



# Journey to the cloud:

Top three roadblocks in enterprise  
cloud strategy

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# Introduction

Ready or not, the cloud is already a vital part of your organization. And it's no surprise, given cloud-based apps and web services were explicitly designed for easy access. They're like cookies in an unattended jar – too tempting for business units to ignore, easy to reach, and offering a flavor for everyone.

But what happens when business units leave your internal IT group out of decisions that involve cloud consumption? Without a cohesive plan, you could be facing a cloud free-for-all, with a potpourri of monthly subscription costs, siloed processes, and data everywhere. Even worse, you could see challenges with compliance, data protection, and recovery that threaten the security of your organization.

Of course, creating and implementing a unified cloud strategy isn't easy. The parts of your organization that could benefit the most may stall your efforts before they even get off the ground, whether it's due to fear of change, lack of ownership, or confusion about strategy.

Today, most enterprises realize that the cloud can offer major business and IT benefits. In fact, 70 percent of organizations want to migrate to the cloud, and most of them want to take a hybrid approach – using a combination of public and private cloud resources.<sup>1</sup> When implemented as part of a holistic strategy, cloud services can make your operations more agile, help you use resources more efficiently, and improve business outcomes.

That said, creating and fulfilling a cloud strategy requires a big transition in technology, mindset, and process. Datalink has identified the top three roadblocks we see in building an enterprise cloud strategy:

- 1. Goals for cloud services are undefined.** Do you want to save money? Gain agility? Improve service delivery for customers? You'll need to form a team to explore and answer these questions.
- 2. Teams don't want to change processes.** Too much change at once can be like trying to boil the ocean. You may need to start with low-hanging fruit.
- 3. There's no clear ownership of cloud strategy.** Before you can get everyone on board, someone has to step in and lead. Communication will be key.

In this paper, we'll provide an overview of cloud trends and explore the three obstacles outlined above. We'll also offer some guidance for getting your cloud strategy off the ground – and achieving your goals faster.

# Taking control of a hybrid cloud environment

Not long ago, IT groups held the reins to all technology resources within an organization. Since then, business expectations of IT have changed. Business units see technology as more accessible; they feel more confident selecting their own resources. In one survey, 61 percent of business units said they have bypassed IT to procure their own cloud services.<sup>2</sup> Often, they're looking for faster service delivery, greater expertise, and lower cost. At the same time, IT is gaining visibility as a strategic enabler for the enterprise.

While human resources may adopt a payroll app, your sales team may be logging every activity into a CRM SaaS. These kinds of applications tend to be straightforward, with a high level of service reliability and security. But with new apps available every day, there's no telling what kind of information other teams are sharing, and through which channels. All too often, enterprises end up with a collection of disparate apps that business units have implemented on their own, without understanding the service levels available, cost, or security implications.

These teams may think they're saving time and effort by leaving IT out of it. The reality is that IT should be leading cloud adoption. As the broker of IT cloud services for the entire organization, your IT group can make sure cloud usage and costs align with business goals, while ensuring compliance, recovery, and risk management. This is known as an IT as a Service (ITaaS) model.

## Business benefits of the hybrid cloud

For most organizations, it makes sense to build a strategy around a hybrid cloud environment. Hybrid clouds offer the best of both worlds – the public cloud, which is fast and scalable, and the private cloud, which is secure, offers better service levels, and is easier to control.

A cohesive cloud strategy under the ITaaS model can help enterprises adapt to evolving needs with greater agility, while aligning IT services with business results. Cloud service delivery models that drive ITaaS can make it possible to:

- Reach new markets that were previously inaccessible
- Get new products or services to market quickly
- Gain a better understanding of customers
- Enhance service levels through faster and better access

In addition, cloud services can offer financial transparency that was never before possible with traditional IT services. That's because it's easier to map utilization of resources to results, which can ultimately reduce costs.

