

CLOUD FIRST TO CLOUD SMART

AN IMPERATIVE, NOT A CHOICE



Introduction

Over the past few years, cloud adoption has been considered as one of the core enablers of driving digital transformation giving rise to the moniker "cloud first." As with most technologies, cloud services have evolved with time to underpin major transformational, cultural and organisational shifts, requiring organisations to review and align their strategies with the current realities. The pandemic stands as a strong testament to this cloud evolution.

In fact, a 2021 report reveals that 90% of organisations embarked on their cloud journey to offset the impact of the pandemic.¹

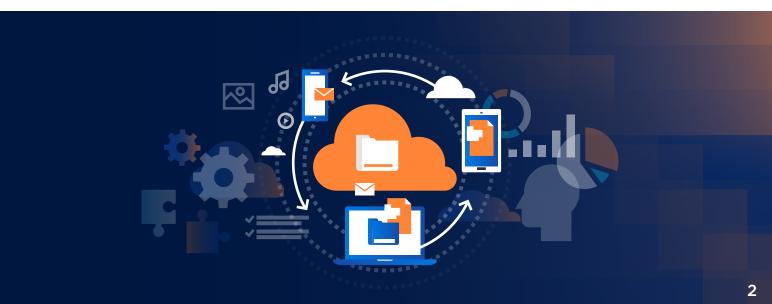
While the immediate benefits of going cloud first are apparent, this hasn't always paid off in terms of achieving the overarching and long-term cloud goals. Even after orchestrating a fast and successful cloud migration within budget, enterprises end up facing challenges hitherto unseen.

From lack of cloud optimisation that causes monthly costs to spiral, to unmodified workloads that fail to unlock critical cloud features and to various impediments and challenges with performance management, not all organisations have successfully realised their cloud goals.

Despite the challenges, cloud adoption shows no signs of slowing down. And it won't be long before it becomes a mainstay of business processes. To keep at par with this eventuality, enterprises must find a way to optimise the cloud and ensure they get the best out of it. And this is where the context of a cloud smart strategy emerges.

Essentially, a cloud smart strategy aims at matching a specific organisation's goals and circumstances to their ability to execute with the cloud. Enterprises can adopt the cloud by leveraging experience and learnings to create sustainable business value without sacrificing on the speed of adoption. We shall conduct a fairly thorough examination of how this fits the organisational context.

 $^1 https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/09/21/lift-shift-and-drift-when-cloud-migrations-fail-miserably/?sh=705b334741fd$



Why do we need a Cloud Smart Strategy?

For nearly a decade, cloud first has been the prevalent approach to cloud adoption initiatives. It aims at maximising the cloud footprint by prioritising legacy modernisation. However, quite expectedly, the Choice of speed over strategy resulted in some workload migrations being counterproductive for the organisation. Some of the main shortcomings of a cloud first approach plaguing enterprises are:

01

Gaps between cloud expectation and execution abilities: Organisations can often develop unrealistic expectations from the cloud that get compounded due to the lack of technical, financial or strategic skills required to implement them. This is the main reason why even successful cloud transitions do not yield the desired results.

02

Incongruency due to siloed business processes: Cloud is agile and dynamic by nature. Legacy organisational properties like rigid IT governance and foundational practices are incompatible and do not find common ground with the dynamic nature of the cloud. A cloud shift ushers in new models of working where business and technology must be aligned with each other to enable competitiveness. Often, legacy siloed processes are unable to coordinate leading to an overall cloud failure.

03

Speed over planning: A cloud first approach is speed centric. The mad rush to incorporate cloud and its elements across each strata of operations leave limited time to adopt other approaches. Moreover, the rush to be cloud first often creates challenges in terms of skilled talent availability, compliance and security issues along with framing the right operational models to suit the cloud.

04

Getting the right cloud services with the right workload: For the uninitiated, cloud offerings can be diverse, extensive and complex. The varied and complicated nature of CSP offerings exacerbates the confusion in matching the right cloud services with the right workload. Cloud offerings can be imbibed in various forms – cloud only with one CSP, multi-cloud with multiple CSPs, or hybrid cloud that presents a mix between multi-cloud and on-premise infrastructure. It is imperative that businesses find the right mix based on their specifics, requirements, capabilities and goals.

