Platform-as-a-Service cloud solution improves access to services and healthcare relationships for h.e.t Software

h.e.t Software's CareOnline service allows healthcare users and their families to manage their own home care services through an online portal. This includes choosing care packages, booking visits, rescheduling appointments and their personal care budget.

By migrating CareOnline to the cloud, h.e.t could deliver an enhanced level of service to its care agency customers who would no longer have to deploy and manage the application on their own file servers. Storage and scalability barriers would be eliminated, and users would be able to access the service via any web-enabled device.

Avanade supported h.e.t through the Windows Azure Platform-as-a-Service development process with additional advice on best practices. Avanade's Azure Factory team in India – a virtual team of specialists that it created jointly with Accenture and Microsoft – used industrialized delivery processes and tools to help h.e.t quickly migrate to Microsoft Azure. Using this approach, Avanade helped h.e.t software create a flexible, scalable solution for CareOnline that sets the stage for future innovation in the cloud.

CareOnline is in the final stages of testing before its launch later in 2011. A pilot is underway with Town & Country Homecare, a care agency in Kent, UK that supports the elderly.

The Avanade advantage

Our approach to cloud is driven by your business needs rather than by technology. As part of our Cloud Strategy Solution we can help you identify internal catalysts for transitioning to the cloud and, if necessary, we can take a macro-view of your situation and review any market conditions or regulatory issues that might play a role in helping you decide when to move different infrastructures, platforms or software to the cloud.

Once we have completed this preliminary evaluation, we'll create your bespoke cloud strategy taking those macro factors into consideration. Then we'll review your applications to ensure that the best opportunities for migration are thoroughly analyzed – which also mitigates risk. Then finally, there's an in-depth assessment to ensure the business case is robust and the technology fits.

Your cloud strategy is a living business tool designed to help you continually review new opportunities for cloud migration and decide precisely when it is the right time to transition new IT applications. So it's the perfect tool to ensure you get cloud exactly the way you want it.

Cloud triggers

How can I tell when a system is right for cloud?

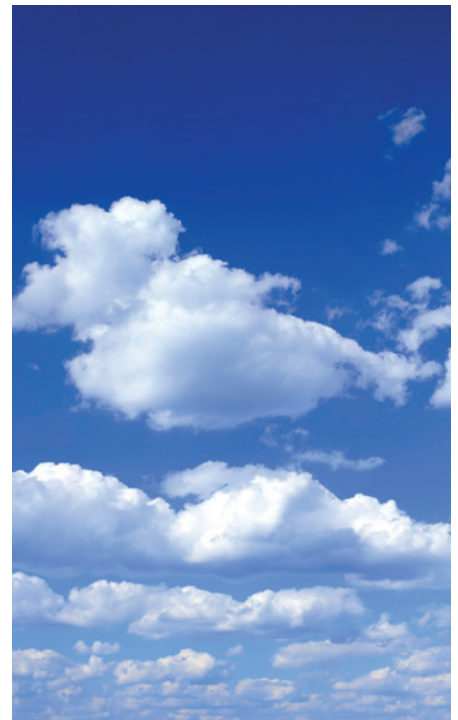
- **Cost savings**
Systems that can be provided at a lower cost – so that transition costs can be recovered within 18 months
 - **Time to market**
When IT needs to support increased agility in highly dynamic markets
 - **End of life**
Systems that need to be replaced soon, or where significant capex re-investment is required are likely candidates
 - **Collaboration**
Systems that will generate more value by being accessible to more users
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The Avanade approach

Avanade has a proven track record in devising cloud strategies and deploying tailored technological 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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