



JOURNEY TO CLOUD

CIO 24/7 Podcast:

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digital future

CIO 24/7 Podcast: Accenture's Journey to Cloud Featuring managing directors Chris Crawford and Merim Becirovic

Chris Crawford: Welcome to CIO 24/7 Podcast bringing you the latest innovations and updates for internal IT from Accenture's internal IT organization. I'm your host, Chris Crawford and today I am joined once again by Accenture Managing Director Merim Becirovic who's going to share the latest news and updates on Accenture's migration to the public cloud. Hey Merim.

Merim Becirovic: Hey Chris. Thanks for having me back on the show.

Chris Crawford: Yeah, it's great. I think the last time we talked was maybe half a year ago, maybe nine months ago and we were talking about the cloud migration journey and I'm guessing lots changed. So, why don't we talk about some updates and maybe, I don't know, if you have any lessons learned and where we are going from here. Sound good?

Merim Becirovic: Sounds great, Chris. You know, it was, I think nine months ago and it feels like it was yesterday and reflecting back on that time, it is just amazing how much and how fast this space is changing. You know, today, we are now 71 percent in the public cloud. We are ahead of schedule and our goal is ultimately to be 90 percent plus in the cloud by December of 2018. Now, that's a big jump and we are going to be closing a lot of data centers, or all of our actual data centers that we are in, any of our business applications, you know, 71 percent of them are already out.

Chris Crawford: So, we had previously moved everything like on a server closets and stuff around the world where we possibly could and into like, into a handful of large data centers, is that right?

Merim Becirovic: Yes Chris, you know that was, that was our first venture into virtualization when virtualization was very popular, that was the first thing we did and then actually by having that aggressive virtualization strategy, put us in a very good position to shift to the cloud very quickly.

Chris Crawford: Well, yeah, I know when you, when my stuff moved a couple months back, it was pretty quick and easy. It was relatively painless for my guys. Now we did have a little bit of downtime, are you seeing that that's the norm, is like a brief outage of a weekend of downtime or what's the target there for moving things?

Merim Becirovic: I've got to tell you Chris, you know, we've been at it now almost 20 months of migrations, we have had a lot of lessons learned. We use our Accenture factory, our Cloud Migration Factory out of India to do all the work for us so we've outsourced it to ourselves believe it or not. A lot of that low-level work. But I would tell you to let, the biggest things that is happening is what you said, you know, the lift and shift stuff is easy. It is a literal shift and then like you said, there's a small outage period but it is nothing significant. You know, where I think we've seen the value, Chris, is you know, across several dimensions because teams like yourself, you went from having servers to now, you've deployed some capabilities that are completely serverless.

Chris Crawford: Yeah, it is kind of fun. And I hope I am helping you with the budgets here by knocking a few of those things out. I don't know that we've, you know, I've been asking my team to give me, you know, a breakdown of what my hosting costs were before and after for the old system verses the new and we are trying to get some, a little bit of run time before we go bragging about that to you but, what, have you seen stuff with other apps?

Merim Becirovic: Yes, I mean, I would tell you, you know, in my conversations with clients, most of them will say, I don't see a way to save money going to the cloud from a lift and shift. And I would argue, we've already saved \$10 million as a result of lift and shift going into our third year.

Chris Crawford: I'm sorry, so help me break that down just one, one tiny step further than is that through, is that just like facilities costs or like on a per server model or are you saying our operations are less or did we clean some house when we were moving?

Merim Becirovic: I mean literally, Chris, it's, we took advantage of the things that are available in the cloud like shutting environments down when we don't use them. That's, you know, that's one of the easy ones. I think the other one is actually you know, we have tools in the cloud that can tell us whether the VM that we've spun up is actually being utilized fully so then we can resize environments basically on the fly to optimize CPU utilization and those are capabilities just not available to you in your data center.

Chris Crawford: Yeah, that's, that's great. I know we had, we had everything virtualized and it would be using up all the capacity on those host VMs but you'd have people that would reserving stuff and not releasing it and you know, you'd have just a different movements. We haven't noticed too much of that. I think our things have been really smooth that we've moved there. Have there been any good disaster stories or we sidestepped most of those so far?

Merim Becirovic: I think we've side stepped a lot of them. I mean, you know, our goal, our ultimate goal as you know is to be very serverless across the patch, across our business application space and that is going to take us time to get there and that's the other thing I heard clients talk about is we need to rearchitect for the cloud. You know, my advice is don't architect for the cloud, get there, shift work you can shift now, you will learn, you will have savings, you will take advantage of things like for example, with Amazon, we buy reserve instances. And that's a concept of hey, I know I am going to have some compute capacity that's going to be guaranteed usage, I might as well buy that upfront and save a significant amount of money as a result of doing so. I mean, so it is like, those kinds of capabilities, they just don't come your way when you have the data center when you've already sunk all that cost.

Chris Crawford: I think that's a, you know, that's a great observation, Merim, because you know, I was mildly critical of calling all this cloud when what we were doing was lift and shift but I see the logic in getting out there, not waiting for the best to be the enemy of better here. You know, getting us on the journey and then like my team is doing now is as we, as it makes sense to rearchitect or rebuild a solution, we do it with the newer technologies.

Merim Becirovic: Yeah, and you guys are the epitome of continuous integration, continuous development, right, the CICD is the hot thing. We don't want to take any outages. Look at Performance Achievement. It is completely serverless set up. We are constantly making changes to that application. We are not taking any downtime. We are using all of the tools in the cloud to do whatever it is we need to do to the application whether it is table level backups at massive scale for pennies on the CPU minute, right, you just, you cannot do these things in a data center and that's the, that's the thing that we are really seeing is, as we stay in the cloud, as we start to mature our capabilities in the cloud, we are finding that the more we're there, the more opportunities that we identify but also frankly, the cloud providers identify because they start to see our consumption and they say hey, have you thought about this?

Chris Crawford: Yeah, it's a great place to be. So, what do you see coming next here now that we are, you said we are on our way up to 90, 90ish you are trying to get there, what's next?

Merim Becirovic: Yes, so right now we are closing out our biggest data center this fiscal year. We are going to take, we are going to go to the other side of our world and shift all of our development test environments

that exist close to our global delivery centers, yeah, so then we are going to get that workload out and then effectively, we are out. We are out of the business of having data centers to support our stuff and the big thing I see coming that we are pushing very aggressively is really a bold move to say, we are going to be very completely serverless and if we are not going to be serverless, we are going to be consuming a platform. And that aligns to our overall platform strategy that we are pushing across the organization but what it really means, Chris, is we get out of the business of not only managing data centers but we also get out of the business of managing servers. And that leaves opportunity for awesome engineering, for awesome applications to be built because it is one less thing we've got to work on.

Chris Crawford: You know I am sold, Merim. My guys are behind you, so, yeah, we are anxious and we are excited to be part of this. It is a neat space and even if the data centers aren't as large as the ones that we operate or you know, you don't have all the applications I think there is some, there is definitely some universal crudes in some of those observations, so thank you again, thanks again for your time today.

Merim Becirovic: Alright, Chris, thank you. Glad to be on your show.

Chris Crawford: And thank you, for listening to another addition to CIO 24/7 Podcast. I am Chris Crawford and with me today was Accenture Managing Director, Merim Becirovic, who gave us the latest news and updates on Accenture's migration to the public cloud. Be sure to check out previous episodes on Accenture.com and I look forward to delivering new ones for you every month or so. Thank you very much.

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