

Overcome the challenges of cloud

Accelerate your digital growth and empower your customers



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Cloud computing offers some amazing opportunities and has the power to transform any organization to make it more customer-centric, cost-efficient and less exposed to risk. As we've explained in this guide so far, the secret is to prepare properly, and the benefits will follow.

But like with any new technology, there are challenges around transitioning from your legacy architecture to one that makes full use of Oracle's cloud offering, whether that be public, private, or both (hybrid). By being aware of these challenges, understanding which are the most significant and knowing how to overcome them, you'll set yourself on the path to success.

We'll look at four key areas you'll need to address, and explain how to tackle each one.

Security

By far the most common reason we hear for organizations not wanting to use the public cloud is security. In very security-conscious businesses and sectors, there's a real (and legitimate) fear of relinquishing control of your proprietary data, especially when barely a week goes by without a story in the press about a high-profile organization's systems (cloud or otherwise) being compromised.

In the public cloud, you have less control over security than you would on premise. You may not, for example, be able to determine which firewall ports are open in the environment you're using. This is why the first thing we tell everyone is that not everything should be stored in the public cloud. Your most sensitive data must be kept on premise (perhaps in a private cloud), under the watchful eye of your security team.

However, certain data can safely be stored in the public cloud, so long as you select it carefully and protect it sufficiently. To determine what you put in the public cloud, we recommend an

assessment of your existing on-premise data and applications, where you categorize things according to their sensitivity and criticality to your business. Your findings should feed into an on-premise security roadmap to address any shortcomings you identify.

Equipped with this clear picture of your organization, you can then confidently identify the areas that can be moved to the public cloud, and the levels of security protection that each will require once it's there. The big advantage of the Oracle cloud is that the way its security works is the same as its on-premise technology. Once you have your in-house Oracle security in order, you can use the same policies and procedures for anything you move into the cloud. Moreover, you'll be using the same security tools that your security and compliance teams are already familiar with.

Another pitfall is around encryption. While many businesses encrypt data stored in the public cloud, you'd be surprised how few encrypt the connections between their on-premise and cloud architectures. To keep your data safe, the connections need to be encrypted as well as the stored data.

The other big challenge around security is that you now need to make it the responsibility of everyone in your business. When your data was stored entirely on premise, security was more or less the domain of your IT team, who looked after the corporate firewall, making sure nothing untoward got in or out. With data being sent beyond the firewall to the public cloud, it's imperative everyone understands why they need to keep data safe and what they must do to ensure this. The security categorization of data and applications we mentioned above can be a huge help in ensuring people understand what they're working with and apply the right security procedures to what they're doing.



Overcome the challenges of cloud (continued)

A change to people's employment contracts to reflect responsibilities around information security is also something to consider.

To oversee this organization-wide change, many businesses are appointing a dedicated security officer, whose job is to ensure all parts of the company understand their obligations and operate in an appropriate manner for applications deployed on-premise, in hosted environments and in the public cloud.

Compliance with data localization requirements for regulated data

Linked to the question of security is often one of compliance: in heavily regulated industries, such as the financial services sector, regulators require certain data to be held in a specific geographical location, or don't allow it to be stored in the public cloud at all.

Again, you should assess your organization's data and applications prior to moving anything to the cloud and categorize things according to the regulatory requirements. Once you've got this grading, you can apply appropriate measures to ensure you comply.

The issue regulators often have with the cloud is that because it's still relatively new, they aren't able to use their traditional tools or methods to

validate compliance. Their reaction is typically one of alarm. However, if you work with a partner who's familiar with the regulatory body as well as the solution you're proposing, they can work with the regulator on your behalf to navigate the issue. In this way, we've helped customers demonstrate that what they're proposing is in line with what others in the same or similar sectors are doing. As a result, the customers have been able to secure an exception to the regulatory requirement, because even though the regulator couldn't

"You'll need to run a 'hearts and minds' campaign in parallel with the technology"

use its standard tools to verify compliance, the customers showed sufficient evidence that their cloud solution met the security and data localization requirements.

And if you're not allowed to store information in the public cloud, remember you can still enjoy the benefits of cloud computing by exploring private or hybrid cloud architectures, carefully selecting what data is stored where and putting in place measures to ensure separation.

Oracle also offers public cloud data centers in numerous locations around the world, which means if your data is required to reside in a particular country, you have options that can enable you to achieve this.

Cultural changes

Although security is the biggest perceived challenge of moving to the cloud, the cultural changes that enable an organization to enjoy the full benefits of cloud are arguably more challenging to overcome.

We previously explained the need for a dedicated team of champions to be responsible for all elements of your cloud capability: this team will need to design and drive the cloud implementation, bringing together the right people from across your business to make things happen. This is likely to disrupt your organizational structure and lead to changed roles and responsibilities in certain areas. Relinquishing control or working in new ways may get a few people's backs up.



