Technology

Building Your Cloud Strategy with Accenture

High performance. Delivered.
Cloud computing, in its simplest form, allows companies to procure technology as services, including infrastructure, applications, platforms and business processes, via the Internet. Because using an IT resource no longer depends on having the capital to own that resource, companies can now source, scale and deliver capacity unbound by physical location, labor or capital, thanks to the cloud. And that changes the game.

With cloud, competitive dynamics change. David-vs.-Goliath scenarios, traditionally implausible because of the cost and capacity constraints on small- to medium-sized businesses, are now more probable than ever. Think of some of the industry giants whose names did not even exist several years ago; chances are the cloud played a role in creating these companies and supporting their rise to the top.

While the concept of cloud is simple, determining how cloud best fits with your organizational needs can be incredibly complex. But one thing is certain: The cloud model changes the way business and technology interact at a strategic level. Therefore, IT’s role also must shift dramatically – and quickly. Maintaining the status quo as you weigh benefits and risks won’t slow down cloud adoption – it will simply incent the business to move forward without you, deploying cloud solutions that spring up independently of the IT function. The business will view IT as a barrier, not a strategic partner in creating a more agile, high-performing business.

In the future, cloud will move from being a shiny new object to “business as usual” for most enterprise organizations. To get in front of this revolutionary shift, CIOs and CEOs must map out a strategy that lays the foundation for a more agile business.

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The Cloud Changes Your Business, Not Just Your Technology

Cloud Strategy: Key Questions To Ask

Accenture Cloud Strategy aims to provide C-level answers to key questions, including:

- How do I separate the realities of the cloud from the hype?
- What are my options for adopting cloud computing?
- What steps should I take to get started in the cloud?
- The cloud seems very tactical – why do I need such a broad strategy?
- How concerned should I be about privacy and regulation?
- Which of my mission-critical applications are candidates for cloud?
- How does my operating model need to evolve to support a cloud strategy?
- How do I procure for the cloud?
- How does the cloud change my strategic investments, now and in the future?

A classic disruptive technology, cloud computing was first adopted by small- and medium-size companies for simple and low-cost solutions. Larger companies are now seeing its benefits play out in the marketplace; some are scrambling to catch up to their more nimble competitors. These organizations are learning that disruptive technologies wait for no one. They change your business whether you react to them or not. At Accenture, we counsel our clients to harness the technology to maximize the control they have over how their businesses change.

Many large organizations are adopting cloud computing for the cost-cutting and speed-to-market benefits. They view clouds primarily as an enabler of process improvement and a means of reducing costs in specific pockets across IT. But as IT executives remain focused on using the cloud to reduce infrastructure costs, business executives have been warming up to cloud’s potential impact across the entire business. In research conducted in late 2010 by the London School of Economics, half of the business executives surveyed said part of cloud’s appeal lies in its ability to help transform the business; by contrast, just over 30% of IT executives cited business transformation as an appealing aspect of the cloud.

IT organizations that continue with this mindset are likely to lose credibility – and a real opportunity to become a strategic partner to the business. Cloud, we are learning quickly, is not simply a low-cost solution for scaling IT capacity. It is a tool for driving out cost, shaving time to market, and transforming the business.
What do CEO’s and CIO’s teams need to know about cloud computing and how it will change the competitive landscape of the business? Answering this question requires a roadmap for integrating cloud technologies into a broader IT and business strategy. Treating cloud as a separate initiative will only increase the complexity of addressing an aging IT infrastructure and legacy applications. Companies need a cloud strategy that provides a pragmatic approach to harnessing the benefits of cloud in the short term while laying a path toward achieving high performance in the long term. This means addressing how you are going to adopt cloud across your entire business, whether that is done in a few years or over a multi-year span.

Accenture’s Cloud Strategy Solution helps senior leadership teams make sense of the cloud in the context of strategic, C-level decision-making. Our solution addresses the business value of cloud adoption, implementation scenarios (including risks and benefits), and the technical implications of cloud along with their impact on the enterprise. Accenture will help senior leadership teams develop critical cloud computing insights such as:

**Implementation risks**
Guidance of strategic decisions on location and security of data, which applications are suitable for a cloud environment, regulatory restrictions on cloud adoption, operational maturity required to operate in the cloud

With these areas thoroughly examined, Accenture helps IT leaders develop and implement a roadmap to:

1. **Optimize existing IT.**
CIOs must develop ways to leverage IT capabilities to provide more efficient and elastic services to the business.

2. **Optimize current business processes and models.**
Cloud services can be deployed to change the way business processes are executed and unlock constrained opportunities. In order to be successful, you must address governance, organizational model, sourcing, and vendor management.

3. **Create new cloud-enabled business models.**
The CEO and senior leadership team should view cloud as a way to explore new business models that surpass the limitations of traditional models.