05

Lack of specialised IT skills: Other than investment, planning and a cultural shift, a cloud transformation also requires a specialised IT skillset that either needs to be upskilled from the existing pool or hired from external sources.

Market surveys reveal that rushing through a cloud first transformation strategy has substantial risks on top of the operational issues.

For instance, cyber security. In a survey of 581 IT security and 302 CXOs² on the impact of digital transformation on cyber security, a staggering 82% of the respondents confirmed that their organisation faced at least one cybersecurity incident due to rapid cloud adoption.

Moreover, the challenges with finding the right skill for the cloud also open up a world of risks for

businesses. Without the right expertise, businesses would not be able to optimise the cloud. This means losing out on substantial value generation subsequently impacting the top line growth as well as the bottom line. Organisations also run the risk of not being compliant with the stringent regulatory guidelines, which may further result in legal and financial ramifications, not to mention the possible loss of reputation and market image.

For enterprises planning to shift their workloads securely to the cloud as a long-term business realignment, the writing is on the wall. Their priority should be to revamp their approach towards a strategy-centric approach from a speed-centric approach. A cross-organisational buy-in that sees the cloud as a long-term business enabler than a short-term stopgap solution needs to be fostered.

With this, a pan-organisational rehaul from a cloud first initiative to a cloud smart initiative is the need of the hour. With cloud smart, organisations can balance cloud adoption with organisational traits, goals and business value. This helps them identify the right set of tools and solutions to employ and exploit.





How can organisations achieve Cloud Smart?



A cloud smart strategy is a thoughtful approach to cloud adoption. It unleashes questioning the purpose of the transition by posing a series of "why" questions. This enables organisations to figure out their true ambition and the measure to achieve them. With the cloud smart line of reasoning, you chalk out a holistic plan for intelligently managing data and applications. Organisations are able to take a strategic look and assess what infrastructure will best serve each workload instead of migrating all applications to the cloud.

With a move from cloud first to cloud smart, organisations can find and personalise the tools that will improve their unique setup, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. To derive maximum value from cloud investments, you need a holistic strategy that is well versed and thorough. Below are a few crucial considerations to help you begin with a cloud smart strategy:



Identifying and closing the gaps

The first priority towards driving a cloud smart approach is to set realistic goals and expectations for cloud initiatives. This is best achieved by identifying all possible human and technological gaps in your strategy and aiming to close these gaps by defining a well-crafted and unified cloud strategy, one that is aligned with your overall business initiatives.



Finding the right fitment for the migration mix

Clear identification of the right cloud environments will help determine which applications to keep on-premises and which to migrate to the cloud (Private/ Public) for on-demand delivery, software updates and patches and even for usage and productivity tracking. Championing workload migrations that reflect the organisation's cultural preferences and its technological and regulatory environments is a must to achieve optimal performance.



Setting a cycle of performance measurements

It is critical to identify all the benchmarks you currently have and then focus on improvising them as you progress along with a cloud smart strategy. The key is to consistently check what you implement to foster optimal performance and reliability. This enables the framing of a strong cloud computing strategy for the long term.



Investing in right services and orchestration tools

Investing in tools and services that help in reducing the complexity of your cloud journey will help improve focus, clarity of vision, speed, cost savings and security. Overall, this will make your business more agile and set the focus towards more value-aided business initiatives.



Mitigating the risk of security breaches and compliance violations

Ungoverned cloud adoption and poor foundational practices can put organisations at risk of security breaches, data loss, compliance issues and budget overruns. Establishing a governance strategy is the key that allows enterprises to leverage the cloud while ensuring IT compliance. It also helps take a holistic security approach into consideration that helps you connect your business goals and objectives to technical solutions.



Realigning workplace culture into cloud enabled agile teams

To be cloud smart, organisations must consider how to use their current resources to their maximum value including reskilling and retraining staff. Moreover, enhancing security postures and using best practices are some other ways organisations can inherit cultural reforms.

