Assessment scorecard

How to sell cloud migration to your biggest critics

"Our existing setup meets our needs, it's low maintenance, and our customers are happy. So, tell me again, why do we need to do this?"

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Just when you thought you'd managed to get your cloud project over the line, up sprout a myriad of questions from your biggest critics. And, it's not as if you haven't been here before, either. You've likely got at least one migration under your belt. So, what's the big deal?

Let's just face it — cloud migration isn't easy. And change makes people nervous — particularly if that change is going to impact their daily lives.

In hindsight, many decision-makers say they would have made different strategic decisions during their first cloud migration. Many others say they wish they'd had access to more information during the process.

Therefore, the resistance on all sides to cloud migration is reasonable. There are very real needs for access to more information, for ensuring that any business risks are negated and, critically, for making certain that any cloud migration will be highly effective in meeting business objectives.

Who do you need to convince?

Getting cloud migration projects over the line has become much harder due to the fact that signoff is now the domain of all or several functions of the business. From HR and sales to marketing and finance, there are many approvals to orchestrate.

And that's because IT strategy is now business strategy.

IT impacts reach far and wide. Therefore, it's imperative for a larger pool of business leaders to understand the technologies they adopt, which means the number of influencers and decision makers for IT projects has grown, too. You're more than likely used to dealing with the demands and questions of your organisation's senior leadership team because of the impacts cloud migrations have across each department or function.

What are some of their concerns?

You've probably encountered the standard questioning around the reasons why you're undertaking certain initiatives. But more and more, line of business executives need a deeper understanding of the impacts

of cloud migration. With the requirement for a deeper understanding comes a requirement for you as the IT leader to make and spend time educating stakeholders about cloud migration.

There will inevitably be concerns around having data off site, particularly if you're planning on moving mission critical applications into the cloud. People naturally get nervous about who's holding onto and looking after their data.

There will also be large concerns about potential downtime to critical applications too. As part of any organisation's transformation to the cloud, availability is a priority, particularly for line of business leaders. These leaders need to know that they (and their customers, if relevant), can access services that help ensure the business operates to its full potential.

Perhaps the biggest concern business leaders have is making sure they have the right (and enough) information to make the best decisions during the migration process. Lack of proper information was cited as one of the biggest concerns from our 2017 cloud migration study of 204 Australian C-level executives.

While these are just some of the high level concerns your stakeholders will have, let's turn our attention to our assessment tool below. This provides far greater depth around the various questions you need to ask and steps to take, to place IT firmly on the front foot. To negate, rather than react to any concerns.

Covered over the following pages are three assessment scorecards to help you understand how you rate in terms of preparedness for your cloud migration strategy across a range of stakeholders.

See how you stack up with your current plans and identify areas where you could improve your strategy to align with their own thought process.

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Assessment #1: The CEO/CFO

While you've likely dealt with senior business leaders in the past, it doesn't do any harm to delve deeper into their mindset and build up a bank of new tactics to combat their concerns. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you meet regularly with your CEO / CFO to update them on your cloud strategy and plans for migration of workloads and applications?

2. Have you drafted a communications plan outlining specific stages of the cloud migration process and its potential impacts on the business?

3. Do you discuss plans for business growth and margin expansion as part of your cloud migration strategy?

4. Have you discussed how you could use any anticipated long-term cost savings from the use of the cloud to fund growth opportunities elsewhere in the business?

5. Do you discuss whether the short-term costs of cloud migration can be covered by efficiencies created elsewhere?

6. Have you provided detailed analyses of the impact the cloud migration could have on productivity, both during and after the completion of the migration process?

7. Have you communicated the explicit benefits the organisation will gain once the migration process is complete?

8. Similarly, is your CEO / CFO aware of all the costs of the migration process, including any potential contingency spend?

9. Cloud migration is complex and comes with many unknowns. Have you considered more than just the cost of the implementation and ROI of the project?

10. Does your CEO have complete confidence that any migration of critical workloads / applications to the cloud are completely safe and secure?

