Agility and Security:

HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS WITH A HYBRID CLOUD STRATEGY

If you are considering modernizing your applications but unsure of your options outside a wholesale "lift and shift" approach, a hybrid cloud strategy could be your answer. It can provide options to handle your data efficiently and affordably.

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Getting Started

See if you can envision your organization in this scenario: You work for a large company. You have data from legacy applications and mobile apps stored both on premise in data centers and in the cloud. Things are working OK. You haven't had any significant data breaches or operational slow-downs so far, knock on wood. But could things run better? Faster? More affordably? Perhaps. But why upset the apple cart?

Here's why: In examining your data needs, and opening yourself up to new solutions, you might discover a whole new customer-centric approach, one that features a hybrid cloud strategy. A hybrid approach blends on-premise infrastructure with cloud-based storage capabilities, which reduces your technical debt while maintaining some of your most crucial and difficult-to-migrate legacy applications. Yet that can only happen if you can explore your cloud options and convince the stakeholders in your organization of making a change. You may have to contend with a cultural preference to keep things the same. That's natural. And to be sure, this is a big decision.

Consider that the average enterprise uses more than 1,400 cloud services, including 76 file-sharing cloud services, according to IT services provider Skyhigh. In 2016, **Skyhigh found** the use of cloud applications went up 23 percent from 2015 to 2016, and tripled since 2013. This means that cloud technology isn't going anywhere and much is at stake in getting your strategy right, perhaps the very fate of your organization.

But don't let that make you nervous. The key is to take that first step forward and see what is out there.

Managing Data Sprawl

As your organization grows, so does your technology investment. Before you know it, you have functionality spread everywhere. The risk is you have technology that isn't integrated and you have duplication, which creates waste. Here's a scenario you might relate to: A developer places data from an application test in an on-premise data center but later, to test remaining data from the application, puts those results in the cloud. So far so good. But did the developer double-back and delete the original data? Did the developer pull all the results together into one place? Or are there now two sets of data concerning the same application in one organization? And does this developer have colleagues doing similar shadow duplications along multiple software platforms? If so, you might be draining resources where you don't have to.

But don't beat yourself up over it. It happens. It's actually pretty common. Our advice: consult with a technology partner to assess your options. A hybrid cloud strategy could be the road forward you need to be on. And providers such as Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services offer many resources for choosing between public and private clouds, with variable storage capacities and price points. The right partner can help you analyze your sprawl challenges by looking at micro-transactions that take place in the public cloud and root out abandoned or non-active workloads so you can decide whether to close out the applications or reallocate them.

A hybrid cloud strategy can coordinate and automate functions throughout your organization. We're not saying that you should or should not use a hybrid cloud strategy. That's for you to decide. What we will say is this: don't be casual about your technical debt. It could be what's preventing you from entering new categories and experiencing growth.

Sifting Through Your Options

A lot of people get intimidated by the notion that a data-storage change needs to be a wholesale lift-and-shift operation. But it doesn't have to be. Often it's a smart play to leave some things where they are and move others. A hybrid cloud solution lets you carve out storage capabilities specific to your business. This could mean leaving some data on-premise in existing data centers and lifting public-facing mobile functions to the cloud. Or you could do a trial run of certain functionalities and test the performance and adjust from there. There are countless permutations. A technology partner can help you assess your options and find a solution that's right for you.

Here's a way of thinking about a hybrid cloud strategy that might help: as multi-cloud. In essence the approach means simply using more than one cloud. Easy to grasp. This can include exploring the public clouds, which provide security and affordability, to private clouds, which present more tools for customization, and adding one where it makes sense. Pro tip: the goal of a hybrid solution should be to provide a consistent architecture across all environments, so your organization is aligned on one platform.

There are some impressive hybrid cloud offerings that can help you do this. Microsoft has developed a one-stop hybrid-cloud offering in conjunction with its Azure public cloud. The Azure Stack extension allows users to bring public cloud computing onto their on-premises private cloud. They can host different instances of the same application in the Azure cloud and on premises depending on their business or technical needs. Or they can develop an app in Azure and then deploy it on-premises to meet regulatory or policy requirements.

Also, Amazon Web Services (AWS) provides a strong array of hybrid cloud offerings. It has partnerships with many long-time on-premise platform providers, such as VMware, Intel, and SAP, and is well-situated to help organizations develop a hybrid strategy often without requiring significant investments in new on-premise hardware and software.

A company like Pivotal can be an essential partner in helping you run a unified multi-cloud platform on your enterprise apps.

If done carefully, with the right partners, a hybrid cloud strategy can help you simplify operations in your organization, which has its own emotional return on investment for your employees.

Next Steps

For any cloud-aspiring or already cloud-intensive enterprise, a hybrid cloud strategy comes down to finding the right collection of cloud technologies and orchestration tools that makes the organization faster and more efficient. And again, getting rid of that pesky technical debt. Think of it this way: Technical debt is not just about having old technology, old techniques, and old processes. It is about having an albatross around your neck, which is holding you back from agility. If you don't deal with it, it will leave you vulnerable to disruption in your category. Embrace the philosophy of aggregation, which brings data into a central location. A hybrid cloud strategy can lead you there. Keep pointing toward the future.

Magenic can help your business design new applications built for the cloud, modernize legacy applications for cloud-native storage, or replatform existing applications to the cloud. Reach out to learn more about our **cloud readiness assessment** and how it can provide your organization a roadmap to the cloud.

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