

Planning the next steps in your cloud journey

Effective cloud transformation is based on an understanding of where you are and where you're going next



Authors

Steve Fatigante

Cloud Transformation Principal, HPE GreenLake cloud services, HPE

Alexey Gerasimov

Vice President, HPE GreenLake cloud services, HPE



Most IT leaders freely admit this about cloud computing: It's important to their organizations, but the journey is frustratingly tough, expensive, and never-ending.

Without realizing it, the notion that cloud transformation is something you march toward, as if it's an end point, is the source of most angst for corporate technologists. They have been trained to believe that once they've migrated a good portion of their apps and data to the public cloud, their long and arduous efforts will prove worthwhile as operating costs start falling and efficiency steadily rises.

That's hardly the case because cloud doesn't work like that. It's not a destination. Rather, it's all about extending so-called cloudified experiences to people whenever and wherever they use applications and data to drive business value. Nobody cares if what they are accessing sits in a public, private, or hybrid cloud environment, co-located or on-premises. People just want quick, easy access to whatever tools and data will enrich their personal and professional lives.

Creating an extensible hybrid cloud architecture that is well managed and tailored to specific needs isn't easy. Indeed, few companies today are able to bring together the people, processes, and technology needed to make this happen.

An effective plan to advance your cloud transformation takes stock of where you are and advances your cloud maturity across people, process, and technology in a measurable, achievable, and incremental way. Embrace these four best practices for cloud maturity:

Identify value and pain “opportunities”

Before embarking on a cloud transformation initiative, figure out what cloud means to you and how that aligns to what your organization is trying to accomplish.

This sounds simple enough. But ask 10 IT leaders within an enterprise how they think about the opportunity of cloud, and you'll likely get 10 vastly different answers. One way to get everyone on the same page is to set objectives around your value chain and pain chain.

A value chain is the full range of activities an organization pursues to bring products or services to market. Any cloud initiative must not only consider ways to advance the product pipeline but account for external factors influencing it, including industry trends, shifting business and economic models, government regulations, and change in the technological landscape.

The pain chain is the exact opposite of all that. It is a mechanism for identifying and understanding inefficiencies and obstacles standing in the way of success. These might include availability and resilience measures for apps and infrastructure, technical debt, or operating model friction. Whatever the case, addressing such issues must be part of any cloud strategy with clear key performance indicators and metrics assigned to objectively measure the impact and results of your cloud solution.

Align and enroll critical internal stakeholders

Don't shoulder the load alone. Even with the smartest strategic vision and plan, providing consistent cloud-everywhere experiences to end users is time consuming and even the smallest mistake made by overtaxed internal staff can lead to lengthy rollout delays and significant cost overruns.

For cloud experiences to become reality, executives, critical partners, and change agents must align on critical aspects of the program. Most notably, the right people—both inside and outside the organization—need to collaborate around:



Enterprise architecture—

Cloud leaders typically adopt standards-based approaches to accelerate outcomes and maintain continuous compliance.

Organizations should work closely with experts in the field to emphasize design and implementation patterns that are extensible by application archetype. Standardization would take place after observing results from initial implementations and migrations.

Application development—

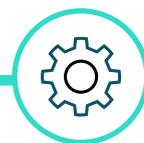
Application developers often want to move as fast as agile methodology will allow, leveraging cloud-optimized services along the way.

Initial partnerships with app development teams should seek to understand the workload portfolio, determine appropriate placement targets for each workload, modernize or migrate workloads as appropriate, and deliver cloud approaches to improve these processes.



Security—

Most of the work in early hybrid cloud engagements must build security into the cloud computing fabric. This cannot be an afterthought. Seven in 10 companies storing data in public clouds get hacked because of basic security blunders. Cybersecurity, therefore, must be job one for any cloud computing initiative.



Infrastructure—

CIOs, almost as a rule, are constantly fighting the challenge of technical debt—legacy infrastructure that's costly to maintain or replace—and that presents challenges in lengthy provisioning times, demand-capacity management, and downtime avoidance. This is often a catalyst for change as internal partners come together to deliver cloud experiences enabling real-time, automated provisioning of services to address such infrastructure pain points.





Define your hybrid cloud formation

Being able to deliver experiences across a hybrid cloud environment starts with determining which formation is needed. This structure can come together only after considering a number of factors, including:

- **Legal and regulatory compliance**—Local or regional standards governing how and where data is kept.
- **Deployment model**—Your preassigned mix of public, private, hybrid, co-located, and community clouds.
- **Delivery model**—The complete portfolio of as-a-service options, such as infrastructure as a service (IaaS), platform as a service (PaaS), and software as a service (SaaS).
- **Service catalogs**—The curated and well-managed services you'll make available through the cloud.
- **Workload locations**—The plan for what will run where and why.
- **Strategic vendor relationships**—Strategic relationships that can significantly reduce your time to value and total cost of ownership (TCO) while improving the initial quality of your hybrid cloud formation.



Establish a Cloud Business Office (CBO)

A CBO can help centralize decision-making and communications for your cloud program, both internally and externally. More than a cloud center of excellence, the CBO is a permanent operational and governing body that directs and guides all aspects of your cloud program, from implementation to ongoing operations. Its members, a mix of full- and part-time leaders, are given daily responsibilities for the successful adoption, execution, and oversight of cloud infrastructure.

Specifically, the CBO is responsible for many common cloud-related functions, such as:

- **Strategic, fiduciary, and operational governance**—The CBO governs key functional elements of the cloud computing program to keep everything operating as planned—and on track.
- **Orchestrating hybrid cloud experiences**—The CBO ensures that the cloud program maintains its focus on delivering cloud experiences that deliver against business outcomes, objectives, and imperatives throughout the enterprise.
- **Forging critical internal partnerships**—The CBO can also break down organizational siloes and assemble the right teams to address key aspects of the cloud program. These could include everything from oversight and steering to policy and technical standards definitions or risk management and compliance.



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