Count how many times you answered "**yes**" to the above questions and give yourself one point for each positive answer.

0-3 points
You still have a lot of work to do to bring your senior leaders on board with your cloud migration project(s). Planning is essential. The conversation at present is likely focused on cost savings and benefits of cloud migration, rather than a wider, holistic view of what cloud can offer the business in the long term.

4-7 points
You meet with your senior leaders regularly and the conversation centres more on cloud as an innovation tool. Yet, there are still concerns and hesitations. You may have a plan in place and have begun to communicate it, however, further work needs to be done to convince your leaders about the explicit benefits of cloud migration. The conversation has to go wider and look at the longer-term growth opportunities afforded by a move to the cloud.

8-10 points
You're well on the way towards becoming a strategic leader within the business. Supporting its long-term objectives, you have the full support of your senior leadership team. While a few concerns may still exist about security, the conversation pushes beyond merely cost savings. You're able to articulate productivity benefits and the shift of IT from an operational to innovation-based function that supports and enables the business.

Three tips to win over your CEO/CFO

1. **Create and build your executive's story** for them. Think about the role cloud migration plays in how they deliver their story to the organisation's stakeholders. Cost comparisons of cloud to on-premises data centres are just one part of the story. Give your executive a sense for how cloud impacts plans for growth and margin expansion.

2. **Timing and trade-offs are critical** when making cloud decisions. At what point does it make the best financial sense to migrate to public cloud? The answer comes down to trade-offs across a variety of factors. These range from short-term migration costs to long-term efficiencies, the risk of under-utilised assets, compliance costs associated with on-premises infrastructure, and the ability to meet demand growth for IT services. Having all the data on-hand to run through with your business leaders will help ensure better decision-making.

3. **Communicate the value of cloud in terms of supply-chain cost**. Cloud changes how IT serves and delivers to the business – it's not simply a turn-on-and-off capability if costs begin to escalate. There's an entire supply chain to consider, too. From investments in network bandwidth increases, labour and retraining, to licensing model changes, and application refactoring. If you're making a serious investment in cloud, your senior business leaders must understand the wider cost implications.

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Assessment #2: The COO

You may not have had too much interaction with your COO in the past. But, as they're increasingly tasked with understanding how to make the organisation more efficient, technology is now a core part of answering that question. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have you discussed how the migration to cloud will change and improve organisational processes and create greater efficiencies over the long-term?

2. Do you have a risk mitigation plan in place for both during and after the migration process?

3. Does your COO have all of the right information they require with particular relevance to compliance regulations and being able to vouch for the integrity of the business' risk controls?

4. Do you have the right plans and procedures in place to help ensure the organisation's people and processes can adapt to the change?

5. Have you considered and communicated the timing and tradeoffs of cloud migration across a variety of variables?

6. Do you have discussions about your multi-cloud strategy and the potential cost an¬d complexity challenges that could arise?

7. To what extent has your COO been across contract negotiation and KPIs with your external cloud suppliers?

8. Is your COO involved in conversations you have with line of business heads to help ensure both short- and long-term strategic objectives are matched with the right technology investments?

9. Have you explained to your COO the value of cloud in terms of supply chain cost?

10. When outlining the role of cloud and its potential to provide gains in terms of time to market, is your COO aware of the varying factors that influence the decisions and the potential trade-offs your business may have to make?

Count how many times you answered "**yes**" to the above questions and give yourself one point for each positive answer.

0-3 points

Your COO is not as involved in the cloud discussions as he / she should be. Is that because they don't consider IT as much as they should? Or have you simply not communicated much with them? Conversations probably exist only at a high level. You need to be having far deeper and more meaningful discussions with your COO to ensure they're across the entire concept of the cloud supply chain and the efficiencies to be gained. Do they understand how technology can have a major impact on their ability to deliver more gains to the organisation?

4-7 points

Conversations are taking place at a far deeper level and you're rightfully considering the impact of cloud across the entire organisation and how it will deliver on its promised benefits. Training and upskilling of staff is on the agenda, and your planning centres on the long-term strategic growth of the business brought. You don't view cloud as a resource that can be simply switched on or off.

