Cloud Migration.

4 easy steps to seamlessly transition to the cloud.

Greater flexibility, the ability to scale up or down, improved cost management, enhanced security and improved operational efficiency are just a few of the multiple benefits of cloud computing. As a result, countless organisations have started taking migrating to the cloud seriously.

However, building a defined cloud strategy is not always simple. Your organisation's objectives will mandate your cloud strategy, which will be intrinsically complex. People and processes must adapt, having complete visibility of IT infrastructure and estimating the true cost are some of the key challenges your IT department will face.

Knowing where to start is the next hurdle, you may be unsure of how ready your staff, systems and processes are for cloud adoption. Cloud computing represents a shift from the traditional way of thinking about IT resources, and transitioning requires careful planning. Cloud migration can also include transitioning from one provider's cloud to another.

Navigate your journey to the cloud.

Step 1: Determine the best fit

A primary benefit of the cloud is that it lets you configure your deployment in a way that makes the most sense for your organisation. By aligning the right workloads with the right cloud platform, significant improvements in workplace efficiency as well as cost effectiveness in your organisation's overall IT infrastructure can be achieved.

However, the cloud is not one size fits all, it's important to understand which type of cloud suit your organisation's priorities the most, and a more detailed assessment is always needed. For example, assessing enterprise environment, infrastructure, workloads, as well as applications for cloud readiness allows organisations to determine what can, and cannot be readily moved to a cloud environment plus what delivery models (public, private, or hybrid) can be supported.

Here are some good questions to be considered during the investigation stage of cloud migration: which applications would you migrate to the cloud? Will they perform well in the cloud or, for instance, do they depend on your current, customised on-premise infrastructure?

Older applications may not be supported by your target cloud, so make sure the cloud platform you're migrating to suits your unique business case and supports your application. Also, consider whether the data you want to move to the cloud is right for the cloud. For example, highly sensitive data may require a more secure deployment.

Step 2: Evaluate investment and risk

Weigh up the existing investment in your on-premise data centre and consider the costs of moving to the cloud to determine whether it's right for your organisation.

For many smaller or younger companies, migrating to the cloud can be an easy decision. With cloud computing, you can quickly gain access to enterprise-class resources on a pay-as-you-go basis — resources that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive. For many larger organisations who have already adopted cloud, it's always the question of how can existing cloud services be optimised in a cost-effective way?

And the following two points are always worth considering throughout your cloud journey.

- Estimate overall total cost of ownership (TCO) of running applications on-premise as opposed to migrating some or all of those to the cloud; labour, infrastructure, tools, IT resources, data security and training should be considered.

- Calculate the Return on Investment (ROI) of migration from on-premise to cloud.

Step 3: Start to migrate

You've assessed your environment, workloads, applications (and their dependencies), completed the TCO and ROI analysis and you've accurately planned your cloud migration strategy. Now it's time to put that preparation into action.

While everything looks good on paper, it's the successful zero-downtime migration of a production application—with live users—that forms the trust test, ultimately determining if the migration is labelled a success.

Risk mitigation
When migrating to the cloud, an organisation must evaluate its security and regulatory compliance needs and plan its deployment accordingly. When you migrate to the cloud, you'll be relying less on your organisation's internal security and control, so you'll need to work with your provider to ensure the right levels of security and compliance are maintained. For example, if your organisation is managing sensitive data, you may need dedicated hardware, software and networking equipment (private cloud) in your deployment — or a public cloud that offers compliance tools and resources that are specific to your industry.

Consider starting small
You'll need to have a migration time line for moving to the cloud. While some organisations choose to migrate everything at once, it can be easier — and less risky — to migrate one application or workload at a time. For example, you may choose to start with less critical workloads like a development and test environment rather than your production environment. Virtualisation can also simplify your migration. It can be much easier to move various workloads to the cloud if they've already been virtualised within your on-premises environment.

Migrating from one cloud provider to another
You may already be taking advantage of cloud computing. If so, your cloud migration scenario could involve transitioning from one cloud provider to another. Over time, you may find that your organisation's initial requirements may have changed and subsequently your organisation's IT infrastructure strategy. Exploring alternative providers may offer distinctive features and capabilities leading to improved efficiency and effectiveness. Careful consideration of how the new provider's service will benefit your environment, and a carefully planned migration will help ensure a successful transition.

Get help with cloud migration strategy and implementation
To help ensure a smooth transition, consider working with a cloud partner to get your computing environment up and running, and more importantly, help you formulate a cloud migration strategy. Kyocera is such a partner. Recognised by Microsoft as an accredited Cloud Solutions Provider, we can help you build a migration strategy and assist with the implementation of it.

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Step 4: Operate and manage cloud services

Now that your data is in cloud, your real responsibilities begin — ongoing operations management. You'll need to consider automation and orchestration, patching updates, configuration management, backup and disaster recovery, and identity management. And as with most organisations, working closely with a trusted partner can bring more value to the service.

It's vital to assess the reliability and capability of a service provider that you plan to entrust with your organisation's applications and data. Some things to consider:

- **Business health and processes:** the provider should have a track record of stability, and a formal management structure. Established risk management policies are essential, as is the provider's ability to validate compliance with all your requirements. And don't underestimate your instincts. You should trust the company. Check its reputation and research its partners. Make sure you fully understand its level of cloud experience.

- **Administration support:** your provider should be able to promise you a basic level of service that you're comfortable with. Understand its service level agreements (SLAs). The provider should also deliver performance reports and be able to track and monitor your services and any changes made to your systems. Billing should be automatic and seamless.

- **Technical capabilities and processes:** your provider should make it easy for you to deploy, manage and upgrade your environment. Also, make sure the provider is using standard APIs and data transforms; that it has a formal system for event management that's integrated with its monitoring/management system; and that the provider has documented, formal processes for requesting, logging, approving, testing and accepting changes. And even if you don't plan to use a hybrid cloud, make sure the provider can support that model in case you want it later

- **Security practices:** make sure the provider has a comprehensive security infrastructure. There should be policies and procedures in place for controlling access to provider and customer systems, as well as ones that ensure integrity of customer data. Evaluate physical security, too. Is the provider's co-located hardware protected? Do data centres have environmental safeguards to protect against disruptive events? There should also be redundant networking and power and a documented disaster recovery and business continuity plan.

There's a lot to consider when it comes to cloud migration. But a carefully planned deployment — whether it's your first foray into the cloud or you're switching to a new provider — can help your organisation get the most from your deployment.

Kyocera, a trusted cloud services partner you can rely on.

We are more than just the sum of our technology; we believe in the power of human insight and intelligence, gathered through years of experience in ICT and managed services, and the collective knowledge of our experts:

- Our team of business analysts provides access to a unique level of expertise, usually only found within software companies, including a depth of knowledge around cloud services

- Our analysts work closely with each of our customers to map out how processes can be simplified and managed based on what the business really needs and ensuring fast, seamless deployment of our solutions and managed services tailored to your business requirements.

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