Overcome the challenges of cloud (continued)

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At a more granular level, your IT department may not have the skills or be sufficiently nimble to enable you to enjoy the flexibility and agility you can achieve with cloud. Database administrators often fear their roles will be made redundant. And many businesses are used to creating and managing things in-house: they don't like the idea of handing over control of applications or data to third parties.

To make these cultural changes successfully, you'll need to run a 'hearts and minds' campaign in parallel with the technology and architecture transformations. Develop a comprehensive communications plan that explains the benefits of cloud, the primary drivers for your company's adoption, and how each individual can play a part in this exciting journey. Listen to people's concerns – some you'll be able to allay, while others will be valid and prompt you to reassess your plans, or investigate private or hybrid cloud options.

Identify skills gaps within your organization, most notably in your IT team. Then work to fill these, through retraining and upskilling existing employees, by recruiting new staff, or by partnering with others who can offer the capabilities you need.

Reassure your IT team and database administrators they aren't being replaced, and that instead of working extremely hard just to keep things running, they'll be freed to do

more interesting, rewarding and valuable work, including realizing the benefits of cloud. Rather than their roles becoming redundant, they'll become indispensable when your business sees the value they can unleash.

Stealth costs

Many people see a move to the cloud as a guaranteed cost-cutter. And for most businesses, it will be – at first. But unless you've architected both your on-premise and cloud solutions in the right way, the size and cost of your cloud estate will start to sprawl uncontrollably.

You can avoid this by laying the right foundations and governance models. Get your on-premise architectures in order before you think about cloud. Consider what you're putting in the cloud, why you're doing it and create appropriate architectures with approved deployment models. Keep centralized control over new cloud solutions so that you can manage both on-premise and cloud assets through a single tool. And actively manage your cloud estate to ensure you're making the absolute most of the capabilities you're paying for – switch off what you don't need and maximize fixed asset utilization.

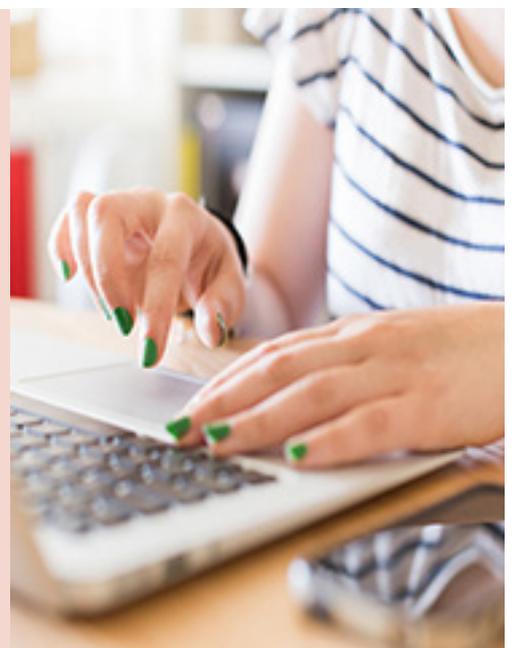


Your pathway to success

Cloud represents one of the most fundamental changes your business and its IT estate will ever have faced. Issues around security, compliance, cultural changes and stealth costs are significant, and you need to address them correctly from the start. If you don't, you'll miss out on the full benefits of cloud computing: the chance to become truly customer-centric, to respond quickly to changing market conditions, to reduce risk and operate more efficiently and sustainably.

Worse, failing to address questions around security and compliance will put the very future of your business at risk: rather than becoming the digital predator you want to be, you'll be the 'digital prey' for your competitors.

But be reassured: organizations across many industries have successfully tackled these challenges and are reaping the rewards we've discussed. And there's no need to reinvent the wheel: talk to someone who specializes in enterprise architecture and Oracle's cloud offering about how you too can accelerate your digital growth and become the go-to business for today's knowledgeable and empowered customers.





Your pathway to success

Cintra is a multi-award winning Global Oracle Platinum partner and Enterprise Architecture specialist operating in the Americas, Europe and Asia. Cintra focuses on enterprises undergoing digital transformation strategies in Retail, Financial Services, Gaming and other verticals; becoming a trusted partner for organizations investing in Oracle Business Technology – delivering value by helping architect the digital enterprise.

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FURTHER READING:

Best Practice Guide: Cloud computing: How you can unleash the benefits in your business

Opinion: Five reasons your business needs cloud

Opinion: What every business must do before moving to the cloud

Opinion: Design, implement and manage a successful cloud environment

Case study: GVC Gaming boosts efficiency and reduces costs with an Oracle Exadata and cloud strategy

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