8-10 points

You have a strong and close relationship with your COO, ensuring they're across contract negotiations and the delivery of cloud as a long-term strategic resource. You have made data-driven decisions to work out the best time to switch applications and workloads to the cloud for maximum efficiency gains. As a result, while cost will always be a factor, because of the great understanding your COO has of what cloud can do, he / she is fully supportive of way in which IT can deliver at speed and how IT can improve time to market for the products and services your organisation offers.

Three tips to win over your COO

1. **Emphasise immediate transparency** around the cost and complexity of cloud. Be completely clear with your plans and ensure the longer-term vision and all of its associated costs and complexity are clearly outlined up front. It makes conversations about delivery and expectations far more palatable during the process, should things not go completely to plan.

2. **Make risk mitigation** an essential part of your COO planning conversations. No one likes nasty surprises, particularly a COO who has to ensure all of the right risk controls are in place within your business. You need to plan for any eventuality during and after the migration, whether it presents a threat to the business in terms of meeting compliance regulations or if it fails to deliver on the efficiencies promised.

3. **Emphasise how cloud is a better way of doing things**, rather than offering the same services through a digital platform. The COO wants to know that what you're doing is game-changing and that, going forward, you will be doing things more efficiently. He / she is constantly caught between two worlds. One is focused on being highly flexible and agile, preparing for the future; the other retains a deep focus on efficiency and managing present priorities.

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Assessment #3: Line of business/management

Line of business heads span a variety of departments and disciplines. Knowing and understand every facet of their job is hard. There are multiple considerations to be accounted for, particularly if the cloud migration impacts a number of functions. The education process is two-way. While you need to understand their requirements for cloud, they need to understand what's achievable and what it costs to deliver those requirements — not just in financial terms, but resources too. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have detailed discussions taken place and plans been made for the exact usage and proposed benefits to be gained from a cloud migration with line of business heads?

2. Have you discussed the impact to everyday operations with each line of business head?

3. Does each department head understand the implications of any potential downtime?

4. Have you had detailed discussions about new ways of working with cloud-based applications and implemented the appropriate training and upskilling required?

5. Do you have contingency plans in place for any failure in the plans / process?

6. Have you and your line of business heads accounted for the potential for significant demand and growth in cloud services post-implementation and how you're going to manage this?

7. Have you begun discussions with line of business heads to understand how IT can now play a different role in helping them to achieve their objectives i.e., a focus on innovation rather than operations?

8. Do your line of business heads understand the trade-off between IT's ability to deliver at speed and how much they're prepared to pay for that capability?

9. Are you communicating consistently with line of business heads as to cloud migration progress, adherence to timelines or budgets, and the effectiveness of efforts to meet departmental objectives?

10. Do line of business heads understand the concepts of cloud visibility and observability in the increasingly more complex environments you'll be operating? And, have you jointly made plans to ensure they gain a level of visibility they're happy with?

Count how many times you answered "**yes**" to the above questions and give yourself one point for each positive answer.

0-3 points
The key to any successful implementation is communication and planning. At this stage, there's likely not much of this going on. And, should something not go according to plan with the migration, there may be some nasty surprises for these department heads to deal with.

4-7 points
Consultation and planning are happening on a regular basis and you're prepared for the worst, too. These department heads also likely gain from your ability to communicate the proposed benefits of cloud migration. Training and upskilling is likely to be firmly on the agenda as well.

8-10 points
Not only are you fully prepared for the cloud migration, but your department heads have fully acknowledged your ability to deliver IT at speed and how that will align to their objectives. You're also planning for the next phase of growth and how IT can deliver that — not just in terms of cost, but also from technical delivery and cost perspectives, too.

Three tips to win over your line of business heads

1. **Communicate in terms 'what's in it for them'** and how IT should be considered an enabler of business strategy and deliver on their objectives and goals. All too often, IT is viewed as an operational cost centre rather than a business innovator. Cloud is the perfect opportunity to dispel those thoughts, but also done in tandem with the support of the business.