# Taking control of a hybrid cloud environment (cont.)

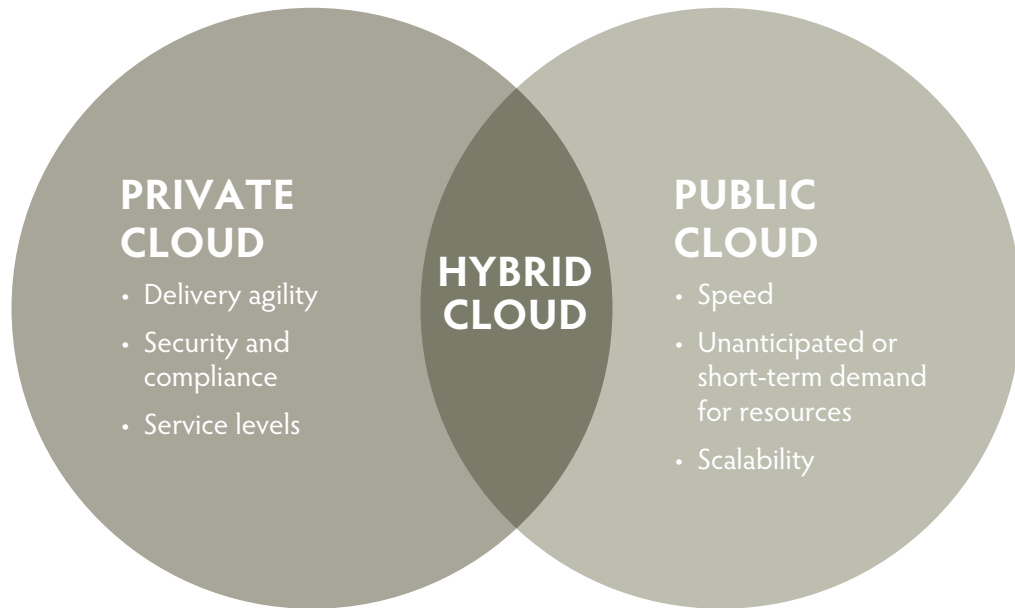
## IT benefits of the hybrid cloud

Research shows that up to 75 percent of your IT group's time is spent on maintenance.<sup>3</sup> Because cloud services are less complex than traditional infrastructure, they can offer more control with less management, freeing up time for strategic projects.

Cloud services can also make your IT group more effective by offering better visibility into IT use and challenges.

Using this information, your IT group can align resources to consumption. And when implemented correctly, cloud services can enhance security and compliance.

If the benefits of a hybrid cloud and ITaaS model are starting to sound even better to you, read on. Before reaching cloud paradise, you'll need to overcome the three obstacles that follow.



Many enterprises take a hybrid cloud approach to get the best of both public and private clouds.

# 1. Goals for cloud services are undefined.

Almost any CIO these days will tell you that cloud services need to play a larger role in their organization. The tricky question is why. Not every application should move to the cloud, and what worked for one organization may not pay off in yours. Plus, employees need to understand what's behind the strategy before they can buy into it – more on that later.

Before creating a roadmap, you'll need to form a cloud strategy team and ask participants to tackle a long list of questions. You may consider bringing in a consultant at this point to help take stock of your current IT environment, review processes, and make suggestions about cloud and alternative services.

## What are your goals?

For some, cost may be the major driving force behind cloud adoption. Others seek to gain agility and flexibility, encourage collaboration among their teams, make services more available, or tighten up security. It will take some work, but your cloud strategy team should identify and prioritize specific goals. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Reduce IT hardware and support costs
- Go to market faster
- Improve efficiency in workflow
- Empower a mobile workforce
- Improve agility and empower innovation
- Improve security, compliance, or data protection

## How will you measure success?

Once you've outlined your goals, associate metrics with each one so you can track the progress of all initiatives. For example, if your goal is to reduce data center costs, you'll want to track energy savings; hours of support needed; and the cost of hardware upgrades, software licenses, and anything else that keeps the data center running.

The possibilities for metrics are endless. Just make sure you have a concrete way to measure everything. For example, if you want to increase agility by getting resources to a business unit 90 percent faster, measure the time it takes before and after implementing cloud services to show you've met the objective. If you implement a SaaS product to help employees work with more flexibility (a less tangible goal), consider conducting surveys to measure employee satisfaction with the solution.

## What are the alternatives?

There's always an opportunity cost. Your team should identify all possible alternative options to a given cloud-based service, calculate how much they would cost in comparison, and project the likely results. If the alternative is an existing system, look at historical data.

# 1. Goals for cloud services are undefined. (cont.)

## What moves and what stays?

Now that you've identified goals, metrics, and alternatives, you're ready to make an informed decision about what should go to the cloud. Not everything will make the cut. Your team should determine which applications will increase efficiency, lower costs, improve service, or meet your other goals.

## What goes public, and what goes private?

Once you know which applications will move to (or launch on) the cloud, decide whether each one should be hosted on a public or private cloud. For some applications – such as Salesforce.com and Office 365 – it's an easy choice, with SaaS offering high service, accessibility, and security. Other applications may offer more control or a higher SLA when hosted on a private cloud. In general, applications that are always on will be more cost-effective in private clouds, while short-term or burst workloads can benefit from flexible public cloud services.

