



## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MIDMARKET CLOUD ADOPTION

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR IT LEADERS AND EXECUTIVES OF MIDMARKET COMPANIES, TO MAKE THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MOVING APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES TO THE CLOUD.

Agility and the ability to leverage technology can accelerate [digital business transformation](#), according to Gartner. Midmarket CIOs are in a prime position for this: their organizations have powerful agility advantages over larger enterprises, and it's far easier for them to connect and [engage with customers](#) — possibly the biggest advantage they have when it comes to digital business.

Companies of all sizes are moving applications and services to the cloud. In fact, in a recent IDG Enterprise Research Services survey, 78% of the participating IT and business leaders said they have either already made the transition or are in the process of migrating one or more on-premises apps to the cloud.

The cloud push is happening for many reasons, including the need for scalability and agility and to better manage costs. And, for many organizations, the growing pressure to migrate stems from a need to remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy. After all, today's customers have heightened service expectations.

However, agility and scalability are often difficult to achieve in cloud migrations without help. Some of the stumbling blocks or challenges, especially for midmarket companies, include:

- Dealing with complexity issues involving infrastructure limitations, legacy apps, and interoperability
- Properly allocating resources, including staff, time, and budget

- Overcoming internal politics, especially misconceptions about the cloud
- Addressing security and/or regulatory compliance concerns

Midmarket companies have unique requirements: they have fewer resources than large enterprises yet more complex IT infrastructures than small businesses. That's why it's important for midmarket organizations to develop a cloud migration strategy before moving to the cloud.

The keys to success include building the business case in advance, securing buy-in from stakeholders, and seeking assistance where best applicable. Here are five steps designed to ease the midmarket company's move to the cloud.



## STEP ONE: IDENTIFY USE CASES

The primary objective here is to clearly delineate the need for a cloud migration. The best way to accomplish this goal is to work directly with line-of-business (LOB) leaders to identify projects well suited for cloud migration.

Take the example of migrating a customer contact application to the cloud. Start by mapping the benefits—such as improving the customer experience by decreasing response times—and then highlight how the cloud will address the associated business pains, including a lack of resources or security concerns about customer data.

Be sure to consider each LOB. Although those business units that focus on improving the customer experience may have the C-suite's ear, aligning other LOB needs can actually help improve the effectiveness of customer-facing apps. For instance, although marketing may desire apps that help customize the customer experience, it's often manufacturing, engineering, or development teams that materialize this requirement.

## STEP TWO: DETERMINE SUCCESS FACTORS

After identifying the use cases that make the most sense and securing LOB buy-in, it's important to clarify measurable targets and goals associated with migration.

For instance, goals associated with migrating a customer contact application to the cloud might include reducing staff time to resolve customer issues or improving customer self-service functionality. As best possible, develop measurable targets to prove success—for example, reduce customer call wait times by two minutes or decrease the number of calls to the contact center by 10%.

## STEP THREE: ASSESS RESOURCES

The objective of assessing resources is to analyze existing infrastructure and applications to determine how cloud migration will affect people, processes, and technology. For instance, using the customer contact example, start by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the existing app and its use (externally and internally), management, and maintenance. Also consider its integration with current infrastructure.

Going through this process enables you to more realistically determine whether you have the in-house skills and expertise needed for a smooth migration and ongoing maintenance. It also identifies technology needs and defines the process by which the migration will occur. That said, it's important to assess service needs on an ongoing basis—before, during, and after the move to the cloud.

It's worth noting: if your company is lacking cloud expertise or skills, this step will highlight the business case for using a managed services provider (MSP).

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MIKE HILTON,

VP, Director of IT, GKV Communications

## STEP FOUR: ADDRESS OPTIONS

No two cloud migrations are identical, nor is the process equal among different companies. As a result, taking the time to analyze the different cloud models—public, private, hybrid—will help determine which is the best fit for the application or service under consideration.

Using the customer contact application example, there are certain security, compliance, and interoperability factors that will influence the cloud model decision. Take the time to understand specifically how each approach affects these concerns.

For instance, a private cloud may provide the necessary security for a customer contact app. But if the data within that app doesn't include personal identifiers or sensitive customer information, the company will be better off benefiting from the economies of scale afforded by a public cloud model.

Or perhaps a hybrid configuration would make the most sense—leveraging the public cloud when scalability and cost efficiencies are needed, while isolating sensitive data in the private cloud.

Industry regulations may also play a role in determining which route is most appropriate. Highly regulated industries must demonstrate compliance, which naturally includes cloud deployments. Also, international regulations have added a few wrinkles, forcing organizations to pay closer attention to how data is handled.

## STEP FIVE: MAP OUT MIGRATION

Having a roadmap is the best route to success. Establish the structure—including people, processes, and technology—as the organization goes through cloud migration, keeping the project on task while also allowing for adjustments as necessary.

Key aspects include establishing a timeframe for completion, determining who will lead the migration, and lining up outside expertise for ongoing and evolving needs.

## CONCLUSION

The cloud has become an enabling force for midmarket businesses looking to reduce complexity, improve agility, and become more competitive. A well-orchestrated cloud migration that complements rather than replaces existing infrastructure can play a pivotal role.



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“ We get the benefit of the DataBank learning curve. They are managing cloud applications for hundreds of clients, and we get that knowledge, which improves our ability to provide the best service to our clients.”

**DOUG REMPFER,**

COO, Surgical Information Systems