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# Cracking the cloud conundrum

*Optimising your environment with Highlander and Microsoft Azure*

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When cloud computing first emerged, early adopters were understandably attracted by the increased agility and accessibility that public cloud services such as Microsoft Azure could deliver.

Commercial flexibility was also a key motivator. The consumption-based, pay-as-you-go nature of cloud promised a predictability of cost and a shift to OPEX expenditure that wasn't attainable with on-premises alternatives.

Over time, the popularity of cloud has continued to grow, and this has only accelerated as new working models have taken root, with businesses seeing cloud services as the most obvious way to deliver the technology solutions needed. Gartner has forecasted that global spending on cloud services will increase by 23.1% in 2021<sup>1</sup>.

Equally, those who have already adopted the cloud are in search of new ways to create value, size services closer to the edge, understand where further cost savings can be realised and harness further innovation as part of a cloud 2.0 strategy. 70% of organisations using cloud services are expecting to increase cloud spending this year<sup>2</sup>, but adopting new services doesn't mean that you can't enjoy cost savings along the way.



## Making the case for cloud

With an upward trend already in full swing, the potential benefits of cloud adoption are well known to many. That said, for those yet to migrate, or early adopters who have not yet realised the full potential, it's well worth re-establishing the key benefits of the cloud:

### Agile

With cloud-based platforms and applications, your people enjoy easier access to the resources they need from any location, across any device. Additionally, you can provision new resources more quickly, and there's also ready-made tools to better support more flexible working.

### Scalable

The scalability of virtualised cloud environments allows you to utilise only the resources required at any given moment, with the flexibility to scale up and down as required.

### Predictable

The pay-as-you-go cloud computing model sees that you only pay for what you use, meaning that you can better predict the real-time commercial implications of an increase or reduction in capacity.

### Resilient

The cloud hyperscalers are building host platforms that are very resilient, and often much more so than typical on-premises environments. When availability is everything, cloud is an attractive prospect in this regard.



# Why you need to get your strategy right

Done right cloud offers much to your business. Done badly you'll migrate problems, overprovision, and fall foul of metered billing. Thorough planning is the first and all-important step to realising everything the cloud has to offer.

Good planning goes beyond lifting and shifting what you have today. A thorough assessment that explores the interdependencies that exist between applications, evaluates portability of workloads and considers operations once in the cloud is essential. These are just some of the critical success factors of a comprehensive migration strategy.

Operating in the cloud is different to on-premises, so plans must reflect this. With on-premises, capacity planning is a perennial problem, so over-provisioning is commonplace. 'Just-in-case' capacity ties up capital in redundant resources and creates additional maintenance overheads. Getting the best out of the cloud means sizing closer to the edge of your true capacity needs and trusting that anything extra is on tap when you need it.

Similarly, a natural product of on-premises infrastructure growth is data sprawl and pockets of data that may not need to be migrated to the cloud. Data that is obsolete, redundant, or duplicated will bloat data stored in the cloud, resulting in further unnecessary expense.

Overlooking these considerations, or rushing to migrate without due care, could ultimately limit your ability to access the true operational and financial benefits of cloud infrastructure. Accordingly, your cloud strategy must address these crucial questions:

- How much of my data is ready for migration to the cloud, and what is best suited to on-premises?
- How much of my data needs to be restructured before migration?
- Which areas of my environment are duplicated or no longer required?
- What dependencies exist within my environment, and which workloads need to live and exist together?
- Where can opportunities to optimise and consolidate be realised?

## Building your cloud with Microsoft Azure

Microsoft Azure is a world-class suite of interoperable cloud-native services deployed across every area of your IT estate – compute, network, and storage.

A consumption-based service, Microsoft Azure sees that you only pay for the resources you use, with the flexibility to scale capacity up and down as and when required.

Your cloud architecture can deliver Microsoft Productivity apps as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), support an extended infrastructure with Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) or provide

the tools to develop and customise applications in the cloud with Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS).

Azure offers over 200 additional cloud computing products and services spanning everything from IoT device monitoring, to DevOps, AI, and media services for cloud-based video hosting and analysis.

It's the complete platform, ready to be built around your unique requirements.

### Flexible

Regardless of the Azure services you access, you enjoy the freedom to scale resource up and down as required. There's also ready-made solutions for hybrid and multi-cloud integration, and native platforms for cloud-based desktop virtualisation with Azure Virtual Desktop.

### Secure

Backed by a team of over 3,500 security experts, Azure is secured from the ground up. Multi-layered enterprise-level security is applied across every area of the service, with access to over 90 different compliance offerings. Its core privacy policy also gives you complete peace of mind that the data you share is yours.

### Future-ready

Azure is built for innovation. An open-source approach allows support for multiple languages and frameworks, giving you license to build and develop applications with integrated development environments.

# Optimising your environment with our Cloud Assessments

Analysing your environment ahead of any cloud migration might seem like a complicated undertaking, but our Cloud Assessments remove the complexity.

Available to those already in the cloud, or those looking to migrate, we'll generate a complete report that gives you everything you need to undertake your cloud project successfully.

## We offer two different Cloud Assessments depending upon where you are in your cloud journey:

### Cloud Readiness Assessment

Ideal for those adopting cloud for the first time, we'll undertake a thorough review of your existing on-premises environment to outline the best route to migration.

Using native tools such as Microsoft Azure Migrate, we'll conduct an in-depth analysis to assess current utilisation within your infrastructure, and identify where any changes or restructuring is required. Crucially, we'll also flag up key dependencies where they exist to outline which datasets are best migrated together, as well as pinpointing any workloads that are not suitable for the cloud.

We'll then create and deliver a complete migration plan, with actionable next steps and an estimated timeframe.

### Cloud Optimisation Assessment

For those already in the cloud, our Cloud Optimisation Assessment will help you rationalise and reassess your existing environment to identify new opportunities and realise greater efficiencies.

Following an initial Cloud Health Check, we'll assess your existing environment to identify any areas for restructure and data reduction to help right-size your cloud and reduce your ongoing consumption costs.

Where possible, we'll also suggest potential alternatives for Line of Business apps with cloud-ready alternatives from Azure Native Services.

## Take the next step on your cloud journey

Wherever you are on your cloud journey, our expert team is here to help. To learn more about Microsoft Azure, or to get started with one of our Cloud Assessments, simply get in touch with a member of the team.

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References | <sup>1</sup> Gartner press release 21st April 2021. <sup>2</sup> Gartner press release 17th November 2020.