The successful journey to the cloud: Overcoming known challenges

Is your company considering modernising its technology infrastructure? Moving from legacy systems to the cloud offers you the potential to deploy applications faster, reduce costs, and gain new capabilities. However, the change comes with potential challenges. So, what does a Caribbean business need to do to prepare for the transition?

The potential benefits of moving applications to the cloud are significant:

Benefits of unified software platforms

- Increased infrastructure coherence
- Simplified service deployments and updates
- Supported internet-centric digital exchanges
- Reduced CapEx
- Streamlined technology support

However, to transform the potential benefits into actual business results, there's still a road with possible obstacles. Here's how to avoid the headaches that can come during your journey to the cloud.

01. Acknowledge any limitations

Most firms migrating to the cloud lack practical experience with it. Deploying and maintaining the new cloud systems has some similarities but stark differences compared to their existing platform, especially if the environment doesn't include Virtual Machines (VMs). Corporations need to supplement their staff with cloud experts, but how?

Independent third parties who specialise in this area are available. They have deployed other cloud systems and have first-hand experience understanding the differences between how the process is supposed to unfold and how it typically occurs. They leverage their expertise and apply it to the customer's needs, find the best match, and help businesses understand what the process requires so that they can avoid common mistakes.

02. Look at the big picture

Interest in the cloud often starts with a department that usually has a very acute business problem. However, eventually, this interest permeates throughout the business. Therefore, the possibility arises that cloud applications will sprout up in the enterprise haphazardly, resulting in unnecessary duplication, waste, overhead, and confusion.

To avoid this, businesses need to examine their options at the beginning of the transition and form a cross-department team. The group examines how current workloads run, if the cloud makes sense for them, what the impact is on day-to-day operations, and the challenges of migrating applications to the new computing foundation.

Taking a broad view helps a company better prepare for the eventual changes, which can have a huge impact. In many cases, businesses reallocate workloads and slowly lower the number of servers running in their data centre—sometimes eliminating them completely.

So, the organisation should start its journey to the cloud with a well-defined, long-term adoption strategy aligned with its business outcomes. This ensures that the journey to the cloud is not just a short-term technology initiative but rather a strategic objective, continually delivering tangible benefits to the business.

03. Strengthen the enterprise network

The cloud becomes possible because of the flexibility, bandwidth, and reliability that your network services deliver. The internet allows businesses to move bits of their data processing operations offsite to remote locations but still have all users access the application like it's sitting in headquarters.

But with the change come new, often drastically different, network traffic patterns. So, when examining their cloud options, organisations need to take a close look and ensure that they have a strong network foundation in place. The network has to be able to scale as the business grows.

Maximum reliability is required because applications have become fundamental in how companies function. When the network is down, work essentially stops.

04. Secure executive sponsorship

The cloud provides the entire organisation with a way to transform how it operates. Consequently, it requires senior executive support in order to thrive. Failing to secure buy-in and a clear mandate from key executives impacts the project in many ways. The amount of visibility across the organisation diminishes. The required manpower resources are not allocated. Attaining project funding becomes difficult.

So, the cloud team needs to find a senior sponsor—ideally, more than one. They're essential in spearheading and promoting the initiative, communicating its rationale to others, outlining the potential business benefits, and clarifying both this project's and the company's strategic goals.

05. Plan a continuous project: No need to go all in

Some Caribbean business leaders may be under the impression that a journey to the cloud requires an all-or-nothing approach. Not true. In fact, organisations typically opt for a hybrid model where part of an application remains on-premises while other pieces move to the cloud.

Taking that approach avoids the risks that come with moving critical workloads too quickly and generating more issues. If an enterprise tries to move them all at once, the process may become overwhelming. The phased approach provides them with the ability to move at a comfortable pace to start and gradually increase in speed as they gain more experience with the technology.

06. Monitor and adjust the cloud costs

Cost savings are what all cloud providers tout, and they have been a big attraction for many companies. Long term, cloud computing helps enterprises reduce data centre costs. They cut CapEx because they no longer procure new pieces of hardware on a regular basis. Maintenance activities shift and sometimes are lowered because the vendor maintains the physical infrastructure.

However, corporations can incur new types of expenditures. These agreements with cloud providers come with a base level of service, and charges rise if the client exceeds them. Consequently, it becomes important to perform due diligence upfront and then check their calculus early in the deployment. Over-provisioned services, unused licenses, and duplicate cloud services all drive up the cost.

Also, a business needs to put tools in place to monitor its cloud usage patterns. If unmanaged, they can overshoot even the best initial estimates. Centralised dashboards, alerts, and processes for visibility and transparency on cloud resource usage are required to manage the cloud expenses for organisations with multiple projects, teams, or business units. In summary, having a centralised strategy and the right tools to track cloud expenditures is essential to keeping costs under control.

The key to success

Cloud computing offers businesses the opportunity to upgrade their technology infrastructure and become more agile. The process of migrating from the old to the new can be challenging because the two are so different. Recognising your limitations, garnering top management support, ensuring the network is strong, and putting the right tools in place ease the transition.

C&W Business stands ready to help businesses avoid the common issues that can plague their journey to the cloud. Our cloud experts put their first-hand experience to work deploying cloud systems seamlessly. With our assistance, businesses can achieve a well-defined, long-term adoption strategy that ensures the journey to the cloud is not just a short-term technology initiative but a strategic objective that delivers continuous and tangible benefits to the business.

At **C&W Business,** we're your catalyst for transformative success. From Cybersecurity to Cloud, Data Centres, Unified Communications, and Connectivity, our streamlined solutions ensure scalability and security. With the pan-Caribbean region's largest and most reliable network, together, we can unleash the digital future of Caribbean society.