Even with a sizeable task at hand, achieving cloud smart is an endeavor worth striving for. After all, all your efforts towards digital transformation come to naught if your organisation does not achieve congruency with the cloud, thus not realising the maximum value, or in plain finance terms ROI. Going cloud smart on the other hand, ensures your organisation is primed to glean the most out of its cloud journey.



Building a successful cloud exit strategy

It is also important to build a clear cloud exit strategy during initial cloud design and planning phases considering aspects like stakeholder management, viewpoints around application, legal and data governance, etc. Having a readily available cloud exit plan lets you take advantage of better pricing and maintain a higher level of business continuity.

As per Gartner It is then, hardly surprising that 60% of organisations that had adopted a cloud first approach are predicted to switch to a cloud smart approach by 2023.



Why do it alone, when we can do it together?

Even though the best practices are the key to unlocking significant business value with your cloud adoption, following the iterative and often perpetual set of practices can be a sizeable task. One that requires substantial and organisation-wide focus and effort. The good news is they need not undertake the journey alone.

Businesses can choose to partner with experienced cloud migration experts and Managed Service Providers (MSPs) that allow IT leaders to tap into the agility and efficiency of the cloud without the pain of having to become an expert in every aspect of the cloud. They can adopt cloud services more effectively by making the right choices for solutions, toolsets, processes and services. Working with an MSP also ensures that the organisation continuously learns judicious consumption patterns from the process with comprehensive control and observability.

By partnering with MSPs you ensure that skilled and certified professionals will manage your IT setups tactfully and enable you to quickly provision and deploy IT resources in the hybrid cloud environment of your choice.

Cloud MSPs like Tata Communications has helped enterprises across industries to build an agile, scalable and secure IT ecosystem.

Our cloud enablement platform is designed to help you navigate complexities allowing you to integrate, manage and control your distributed IT environments with a single orchestration platform thereby helping you achieve your cloud goals. Our 24/7 managed support services are delivered through 300+ certified IT personnel, who ensure that your business is always on and can grow across the globe by orchestrating together the right technology, the right skills and the right governance.

Our roadmap toward cloud optimisation includes:

- Formulating a well-defined strategy that identifies obstacles, ensures minimal disruption,
 & sets realistic goals and expectations
- Improving performance and cost-saving through a well-crafted migration strategy
- Championing workload migrations in sync with organisational preferences and its technological, security and regulatory environments
- Enabling organisations to take advantage of cloud economics by protecting current investments, optimising infrastructure resources and forecasting the budget efficiently by providing visibility into cost

In Conclusion

As the business landscape starts to settle after widespread disruption, the cloud has truly emerged as a foremost business enabler for all future-facing enterprises. It has permeated all forms of barriers from industries to scale to be an all-encompassing solution and the definitive of doing business. Under these circumstances, it becomes imperative for businesses to ensure they optimise their cloud onboarding to facilitate a smooth transition towards the future.

However, simply joining the cloud bandwagon in haste can prove to be quite counterproductive. Enterprises and business leaders need to understand the importance of being cloud smart with optimum usage rather than simply being cloud first, or fast-tracking cloud adoption. After all, the cloud cannot deliver on its promise if you don't know what to expect from it. And this is where technology players will have to transform the landscape by helping businesses carefully navigate the murky waters. With experienced cloud MSPs in tow, businesses stand to maximise their cloud gains and generate significant business value, perhaps even greater than ever before.

About Tata Communications

Tata Communications is a reliable and experienced digital infrastructure enabler and has helped enterprises across industries to build agile, scalable and secure IT ecosystems. With long-standing strategic partnerships with AWS, Microsoft, Google, SAP, and VMware, we can enable you to develop solutions of your choice to unlock business opportunities and deliver customer experience. The Tata Communications Vayu Cloud Platform Services portfolio brings a gamut of managed cloud offerings that helps enterprises build an agile IT foundation. With our multiple cloud nodes globally, we provide a unified secure cloud experience while enabling you to build, deploy and manage private, hybrid-multicloud infrastructure, consolidate data centres, provide cloud storage with options to back-up/archive data, upgrade to SAP HANA, build DR environment, and do more while providing visibility and control you need. Our 24/7 managed support services are delivered through 300+ certified IT professionals, who ensure business is always on. We can help you grow your business across the globe.











