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COLUMNS

Your plan should involve analysing your applications and determining whether they'll require complex integration to be utilised within the cloud

Migration mistakes

NICK HAYNE, THE DATA MASTER

Discussions around whether a business should have a cloud strategy have been replaced by those around how the change should be made. And while there are many undeniable advantages to cloud provision, the following common mistakes should be avoided:

Lack of planning – Before migrating anything, you need to consider security, management and finance. Audit these areas to determine which critical features you'll migrate, the order in which they'll move, and how long they'll need embedding before moving to the next feature.

The audit will also establish a 'chain of governance', making it clear exactly who in your businesses is responsible for which aspect of the migration. Finally, a detailed plan set down in writing will create a record that can be used to monitor progress and be a reference point if problems arise.

Sticking with legacy systems – Don't simply migrate legacy solutions without considering whether a cloud-specific solution might work better for your business. Many cloud solutions offer massively increased functionality, and assessing before migrating could save a lot of future time and expense.

Your people will continue to use the old functionality of legacy systems, even after switching to more efficient cloud solutions with more features, unless you plan for this prior to the shift. Compare your existing systems and cloud-based alternatives, then plan training for your people to take full advantage.

Focus only on cost – For many, migration to the cloud is driven by the desire to cut costs through increased efficiency and productivity, but a focus on finance that dictates the service provider can also be a problem.

While competition may drive down prices, it still pays to interrogate the providers you're considering, assessing their offer in terms of security, compliance, performance and uptime, not just cost.

Leaving it all to the provider – Your chosen service provider cannot handle absolutely everything; they'll only be responsible for factors over which they have control, like your service infrastructure.

Issues such as cybersecurity will still be in your hands and it's vital to build a full picture of where the responsibilities are divided between your business and the cloud provider before migration.

Migrating everything – Migrating to the cloud, then working backward to discover which applications can't deliver the performance or user experience expected, is wasteful and could damage your business.

Your plan should involve analysing your applications and determining whether they'll require complex integration within the cloud – then you know what not to shift before doing so.

Continuity and disaster planning – Cloud provides uptime percentages that conventional infrastructure could never hope to achieve – but downtime cannot be ignored.

When serious problems occur, you'll need a plan to recover your business-critical processes and data without relying on the provider's automatic solutions, using the same systems and safeguards you relied upon prior to cloud migration.

If you're still assessing the benefits of cloud migration for all or part of your business, then a cloud-enablement workshop will help to identify any of the likely issues, long before they become a serious problem, during or after your migration. Use your time wisely and plan every step carefully. **LPM**

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