**Cost impact**
Assessment of TCO reduction in IT when adopting cloud and the impacts on liquidity and balance sheet

**Business impact**
Identification of business opportunities “in the cloud” and possible disruptions during cloud adoption, calculation of real cloud-enabled time-to-market gains
Key Ingredients in a Cloud Strategy

When assessing which elements of the IT environment would benefit most from moving to the cloud, businesses must take into account not just the enterprise architecture, but the operating model as well. Traditional organizational models will not support the business agility required in this new environment. The relationship between IT and the business and the associated IT operating model need wholesale change.

Accenture has married business and technology successfully in thousands of projects, in a host of industries, over a multitude of years. We bring this experience to your boardroom table, helping you map cloud computing to your larger business strategy. Our work will be shaped to your organization, focused on identifying the key areas where your cloud investments will achieve the greatest business benefit and providing the tools to help you build a sound business case for practical projects.

Accenture's Strategy Solution includes five key assets:

- **Cloud Strategy Methodology**
  A proven methodology used to support the development of your cloud strategy, focusing on the alignment between business and IT, understanding the business and IT strategy and imperatives, the target state cloud architecture, implementation roadmaps and business cases, and impacts to the IT operating model.

- **Cloud Enterprise Architecture**
  A cross-industry cloud enterprise architecture representing what a potential “future state” application and infrastructure architecture might look like for a large organization pushing the boundaries of cloud adoption. This enterprise architecture is maintained by a dedicated team as the cloud marketplace evolves.

- **Cloud-Enabled IT Operating Model**
  A proven blueprint for how an IT organization operates and how IT services are provided to the organization, including functions, processes, governance, roles and organizational models. This operating model has been refreshed to reflect the current challenges and opportunities of cloud and the impact of cloud on the IT organization’s relationship with the business.

- **Cloud Opportunity Assessment Tool**
  A toolset to support the assessment of your organization’s applications and infrastructure to determine potential cloud opportunities, define a target application and infrastructure architecture, and develop roadmaps for the initiatives required to support a move to the cloud.

- **Cloud Market Insight**
  A dedicated team that continually monitors the global cloud marketplace to assess solutions for infrastructure, platform, software and business process as a service, as well as supporting tools and technologies. The team also maintains a knowledge repository that captures Accenture’s collective cloud strategy expertise.
Developing a Cloud Strategy: Accenture’s Value

Cloud strategy is not something a CIO can delegate, because the cloud will have too great an impact on a business’s competitive dynamics. The CIO must take the lead in driving a high-level strategy.

The opportunities presented by the cloud may seem endless, and somewhat daunting. Yet, if not handled strategically, the cloud’s potential may remain unrealized. You need a collaborator who sees the cloud’s possibilities for achieving high performance and marries them with a tailored practicality that suits your organization. Enter Accenture, which can help you take the first steps on your journey into the cloud in a way that makes sense now and into the future.

While many providers are focused on introducing and selling their technologies, organizations are looking at how those technologies will impact their business operations and opportunity for growth. Accenture helps bridge this gap by working with and understanding your business realities, as well as available cloud capabilities and technologies. Specifically:

- We help clients create cloud strategies that are incremental or a revolutionary leap forward – whichever pace and scale is most appropriate for your organization. Our specially trained cloud strategy team will shape its assessment based on your organizational needs, typically delivering actionable insights within 8-12 weeks of beginning an engagement.

- We help senior leaders sort through the complexity of developing a cloud strategy. Our traditional areas of strength – security, reliability, compliance, and integration – give us deep insights into the risks associated with cloud deployment.

- We bring objectivity to vendor selection because we are an independent advisor that sits within a large, but select, ecosystem of cloud providers. This varied ecosystem also enables access to highly scalable, highly available, on-demand compute capacity – and the ability to adapt quickly to a rapidly changing and maturing market.

- Our view from the cloud, honed via projects around the world in a plethora of industries, becomes your advantage because we help you partner with the providers best suited to your needs. Our selection is based on experience with hundreds or even thousands of similar projects. We have the capability to break down the barriers put up by “walled garden” providers, while helping to instill an organizational discipline that fosters success in the cloud.

- We bring a disciplined, systematic approach to your cloud project. As an experienced services integrator, Accenture will drive consistency across all suppliers while giving our clients a single point of contact and accountability.

Many firms will promise to help you develop a business strategy that incorporates cloud solutions. But few sit in Accenture’s sweet spot, with the ability to marry the technology implications of cloud with the business realities your executive team faces every day. From strategic mapping to identifying the right vendor collaborators, there are hundreds of decisions to be made. Through it all, Accenture is with you, a provider who speaks your language and helps you not only sort through the complex choices presented by the many vendors, services and technologies in the market, but also helps integrate your new IT landscape for high performance. We marry cloud’s promise with a tailored practicality crucial to your success.
For more information about Accenture's cloud strategy solutions:
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