## Forming a cloud strategy team

Start strong with a politically savvy move. Enlist employees from different parts of your organization to form a cloud strategy team. Here are some things to consider:

- **Invite collaborative innovators.** Members of this team should show enthusiasm for the cloud. However, they should also understand what's at stake and be willing to think critically – even if that means pushing back when they have concerns.
- **Let them answer questions.** Your C-suite may think they already know the answers, but chances are the members of your cloud strategy team have their feet more firmly planted on the ground.
- **Enlist a vendor or consultant.** You can make a consultant part of your team from day one, or you could take a few meetings to ramp up, so you better know where to start with your vendor.

## 2. Teams don't want to change processes.

Change doesn't come easily for most people, especially when it involves the way they work. Your newly minted cloud strategy will cause some processes to change, so expect some employees (or entire departments) to resist. It's only natural they'd worry about cloud services replacing their roles or expertise – or even threatening their job security.

If you encounter resistance, try to understand where it's coming from. Ask a few questions to dig deeper:

- How is the process done today?
- Does it work as well as it can?
- Is there something about the new cloud service that is doomed to fail?

The cloud is inherently disruptive, and the key to disruption is a good plan – along with lots of communication. Help teams understand why a particular

cloud approach is a good change, and focus on the benefits. If you can't explain why the disruption is positive, maybe it's time to go back to the drawing board.

You may also need to take smaller steps. While your cloud strategy team should never lose sight of the big picture, consider starting with individual processes or applications rather than trying to move everything to the cloud at once. This bottom-up approach may feel more natural to employees who are wary of change.



### 3. There's no clear ownership of cloud strategy.

Even with a good plan, there may still be some fear or confusion about your cloud strategy. Now is the time to inspire confidence. Designate someone to take ownership of the strategy, communicate its benefits, and alleviate any anxiety about what it means.

#### **Who will best serve as your head of cloud strategy?**

Most likely, it will be your CIO or the leader of your IT group. This person will lead your cloud strategy team to:

- Define and communicate goals
- Choose new members of the team
- Evaluate vendors or consultants
- Track metrics and communicate progress
- Keep everyone motivated and focused on goals

Most importantly, this person will be the face of your cloud initiative, so make sure he or she is comfortable taking on this role and has the time and resources to be successful.

# Summary

## Taking the next steps

As your cloud strategy takes shape, your team will need to continue making decisions from both a technological and organizational perspective. If you haven't already enlisted support from a vendor, now is the time to take advantage of that guidance. Here are some additional questions you'll need to answer:

- Which cloud services should be on premise, and which should be off premise?
- How will you integrate new cloud services with existing technology?
- How will you work with vendors, and what services will you purchase?
- What is the process for selecting new applications?
- Should you choose an approach aligned with a specific platform or technology, such as VMware®, Microsoft®, or Cisco®?

Keep in mind that moving to the cloud is a journey. Steps must build upon each other and follow an overall strategy. When you work with a cloud vendor such as Datalink, you'll get help setting high-level objectives that align with your overall business goals. You'll also get knowledgeable recommendations to help you make decisions faster. Finally, by choosing a complete cloud vendor, you can simplify deployments by getting storage and services all in one place.

## Datalink Cloud Complete streamlines decision-making

With Cloud Complete, Datalink helps enterprises migrate to ITaaS by consolidating and simplifying dozens of cloud technology decisions. Cloud Complete is an end-to-end solution that includes:

- Converged infrastructure, including Cisco compute and network solutions, hypervisor, storage, and Intel® Xeon® processor-based servers
- A self-service portal with basic OS and application offering for quick start-up
- Management and orchestration for private and hybrid service delivery
- Support and implementation services
- Advanced services to align business initiatives and specific business unit needs

Cloud Complete takes into account your existing strategy, investments, and data center components so you can leverage more of your resources. It customizes your private cloud with a ramp to the hybrid cloud, giving you more flexibility and customization than with public cloud services alone. All this helps you move to an ITaaS model faster. Many of the enterprises that work with Datalink are able to deliver a cloud architecture within weeks.

# Why Datalink?

## Datalink Cloud Complete

By working with Datalink, you can leverage our extensive experience in cloud environments – from orchestration to management and automation – to accelerate and ease your transition to the cloud. We help architect solutions that enable your IT organization to focus on the strategic initiatives that matter most to your business. With Cloud Complete, you can increase business agility and improve operational efficiency with a cloud solution that serves as the foundation for ITaaS.

We operate in more than 35 U.S. cities and offer more than 25 years of data center expertise. Learn more about Datalink at [www.datalink.com](http://www.datalink.com), or see what we can do for you by calling us at 800-448-6314.

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1 Gartner Data Center 2014, poll of enterprise accounts.

2 Christensen, K. and Rossi, B. "6 Tips to Avoiding Rogue IT," Information Age, Feb. 26, 2014.

3 Bartels, A. and Murphy, P. "Tame Your Tech MOOSE Before The BT Agenda Makes It Bigger," Forrester, May 13, 2015.

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