Most businesses have a strategy for adopting cloud services, but struggle during the actual migration because they don’t have a clear roadmap. Based on our experience helping companies migrate to the cloud, here are six best practices that could benefit any organization.

1. Ensure that all stakeholders are on board.

Each cloud implementation should begin with discussions that involve everyone from C-suite executives to end users. Stakeholders should include IT and Line-of-Business Managers, software developers, and third-party vendors. Getting the executives involved early helps head off objections later on, and it’s always helpful to explain to users why the organization has chosen to migrate to new systems.

The IT department, along with their technology partners, should also play a big role to ensure that critical operations are never disrupted during the migration. This is particularly true when integrating on-premises applications with private and public clouds.

2. Define processes up front.

This includes your approach toward your core business processes or foundation. An established global solution template that aligns with your cloud strategy (SaaS, hosting) can be replicated quickly and predictably to cover business processes along with technology solution approaches. Having this part of the roadmap laid out will save time and effort and will limit miscalculations when rolling out the cloud services to additional countries, subsidiaries, or business functions.

3. Roll out cloud services in phases.

Some lines of business may require cloud applications only to meet their operational needs at lower costs, while more innovation-focused departments may need on-demand compute, storage, and networking infrastructure to deliver cloud-native applications faster. Ultimately, however, all stakeholders must work together to achieve the same big picture objectives.

4. Coordinate the move across subsidiaries.

The average multinational corporation has more than 187 subsidiaries—according to estimates from Oracle—making it imperative to move to the cloud in sync. Allowing subsidiaries to use separate cloud solutions can have devastating effects on your entire ecosystem, and process integration is crucial to the success of any cloud migration.

Furthermore, leaving some subsidiaries behind others not only damages the overall business by complicating global infrastructure, but it also prevents those left behind from capitalizing on the increased agility and lower costs made possible by cloud services, while making them vulnerable to security gaps. Fortunately, implementing global systems that meet the widest range of business requirements is no longer an impossible task.

5. Align cloud purchases with business goals.

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6. Choose a committed technology partner.

Every organization has unique needs, and an effective partner will be able to accommodate existing assets while meeting future technology requirements. Only global, experienced cloud providers with both breadth and depth across applications, platforms, and infrastructure can offer the best technology solutions, tools, and support. Moreover, view the process less as a one-time transaction and more as a long-term relationship. Select a vendor that aligns with your long-term cloud migration strategy and engage your vendor at every stage of your digital transformation, building a strong, productive relationship.

Moving to the cloud can appear daunting, especially when these changes impact critical processes. However, doing the up-front work, involving the right stakeholders, and being clear on the intended ROI will make the process a whole lot easier.