

ACHIEVING THE RIGHT BALANCE WITH MULTI-CLOUD

Maybe there are a few enterprises able to stick solely to a public or solely to a private cloud strategy, but most of us are likely struggling with hitting the optimal balance—a mixed environment comprising public cloud, private cloud, and on-premise resources. Determining how to achieve the right mix of resources is one challenge; another is figuring out how to manage an environment that relies on different cloud providers and platforms for different workloads.

For example, your organizations might draw on large pools of storage and networking resources on a private cloud such as OpenStack, but use a public cloud such as Microsoft Azure or AWS for a workload that needs to scale up or down quickly.

"Multi-cloud consumption is fast becoming the new normal," [writes Colm Keegan](#), a senior analyst with Enterprise Strategy Group, citing the consultancy's research that nearly half of businesses consuming cloud infrastructure as a service are relying on several cloud providers. [Gartner estimates](#) that 70% of organizations will have multi-cloud strategies by 2019.

WELCOMING COMPLEXITY!

Why take on the added complexity of managing multiple providers? Reduced costs, increased choice, and risk mitigation, Keegan asserts. "Spreading the wealth can be a powerful way to keep your cloud providers honest," he says, also noting that IT organizations need to be able to provide choices to end-user constituencies, and to guard against service level interruptions or even service provider business failure.

"Enterprises adopt more than one type of cloud for a number of

reasons, including security, shadow IT, and the varying degrees of support from providers," [writes InformationWeek's Charles Babcock](#), who lays out six signs for when you need a multi-cloud strategy.

In most cases, [argues Carl Lehmann of 451Research](#), "Multi-cloud approaches just happened, the result of pioneering LOBs and a few IT renegades." But, he adds, that ended up being a good thing, because "the IT organization has been forced to react, to understand the value proposition of various cloud infrastructures, and to be smart about where to invest the organization's resources."

HEDGING INDUSTRY RISK

Still, there is inherent risk in dealing with service providers that may not be around for the long-haul. In [a report in the UK's Computing](#), Nick Delewski of Spirent Communications notes that, "History is filled with accounts of promising new companies with useful products and growth potential which fold due to grievous mismanagement or missed opportunities. It's also filled with acquisitions hoping to bring a solution to new heights of prominence only to be shut down after a talent exodus."

ARE YOUR SKILLS UP TO THE TASK?

With so many options available it can be challenging and time-consuming to figure out what services to obtain and how to manage them. [As SiliconAngle reports](#), at the recent AWS re:Invent conference hosted by Amazon Web Services, Rackspace CTO

John Engates observed that many companies are eager to take advantage of new cloud services but don't have the skills and expertise to do so. "[Engates] said that there is such a huge matrix of complex applications across multiple vendors, it makes it difficult to be an expert on everything."

IT organizations must figure out whether it makes sense to invest in building internally to manage skills with a wealth of opportunities, or to call in outside experts for help.