



Head for the Clouds

*Evaluating
If You're Ready and
How Best to Get There*

Part of the Rolta Managed Services Series



Head for the Clouds:

Evaluating If You're Ready and How Best to Get There

Are you in the Cloud yet? Shouldn't you be? Fully 40% of respondents in a Gartner survey said they are using Cloud Computing services in some form from external service providers, and 25% plan to do so within the next 12 months. By the end of 2016, more than 50% of Global 1000 companies are expected to have stored customer-sensitive data in the Cloud¹.

More organizations are reaching to the Cloud for computing needs. But while Cloud Computing has been with us a while, confusion regarding its applications and benefits still exist. It takes time to determine how best to proceed, which options among the numerous offerings are right for your individual circumstances and business needs, and just when to jump in. But wait too long, and the Cloud will pass you by.

*This Executive Report provides advice
on how to evaluate your
organization's Cloud readiness
and how to move forward
with a strategic plan to obtain
maximum benefits.*

The Cloud, by Any Other Name...

...would first and foremost be about cost savings and moving from CAPEX to OPEX. As with so many other business decisions in today's troubled economic environment, the costs savings inherent in Cloud Computing solutions are the first to resonate with the C-suite. In fact, Cloud services have been seen to operate at less than half the cost of similar traditional infrastructures. Gone are the traditional expenses of software licensing models, sometimes exorbitant hardware costs, and high maintenance budgets.

The on-demand and highly scalable model of Cloud Computing makes it an appropriate choice for organizations from small to global in size. Today's Cloud services are feature

rich. IT needs are obtained as a service – Software as a Service, Infrastructure as a Service and Platform as a Service all reside in the cloud, as do Testing, Monitoring and Security services. Adding Cloud Computing to a company's IT offerings can have a significant impact on access to applications, response time and business outcomes. Incorporating your Cloud strategy and management with best practices will help ensure you realize the full benefits of the technology.

As with other Managed Service offerings that shift the burden of up-front costs and long-term management, Cloud Computing moves IT solutions and actions to a third-party. It eases the burden and cost of IT operations while delivering flexibility and security at lower costs by hosting databases, infrastructure and applications, all supported by 24/7 managed services, with responsible providers.

Not only are there cost advantages to the Cloud, it is also extremely beneficial to organizations operating with wide swings in compute needs. Companies that typically exhibit peaks and valleys in demand will find the Cloud's capability of meeting changing demands as needed is highly supportive of key business outcomes.

Clearly, Cloud Computing offers more tangible benefits than cost savings. Cloud Computing resonates beyond the IT department, changing important competitive aspects of those businesses that fully embrace the technology. But to achieve optimum impact, you have to have a plan.



Think it Through and Socialize it Throughout

While there are many business benefits to working in the Cloud, it takes experience and expertise to integrate Cloud Computing into an enterprise. While all businesses in today's ever-more competitive environment feel the need for speed, proper and consistent data management is also paramount to an organization's success – or to its avoidance of failure. It's imperative to take the right approach to Cloud data management and its introduction to cross-functional teams throughout the enterprise. Without organizational buy in and acceptance of offerings in the Cloud, a company will fail to enjoy the maximum benefits or ROI achievable. You need a comprehensive, strategic plan to guide the integration process.

When considering the Cloud, evaluate the business value it can bring to your company, including improved productivity, smoother operational processes and enhanced opportunities for growth. All are benefits of the Cloud. But the specific processes on how you will gain such benefits must be a precise part of the strategic plan in order to move in that direction.

You can't move to Cloud Computing as a separate, IT-only process. Because it impacts the organization across the enterprise, a well thought out plan begins with a roadmap for the steps you will take to introduce Cloud Computing cross-functionally and in ways that maximize business value.

Gathering insight across the enterprise is often best managed by an outside consulting firm. You need people with a solid knowledge of Cloud Computing capabilities combined with an understanding of how they can best match up with your business initiatives. Executive management teams often find that independent third-party advisors are best able to navigate an organization's sometimes conflicting and often politicized environment, especially when pursuing a change that impacts all to varying degrees.

Are You Ready for the Cloud?

A systematic approach to evaluating an organization's Cloud-readiness is the first step to identifying the elements of the technology that will prove most beneficial. Begin by obtaining answers to the following questions.

