

10 Things.... To Consider When Moving Your Applications to the Cloud

Cloud computing seems to be taking the world of IT by storm. According to the latest research conducted by MarketBridge, an impressive 44% of companies are already using at least one cloud-based application somewhere within their organisation - and over 70% have plans to move more applications into the cloud over the next 12 months.

Goldman Sachs has confidently predicted that spending on cloud-based applications is going to outstrip the growth on traditional on-premise applications by a factor of 3-4x over the next three years. And it's not just the preserve of small companies or start-ups - much of the future growth in cloud-based applications is expected to come from some of the largest global organisations.

PROVEN ADVANTAGES TO CLOUD-BASED COMPUTING

So why have such a rapidly growing number of companies chosen to embrace cloud computing - or announced their intention to do so? Cloud-based computing offers many advantages, but the most commonly quoted reasons are a desire to reduce IT costs, to increase business flexibility and agility, and to improve application reliability, uptime and scalability.

It seems that these goals are being achieved. A recent survey by Loudhouse Research, on behalf of Mimecast, found that more than 7 out of 10 users agreed that their cloud-based implementations had reduced IT infrastructure costs, accelerated IT delivery, alleviated internal resourcing pressures and - perhaps most important of all - improved the end-user experience.

NOT JUST FOR NEW APPLICATIONS

Many people associate cloud-based computing primarily with new on-demand Software-as-a-Service applications and platforms from the likes of Oracle, Salesforce, Amazon, Google and many others. But a growing number of companies have found real benefit from moving their existing business applications into the Cloud.

SO WHY HAVEN'T MORE ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERED THIS PATH? WHAT'S HOLDING THEM BACK?

In some cases, it's a simple fear of the unknown, or the fact that they have had a less than satisfactory experience from traditional hosting vendors who see their application as nothing more than a set of virtualised bits of data and code. Others may not be aware of the fact that many of their business-critical applications can now be safely moved to the cloud with significant cost, reliability and performance advantages.

The purpose of this document is to help organisations like yours who might be considering moving their applications into the cloud to ask the right questions - both of themselves and of their existing or potential suppliers. We would like to share what we've learned from moving business-critical applications into the cloud - and to suggest 10 questions you might like to ask as you decide what your own strategy should be.



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We've divided these questions into two groups - 5 questions you might like to ask of your own organisation and 5 questions you might like to ask a potential supplier:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. What are you hoping to achieve?

What has caused you to start thinking about moving some of your applications to the cloud? It is dissatisfaction with your existing environment, or the desire to react in a more agile manner to future business challenges. Having a clear sense of your goals will help you assess your options...

2. What can I expect from moving my applications to the cloud?

Are you most strongly motivated by the idea of reduced costs, making better use of your existing IT resources, improved performance, reliability and flexibility, a better end-user experience, or some other important factor? Having a clear sense of the intended benefits will help you establish the appropriate business case...

3. Should I continue to manage my applications in house?

Is managing and maintaining your existing applications really an essential core business competence - or could your scarce IT resources be better applied in driving innovation, and helping to pioneer new applications and capabilities? The ability to focus your IT resources on the things that really make a difference to the business can present a powerful argument in favour of moving applications into the cloud...

4. What's the true cost of maintaining my applications in-house?

Managing and maintaining in-house applications can consume a striking amount of IT resources. The visible costs often only represent the "tip of the iceberg". How much is it really costing you in terms of maintaining scarce and expensive skills? And what about the challenge of recruiting qualified replacements if a critical member of staff leaves?

5. What would happen if disaster struck?

How much are you investing today in your business continuity and disaster recovery strategy? What would happen if you experienced a catastrophic failure to a business critical application? The inherent resilience of cloud-based solutions can often mean that you can achieve a higher level of protection for significantly lower costs...

QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS HOSTING PROVIDER

6. How well do you understand my applications?

"Just hosting" isn't enough when it comes to moving business-critical applications into the cloud. You are unlikely to realise the full potential benefits if your applications aren't monitored, managed and tuned appropriately. How well does your potential provider understand your application environment - and what in-house skills can they call upon to ensure you always get the best results?



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7. How can you help me move my applications to the cloud?

Moving a business critical application from your in-house environment into the cloud is not a trivial task. What experience can the provider demonstrate in migrating applications and data into the cloud? How can they ensure that application performance and uptime is maintained through the transition?

8. How can you ensure the security of my data?

Security - of applications and data - is one of the most commonly expressed concerns when organisations are considering using cloud-based applications for the first time. What is the provider's approach to ensuring the security and integrity of your applications and data at all times? Is it at least as robust as your existing in-house processes? Have they been awarded independent ISO accreditation?

9. How can my application data be integrated into corporate systems?

What about data integration, and connectivity with existing in-house applications? What experience can your provider point to in ensuring that business-critical data is seamlessly integrated between cloud-based and in-house systems?

10. What happens when I want to expand?

Finally, what about the future? What happens if your needs or circumstances change? How easy is it to ramp up or down resources, or to implement test systems or proofs of concept? And how long will it take to get your cloud-based application operational?

CONCLUSION

We hope that these ten questions help you to make an informed judgement about your options for moving applications into the cloud, and that we've highlighted some of the key factors that could help ensure that you are able to realise the full potential of cloud-based applications in your own organisation.

Quantix is one of the UK's premier providers of Application Managed Services, Managed Cloud Services and Infrastructure Solutions for Enterprises and Independent Software Vendors. Our secure, dependable data centres and proven application & security expertise allows us to provision a portfolio of hosted and on-premise solutions that deliver considerable IT cost savings and de-risk technology investments. We would be delighted to share what we've learned from helping a growing number of organisations just like your own to fully realise the benefits of cloud-based computing whilst avoiding the potential pitfalls.

NEXT STEPS

We hope that we've helped to elevate your interest in realising the benefits of cloud-based computing within your own organisation. You can review our [case studies here](#) - or [contact us here](#) to receive a personalised assessment and cost-benefit analysis of your options for moving some or all of your existing applications into the cloud.



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