7 Steps to a successful **cloud adoption** program

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PLANNING A MOVE INTO THE CLOUD SHOULD BE AN EXCITING TIME!

The reality is that sifting through the multitude of options, deciding which tools and services will be needed, figuring out how to integrate existing processes and procedures while trying to ensure that current service levels are maintained can be a tiring and confusing experience.

Add in those stories about runaway costs and security breaches that wipe out entire companies and it can also be a terrifying experience.

We know We've been there!
While the benefits of running your systems in the cloud are well known, the 'how to get there' part is much less clear and most companies try to navigate the multitude of options and pitfalls by themselves.
Below we have compiled a list of seven steps that will go a long way to ensuring that your cloud adoption program gets off to a good start.

## KNOW YOUR CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

① 1

You need to know where you are before you can decide where you need to go. The first crucial step in your journey to the cloud is ensuring that you know your current landscape in detail. This is generally known as the 'Current State Analysis' and should, at a minimum, include details about:

- Workload placement, configurations & their dependencies
- System owners & SLAs
- Related security & operational processes

Given the complexity and scale of many environments, it is not surprising that many companies struggle to collect this level of detail. Tools like 'VMware Discovery' and 'AWS Application Discovery Service' can help by automatically discovering and mapping your current environment. Having a detailed view of your current setup will:

- Help define your cloud adoption & migration strategy.
- Help determine the architectural requirements.

Identify key players for the later phases.
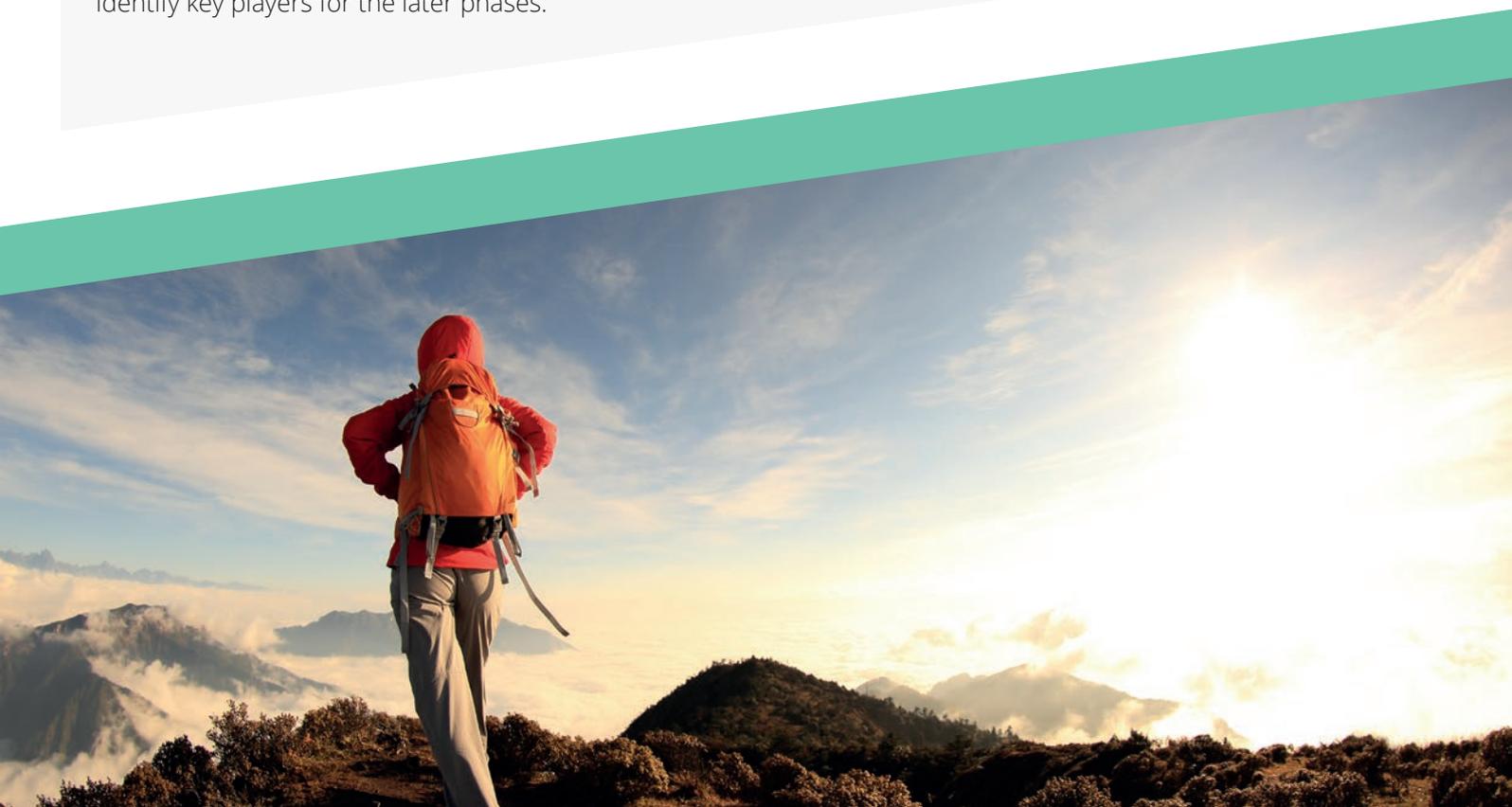
UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ARE MOVING INTO THE CLOUD 2