2. **Provide reassurance and be understanding of their concerns** about cloud migration. One of the biggest things for line of business heads to rationalise is how applications and workloads close to their mode of operation will be delivered via the cloud. Concerns around not being able to 'see' these applications, the data that's contained within them, and the potential impacts if there's downtime need to be handled with empathy and importantly, a plan.

3. **Consider all staff within each department** and work with your line of business head to build a plan around the communication to staff. Address the reasons for the changes and how they'll affect them. Highlight the benefits to their team and to the wider company, and the types of differences they'll notice as a result. Then let them know where they can go for further information and potential training.

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Planning for your cloud migration

Of course, nothing helps deal with the apprehensions and concerns of the wider business than making sure everyone understands your cloud migration plan. This five-step process can serve as a starting point for the journey ahead.

1. **Appoint a migration lead**
   The migration lead role is typically assigned to someone in a systems architect position. This person is responsible for planning and completing all aspects of the migration. There are many decisions and plans to be considered. Having a migration architect who is responsible for this is critical to the success of the project.

2. **Consider what you do and don't want to migrate**
   Not every application or workload is suitable for the cloud. While some are perfect for the improved flexibility and scalability benefits, more mission-critical applications may need to stay on premises. This is where operating a hybrid cloud environment can be beneficial and is certainly a fast-growing option for many organisations. In fact, By 2020, Gartner analysts predict that 90% of organisations will adopt a hybrid infrastructure.

3. **Evaluate the total cost**
   While cloud is often touted as providing greater cost efficiencies, that's only true for certain applications. As part of this guide, we talk in depth about the cloud supply chain. Cloud isn't simply about buying space for your applications to run, there are a whole host of knock-on costs that need to be considered as part of any migration.

4. **Address governance and security**
   Many businesses focus their security concerns on how safe the public cloud is. But security and governance go far deeper. If you're running a hybrid environment for example, you need to consider the interfaces between applications running across the different environments and ensure appropriate and consistent controls are applied.

5. **Build backup and recovery plans**
   Notions around a lack of visibility of applications in the cloud, coupled with the discomfort of potentially losing applications and data mean that backup and recovery are essential parts of your planning. Check to see what, if any, backup services already exist within your supplier contracts, and monitor the frequency of your backups, too. Also, ensure that your provider's physical location adheres to any legal or regulatory requirements you may have.

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Planning and communication are the core tenets of successful cloud migration

Cloud migration isn't easy. With multiple voices to listen to across multiple parts of the business, it can often feel like an overwhelming task that's impossible to deliver on. But as with anything in life, communication and planning are vital to success. Yet, these are often the most overlooked parts of any migration. We know — senior business leaders have told us.

Along with strong communication and planning across your business, you'll need to have a great team behind you — not just within the IT department. That means that you'll need to bring on board the rest of the business, too. With IT strategy as a focal point for a successful business, the better you can educate your biggest critics, the more support you'll gain along the delivery process.

Think, too, of the bigger picture, and not just the immediate benefits that can be realised. Business leaders want to see how IT can truly enable the organisation to deliver faster, more efficiently and for less cost than before. That's not to say they're putting pressure on you to deliver the impossible. More so, they simply see the huge benefits to be had from recognising IT as a serious strategic partner to the delivery of core services across the business.

Your goal should be to listen, consult and deliver these benefits while ensuring expectations are in line with what's possible. You'll have to address each leader's concerns and win them over.

About Rackspace

At Rackspace, we accelerate the value of the cloud during every phase of digital transformation. By managing apps, data, security and multiple clouds, we are the best choice to help customers get to the cloud, innovate with new technologies and maximise their IT investments. As a recognised Gartner Magic Quadrant leader, we are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the complex reality of today and the promise of tomorrow. Passionate about customer success, we provide unbiased expertise, based on proven results, across all the leading technologies. And across every interaction worldwide, we deliver Fanatical Experience.™ Rackspace Australia has been honoured in the top 20 Great Places to Work Australia for the past 7 years.

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