

Enterprises should follow these five vital steps to cloud success

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We can all agree that Covid-19 created an unprecedented wake-up call, and organisations everywhere have had a very powerful and direct reminder of the importance of systems resilience, agility, adaptability and scalability.



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Now, as businesses look for ways to outmanoeuvre the uncertainty heightened by the pandemic, the focus has shifted to sustaining operations under severe disruption, flexing to address highly volatile customer demand, and managing vastly increased needs for remote network access.

Businesses now need to embrace the promise of cloud to mitigate risks, emerge stronger, and get ready to thrive amidst future uncertainties. The danger is, rushing in without a clear strategy can cost the business more, leaving existing legacy applications racking up consumption and costs at an astounding rate.

Our latest Cloud Ascent study details the steps to an intelligent cloud journey, balancing speed and value. Carefully mapping out the journey and determining how cloud will enable the overall business strategy and ambition, will allow businesses to avoid unnecessary losses in future.

5 vital steps to your cloud success

1. Migrate and scale up

Get your workloads to cloud rapidly, securely, and with confidence by selecting the right infrastructure for your business needs. Unless you migrate the majority of your workloads to the cloud, you will not be able to realise the full business value, including making your business more efficient, resilient, and customer focused.

Importantly, the migration needs to be aligned to other parts of the business and cloud must be understood as a critical enabler to innovation, growth and long-term cost-saving.

- **Get the most from the hyperscalers**

Apply the innovations and investments from the big cloud providers to create value for your business. Most businesses in South Africa will choose to work with at least one of the public cloud hyperscalers, such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Microsoft Azure with Google Cloud now gaining traction as well. They'll look to leverage these providers' global scale, deep expertise, and numerous cloud services.

By committing to a partnership with a hyperscaler, businesses can boost their digital transformation especially where financing is an issue and benefit from support with innovation, digital transformation and engineering.

In South Africa, for example, one of the telcos has selected AWS as its primary cloud provider and is migrating the core of its information services landscape to AWS Cloud. Exxaro have chosen Azure as the key platform for their journey to cloud.

Across financial services, there is a trend of a multi cloud strategy, but a deliberate preferred provider is also emerging from both insurance and banking sectors.

- **Modernise and accelerate**

Ramp up your organisational speed and agility by restructuring architectures, applications and data for cloud. Your business needs faster, more efficient and cost-effective applications that are refactored (recoded) for the cloud. This will enable you to swap different components in and out with zero disruption, by abstracting the underlying infrastructure and platform. By thinking holistically about the flow of data, you can easily adopt new technologies as the customer need dictates.

This can however be a substantial undertaking for global organisations with large legacy estates. In this case, modernisation cannot happen overnight, and a careful strategy must be developed that allows for flexibility to adapt over time. Failure to design a strong architecture can render even the services from hyperscalers ineffective thus undermining the expected value.

- **Run and optimise**

Adopt new ways of operating that push your cloud estate to ever higher levels of business performance and sustainability. This is where many cloud journeys falter. The traditional model of managing capacity by purchasing

and running physical hardware doesn't work. Instead, you must continuously manage consumption, capacity, performance, and crucially – cost.

It requires a very different skillset as well as new operational functions. You need people who don't just react to spikes in consumption but understand and anticipate why they're happening and how they impact IT's carbon footprint.

Further, they need to know what business processes are involved, how critical they are and how they all fit together. Management in the cloud is largely a software exercise in which teams write code to monitor and fix the estate, bringing extra complexity to management and optimisation, and according to our research, it is the main reason why many enterprises choose to work with a partner. This frees teams from the burden of day-to-day cloud management and enables them to build up enterprise capabilities in areas that differentiate the business.

- **Innovate and grow**

Use cloud as a digital transformation lever, creating a foundation for rapid experimentation, innovation and new business models. This enables experimentation at speed to let you spin up new environments instantly, try out several ideas at once, and see what's working quickly and securely.

With the strategic use of data, advanced analytics and AI, cloud can also act as a catalyst for business reinvention. Clouds help to leverage data at scale, unlock its value with AI, improve data quality and combine the potential of advanced technologies like machine learning and the vast numbers of future edge devices connected to the Internet of Things. It's about scalable compute power to support increasingly sophisticated AI models.

Furthermore, access to an ecosystem of partners or hyperscalers can be an innovation game-changer. Through collaboration, you can gain access to cutting edge technology. With the speed provided by the cloud, and by working with cloud hyperscalers and other service providers, enterprises can shift their focus away from the "keep the lights on" operations that currently take up so much of their teams' attention. People and funds can be freed up to focus on how systems can adapt to what the business and its customers will need next.

The time to scale cloud adoption is now. The technology has proven its centrality to resilient, sustainable enterprise operations and future competitive advantage. If you're not substantially on the cloud, you can't hope to unlock the capabilities a modern business requires – greater flexibility, more agility and new opportunities for innovation.

Enterprises that continue to delay a shift to cloud at scale aren't just incurring an opportunity cost, they're risking their very survival. The time for cloud is NOW!

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