While this sounds like a simple (and obvious) step, very few companies manage to do this well. Before you start thinking about how you're going to move into the cloud, you should understand why you are moving into the cloud. This involves defining & clearly documenting what you want to get out of this transition by looking at:

- Business requirements
- Technology requirements
- Operational requirements
- Any constraints that may restrict design options

These will form the guiding framework against which all future decisions (and there will be many) can be weighed. To ensure the best results:

- Get inputs from as wide a base as you can. Why limit your input to the 10 members sitting in the room with you if you have a knowledge pool of 500 employees with hands-on experience maintaining your systems.
- Make sure the requirements are as specific as possible. An ambiguous requirement is in many cases worse than having no requirement at all as it may lead to incorrect design decisions being made.

DON´T UNDERESTIMATE THE COSTS 3

Most companies focus solely on the 'hard' costs while planning their move into the cloud, relying on tools like AWS TCO, AWS simple calculator or Azure's pricing calculator to calculate their future running costs. While these are definitely important, it is normally the 'soft' costs that kill cloud adoption projects. Some important costs that must be taken into consideration:

Upskilling Costs

As more companies move into the cloud there is an increasing demand for people with the required cloud knowledge and experience. While hiring externally does have a much shorter ramp-up period, it doesn't come cheap.
If you choose to rather upskill your current employees, you need to calculate in not only their training costs but also the time needed for them to get to a suitable level of experience. For example, for an architectural role, this could be anything from 4 – 12 months!

Solution development cost

Unless you are buying a managed solution, someone is going to need to design & implement your cloud-based environment and related processes. These labour costs grow quickly, especially in the initial months if you have chosen to upskill rather than hire externally and your workforce is gaining experience through trial and error.

GET EVERYONE ON BOARD

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For the majority of companies, moving into the cloud is a paradigm shift from their current way of doing things. For this to be successful it is essential that everyone is aware of the upcoming change, understands the objectives and is engaged in the journey.
This can be achieved in 3 simple steps:

Define your cloud adoption strategy.

- Having a clearly defined cloud adoption strategy makes it easier to explain what it is that you want to accomplish and how you intend to get there.
- Nothing increases resistance to change more in a company than when employees feel that a change (that will affect them significantly) hasn't been thought through properly.

Share your cloud adoption strategy.

- If you want your employees to be engaged, you need to engage with them.
- Share the strategy with as wide an audience as possible.
- Pay attention to their feedback!

Keep sharing!

- Don't let this become just another 'flash in the pan' project.
- Keep it on your employees' radar with regular open discussions to let them know what has been accomplished, what is currently being worked on and what the next steps are.
- Don't just share the good news. IT professional are hard-wired to want to fix problems. Share the areas that you are struggling with too and someone might present you with a solution.

START TRAINING EARLY

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It's too late to think about learning to swim when you've already jumped into the pool. The same applies to cloud adoption. You can't wait until you have your first project signed to start thinking about training your staff. Providing your employees with training has additional benefits. It shows that you are confident in both your strategy and in them and it's an easy way to get them engaged!
Some important points to consider:

Get everyone trained.

- Don't limit training to technical teams.
- Everyone in the company (including finance staff) should have a certain minimum knowledge about the cloud so that they all talk the same language.
- If vendor training costs are a concern take a look at the multitude of cheaper self-study and free vendor options that are available to start with.

Get them involved.

- Training is normally done in simple, isolated environments, while real-life environments are complex and messy.
- Employees need to get their hands dirty to gain that experience and close the gap between the training world and the real world.
- It also reinforces their knowledge and ensures that you haven't just wasted a lot of money on training that will soon be forgotten.

DEVELOP YOUR OPERATIONAL MODEL UPFRONT

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Cloud providers provide a wealth of tools to automate operational tasks and allow you to adopt an 'Automate first' approach when designing your operational model. This is easier (and cheaper) to implement when the environment is designed with the operational model in mind.
A basic operational model should cover:

Access management.

- How will support staff/users access the environment?
- How will you handle authentication?

Incident management.

- How will your environment be monitored?
- How will you be alerted to an incident?
- Which incident responses can be automated?

Audit and event logging.

- How will the logs be collected and where will they be stored?
- How will you handle log retention and access?

Security.

- How will you manage inventory and compliance management?
- How will you manage updates and security patching?

START SMALL, THINK BIG!

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With so many services and options available it is easy to get lost in the rabbit hole trying to design a detailed solution roadmap that will cover all eventualities and all possible services needed in the next 5 years.
This leads to "Analysis paralysis', where countless hours are spent debating various future design components and nothing ever gets built.

A better approach is to imagine painting a picture.

- You start by lightly sketching out a general layout of the entire picture.
- You then fill in the large foundational areas.
- Finally, you add in the smaller details, a section at a time.

Now if you apply the same principles to your cloud adoption roadmap it should:

- Give a general idea of where you want to be in the next few years.
- Show how the larger fundamental services fit together.
- Describe in detail what is needed right now.

Of course, there is an easy way

Let us use our knowledge in the cloud and high-security environments to get you up and running in the cloud in a much shorter time so that you can focus on what your business does best.
Contact us to find out how we can remove the complexity and reduce the costs to accelerate your journey to the cloud:

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