

Digital Transformation Landscape

Organizations must adapt faster than ever to remain competitive. Enterprise leaders, including CIOs and other IT leaders, must transform their organizations with nimble digital solutions and processes to thrive. Key drivers of digital transformation include:

- *Business agility & speed of development*
- *Massive new data streams and increasing storage needs*
- *Rising cybersecurity threats and strict compliance regulations*
- *Opportunities for increased workload efficiency*
- *Flexible IT consumption models*

Software as a Service, big data, cloud, scale-out, containers, OpenStack, and microservices are not just buzz-words, they are disrupting traditional business models. Further, while these terms and technologies represent a new world of opportunity, they also bring complexity that most IT departments are ill-equipped to pursue. This has become the Big Software era.

To address the realities of Big Software, companies need an entirely new way of thinking. Where applications were once simple to manage and deploy with a couple of solutions across a couple of machines; companies must now roll out many applications, components, and integration points spread across tens of thousands of on-premise and hosted physical and virtual machines.

Enterprises must develop a distinct path to cloud deployment that is defined and measured by its particular needs. New cloud deployment models are emerging that help IT teams ensure that their cloud investment delivers immediate, recognizable value that supports enterprise-specific goals. As the need for new applications and technologies emerges, the enterprise is equipped with the flexibility, data, and expertise to adapt and thrive.

However, CIO's and IT leadership must spend much time in evaluating and planning the "Cloud Strategy" and incorporate the "build, measure, learn" principles. There are certain guidelines one can follow to ensure a much predictable and smoother cloud transition.

Some of the key evaluation factors and some of the questions you need to be asking yourself:

Strategic Direction

- a. What are the motivations for cloud movement?
- b. What were the perceived benefits?
- c. What business outcome did we want to impact?
- d. Are our original motives, benefits and expected outcomes valid in today's market place?



Cost & ROI Analysis

- a. What are the cost Optimization models and how are they calculated?
- b. Revenue generation or Chargeback model for internal teams
- c. What are the costs of adding new skills, re-training existing workforce, workforce reduction (if any)?
- d. Sunk costs, cost of decommissioning of assets, re-negotiating contracts, validity and cost of existing contracts

Technology & Business Operations

- a. Vendor Qualification Criteria: Architecture, Toolsets (open source vs proprietary), Global footprint
- b. Ability to hire new talent (full-time vs contract), training programs and upskilling of existing workforce
- c. Governance & Security: Vendor certifications, security team needs to understand risks and manage cloud security models
- d. Business' regulatory and compliance obligations: Data sovereignty, impact on DR & BCP, SLA's
- e. Identify & define KPI's

Technical Operations:

- a. Pilot Projects: Start small and take a small application, do a POC, get feedback, measure, learn and plan for the next one
- b. Application Architecture: Are your apps cloud native? What is the engineering effort to make it happen?
- c. Network Architecture: Is your app sensitive to latency? Is it globally distributed?
- d. Tools & Monitoring: You need to have proper tools for logging, monitoring and measuring the success and KPI's of cloud applications
- e. Data Security: What data needs to be secure/encrypted? Is it data at rest or for data in motion?

Amick Brown (www.amickbrown.com) is a hybrid cloud services provider that helps organizations define, execute and manage hybrid cloud transformation.

By utilizing both private and public clouds, a hybrid approach enables companies to have more control over their IT assets.

Our expertise in datacenter operations, private cloud deployments, public cloud migrations and DevOps methodologies gives us the ability to provide sensible cloud adoption and migration strategies.