- Are you seeking ways to remove costs from your IT environment?
- Is it important for you to be able to develop or manage a flexible infrastructure?
- Do you need to improve the speed of deployment of new applications?
- Do you want to achieve faster ROI on new IT solutions?
- Would greater predictability of IT costs benefit your organization?
- Do you need to increase the agility of your business to serve new and established customers?
- Do you want to improve time-to-market for deploying new business capabilities?

Take the time to conduct an assessment of the company's technical status, particularly noting how much of the IT infrastructure is virtualized, making these components easily migrated to the Cloud. Consider unique security requirements, especially if your company is highly regulated. High levels of data security do not remove Cloud Computing as an option for an organization, but protocols and practices must be incorporated into your strategic plan.

As a prime component of your plan, include a detailed roadmap and share it liberally with others in the organization. By providing users of Cloud services with a timeline outlining expected milestones and deliverables, you are more likely to receive continued support during the implementation process and beyond. Perhaps you'll begin with a pilot project to evaluate organizational readiness and acceptance of Cloud Computing. As you gain insights into the workloads and data requirements of various processes across the enterprise, you can better choose a path forward.



Who You Gonna Call?

When it comes time to find a Cloud service provider, you won't have to look too long or far. You will, however, have to look closely at capabilities. Not all providers offer all services, and most companies don't need everything a vendor has to offer. Gartner cautions companies seeking Cloud providers from undertaking what it calls a "speed dating" approach.² The firm warns that trying to review a myriad number of providers as quickly as possible often leads to suboptimal provider selection and deals that don't deliver the expected outcomes.

Let your strategic plan and roadmap guide you toward the companies offering the specific services your organization requires. Because you've taken a comprehensive assessment of needs in the development of your strategic plan, you have already identified the services you require most from any vendor. First seek out those offering what you need and with a track record of successfully providing it. Match the complexity of your needs with the capabilities of the vendor. And remember that while small companies have jumped into offering Cloud Computing, size does matter. Be sure to work with a company able to provide for your needs now and in the future as your work in the Cloud grows in size and complexity. Rest assured, it will.

Work with Cloud experts able to assist you to make a comprehensive assessment of your IT infrastructure and application landscape. Obtain agreement across the board on which elements are best migrated to the cloud to attain cost savings, as well as those processes that would deliver competitive advantages from improved availability and scalability.

Highly experienced IT consulting and solution providers go beyond simply moving IT to the Cloud. Expect guidance on business benefits and possible disruptions in your move to the Cloud, along with suggestions on maximizing the former and minimizing the latter. Seek a vendor that can not only migrate IT functions to the Cloud but also help you identify changes in processes and organizational structures that will maximize the benefits of doing so.

Developing a strategy and roadmap that takes you to the Cloud and finding the provider that will partner with you for a successful outcome can deliver tremendous, transformative advantages to your organization. Don't wait for a rainy day to look to the clouds.

1. "Gartner's Top Predictions for IT Organizations and Users, 2012 and Beyond: Control Slips Away," Gartner Research, November 2011
2. "Deal 'Sweet Spot' Analysis Accelerates Service Provider Evaluation and Selection," Gartner Research, August 2012



About Rolta

Rolta Cloud Services deliver flexibility and security at lower costs by hosting client databases, infrastructure and applications, all supported by 24/7 managed services. Rolta helps organizations develop a strategic, comprehensive approach to Cloud Computing to achieve lower IT costs with greater agility and flexibility.

With more than 100 certified Cloud practitioners and architects, Rolta offers consulting focused on delivering Continuous Improvement in your Cloud-based infrastructure and applications. Our pay-per-use, utility-based approach — accompanied by highly skilled Cloud consultants — ensures maximum benefits for your organization. We will help you create a strong, strategic Go-to-Cloud approach that enables a change in architecture without service disruption.

Part of Rolta's global organization, AdvizeX Technology supports Cloud initiatives with a team of highly skilled professionals that can provide a comprehensive approach, including customized planning, design and implementation. To guide this process, the Cloud Advisor™, an assessment methodology based on over 600 weighted characteristics and regularly refined and updated by a seasoned panel of IT experts, can accurately benchmark the Cloud readiness of your IT infrastructure and identify critical gaps. It provides an actionable roadmap toward a custom Cloud architecture and includes a set of prioritized strategic initiatives, a SWOT analysis, an effort/benefit quadrant and a public Cloud balanced scorecard.

To find out more about how Rolta can assist with your Cloud outreach,
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