

DARE TO BE BOLD

Reap the rewards of migrating complex workloads to Azure

Over a decade into the cloud services revolution, the consensus is clear: moving to the cloud is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Businesses can choose what applications or workloads they want to migrate. The control is theirs – it's just a matter of knowing what they want to achieve and having the right strategy to achieve it.

Our recent research on cloud migration shows that, for the most part, cloud projects in Australia go according to plan, meeting time and budget requirements. Of those businesses that had already migrated workloads to the cloud, 37 per cent said that the project took less than three months to implement, with 80 per cent saying the migration met their business goals. In contrast, a similar study in the U.K. found that just five per cent of migrations were completed within three months, and only 58 per cent felt their business goals were met.

These findings indicate that Australia has made a solid start in the successful delivery of back-office and operational systems. Twelve months ago, the main types of workloads being migrated to the cloud were "test and dev" environments and web-facing applications. Today, a larger number of businesses are placing mission-critical back-office applications in the cloud. Also, 50 per cent of Australian businesses have placed or are looking to place analytics and business intelligence into the cloud.

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Both adoption and confidence in the cloud are trending in the right direction; but even so, many Australian businesses are failing to realise all the benefits made possible by a cloud-driven service delivery model. It would be unfair to say that we are simply picking the low hanging fruit when it comes to cloud migrations, but there is an opportunity for businesses to move things up a notch.

It's not a matter of simply lifting and shifting more workloads to the cloud. And not every application or workload is suited for the cloud. But the greater the risk, the greater the reward. While you don't want to place all your eggs in one basket, there are many more workloads that would benefit from the flexibility and scalability of a leading cloud service such as Microsoft Azure. This includes line-of-business (LOB) applications, for example, as well as data and analytics. By moving these workloads to the cloud, you benefit from greater processing power and possible IT cost savings.

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Moving existing LOB applications to the cloud can be a daunting task though. Differences in execution environments, application remediation efforts and unfamiliar functionality can all combine to make the process more difficult than it needs to be. For larger organisations, this might be particularly uneasy, especially if the LOB applications have been customised specifically to suit the business process needs of that organisation, as is often the case.

With regards to moving data and analytics workloads to the cloud, businesses will benefit from greater processing power and potentially lower their IT costs. They can also get more out of their analytics data and start to build a connected view of their customers and operations, bringing in everything from Customer Relationship Management through to Internet of Things data.

Those leading in cloud adoption have already migrated customer facing applications, including websites, ecommerce and gaming platforms into Azure. Hosting these variable workloads in the cloud makes it easier for businesses to scale up and down and ensure maximum uptime during peak periods.

There are still other and more ambitious ways that businesses can leverage the cloud. They can move more of their internal systems to the cloud, including finance and HR applications. They can also join the growing number of businesses moving their ERP to the cloud.

Also, businesses that may only be using private cloud services may realise increased cost savings and flexibility by leveraging public or hybrid cloud. Hybrid really is the best of both worlds, but it does take planning to get the right balance of consumption.

Of course migrating what you might regard as 'riskier' applications into Azure does take time, and the risks need to be carefully managed. Businesses need to think about resiliency and scalability and have a plan for backing up and recovering systems and data. Depending on the data, they also need to consider customer privacy concerns and regulations.

DON'T JUST MIGRATE, TRANSFORM YOUR APPLICATIONS

What's most important is that businesses develop and maintain a cloud strategy tailored and aligned to their business strategy and technology aims. They should think about transforming and not just migrating applications. They should also seek out the right expertise both inside and outside the business to extract maximum reward while minimising risk.

Microsoft Azure provides a rich Platform-as-a-Service environment to make application migration not only easy but advantageous over on-premises solutions for more complex workloads. It allows IT departments to focus efforts on their custom applications, not the platform they run on.

Using Azure for infrastructure and Rackspace for support is the ultimate solution to keep businesses on the cutting edge in the most cost-effective and reliable way possible. Rackspace helps you to run production workload applications on Azure, reducing complexities by providing planning, guidance and implementation support. From a technical standpoint, Rackspace brings additional layers of support to the Azure platform in the form of ongoing architecture design with a plethora of Microsoft-Certified experts.

We also help to greatly reduced risk in your business by deploying managed services like patching, monitoring, a 15-minute response time SLA, and proactive notifications on top of Microsoft Azure to reduce your risk of downtime.

But it's at the business level where migrating complex workloads to Azure with Rackspace can really pay off, giving you the ability to focus scarce resources on innovation and business growth by offloading Azure support management to your team at Rackspace.

This in turn will help you to maximise your return on investment, allowing your apps to realise better performance, reliability, uptime and cost effectiveness.

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace, the #1 managed cloud company, helps businesses tap the power of cloud computing without the challenge and expense of managing complex IT infrastructure and application platforms on their own. Rackspace engineers deliver specialized expertise on top of leading technologies developed by OpenStack®, Microsoft®, VMware® and others, through a results-obsessed service known as Fanatical Support®.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com/en-au/microsoft/managed-azure-cloud or call us at 1800-722-577.

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