



A bridging strategy minimizes the impact to systems, while maximizing the value of investments.

Building a Bridge to the Cloud

A How-To Guide

It is often said that [hybrid cloud adoption](#) is the future, but it's also the present. In the long run, hybrid cloud hosting will be the norm, synthesizing the low latency and high throughput of onsite systems with the flexibility and scalability of cloud solutions.

More immediately, the hybrid cloud can function as a bridge for enterprises who rely on onsite hosting. Organizations gain quick ROI by moving pricey onsite datacenters to economical cloud hosting; migrating legacy silos to modern cloud ERP — using the “as a Service” ecosystem to streamline and simplify business processes. The challenge is to use the incremental improvements of the hybrid cloud at present to reach the visionary potential of a true hybrid cloud future.

Why Bridge to Hybrid Cloud Hosting?

A bridging strategy minimizes the impact to systems, while maximizing the value of investments. Executing a large-scale migration all at once often requires significant downtime, training and post go-live tweaking. This can lead to production bottlenecks, elevated risks and unnecessary stress, for both IT and non-IT workers. It can also pose budgetary strains by preventing companies from taking full advantage of hardware life, licenses and support contracts.

Bridging to [hybrid cloud hosting](#) allows companies to take a more strategic approach to upgrades, and gain experience with non-mission critical systems which can be used later in the process. Development and QA migration can be paced around the completion of products, while major upgrades can be scheduled for holidays or weekends or the middle of the night, when planned downtime will pose the least burden. Migration to a new database like the SAP S/4HANA Cloud can coincide with license expiration or hardware end of life.

Getting Your Feet Wet with Hybrid Cloud Hosting

Companies with decades of onsite hosting experience can be skeptical of the cloud. Others businesses may be hampered by a lack of long-term technology strategy, or have a change-averse culture. For these organizations, moving non-mission critical workloads into the cloud is a way to assuage fears with early successes, help gather information to develop a cloud strategy, and show ROI — all with little risk.

Testing and development environments are obvious candidates for early migration to hybrid cloud hosting. Disaster recovery is another good choice — particularly for companies that are risk averse. Most onsite or non-cloud remote DR is either expensive or inadequate. Hot DR can double IT infrastructure costs, and cold DR can take weeks to get up in an emergency. Cloud disaster recovery puts the backup in the hands of a remote MSP, allowing for RPO and RTO within minutes if necessary — usually for much less than traditional DR.

For development and production, ROI comes from both reduced costs and faster time to market. Instead of supporting peak demand, companies can pay for metered compute and scale up as necessary. Once development and testing teams aren't limited by existing hardware investments; work can proceed at the speed of innovation, not the speed of aging servers.

Planning a Hybrid Cloud Hosting Strategy

Companies need to create a broad framework for cloud migration — ideally with the help of a managed services provider. A project management approach with adequate reporting on early hybrid cloud experimentation is a must. From the beginning, companies need to start considering a variety of

factors, including cost vs. performance and the security implications of moving to the cloud.



Companies should consider each provider's security controls, as well as the sensitivity of the data being migrated. Just by plugging into a cloud configured around network security architecture best practices like segmentation and hardening, companies can reduce risks compared to an ad-hoc onsite hosting.

Use your IT staff — particularly those involved in early cloud experimentation — as resources in building your hybrid cloud hosting strategy. However, don't make cloud migration all about IT needs. Your strategy also needs to be informed by strategic business goals along with technical, budgetary and other considerations. Poor internal communication is a serious (and common) roadblock here. An external consultant or MSP can help you bridge the gap between the technical and business sides and move forward.

Execution: Taking the Leap with the Cloud

The execution of a hybrid cloud hosting strategy can have long-lasting impact for a company. A smooth rollout yields quick ROI. Everything is suddenly faster and easier to use, boosting morale and setting the stage for ongoing innovation. A bad rollout, on the other hand, can hemorrhage money and confidence. Watching deadlines get pushed back and systems slow or stop hurts productivity and alienates customers. Perhaps more importantly, it can sour your company on the cloud. This can be much more costly in the long run, as the organization retreats to a slower, pricier and less agile onsite system while its competitors soar in the cloud.

The execution of a hybrid cloud hosting strategy can have long-lasting impact for a company. Everything is suddenly faster and easier to use...setting the stage for ongoing innovation.

In any complicated migration, things can break unexpectedly, but luck only plays a major role if you don't do your due diligence. Companies need to engage in comprehensive what-if planning, and put in place controls for every phase of the project. Every stage of the upgrade needs to be carefully tested, and there always needs to be a rollback available. IT staff need to be drilled in proper protocol and emergency procedures — particularly for mission-critical stages.

One of the most crucial (but challenging) steps in migrating is understand how the pieces of your hybrid cloud hosting fit together. Application dependencies, load balancing and potential impact to customers or end users all need to be considered at each step. Change control is particularly crucial in a multi-phase hybrid cloud hosting. Hardware sizing and provisioning projections made at the beginning of the project may not reflect your needs when you reach the final phase two years later. Mechanisms for reevaluating and altering the project need to be built in from the very beginning.

Iterating Over a Multi-Phase Hybrid Cloud Hosting Project

It's not just computing and infrastructure needs that change. As you move to the cloud, the market and technology continue to evolve, and your company keeps growing and gaining insight. To ensure your hybrid cloud hosting strategy keeps up, each phase should include its own planning, building, testing and migration stages.

Using a process like Continual Service Improvement (CSI) can help ensure that your iteration process continues throughout your hybrid cloud hosting. It allows your team to establish goals for the migration, measure against those goals and evaluate where improvements can be made.

Metrics can be tricky here, and care must be taken not to incentivize behaviors that pose risks. For example, it's easy to measure whether a project was completed ahead of schedule or below budget, but more difficult to measure whether all stakeholders were adequately consulted or the project was correctly reworked to address changing business needs and strategic goals. A company focusing solely on speed and cost could incentivize dangerous shortcuts.

Consulting all stakeholders involved for each phase will help keep the hybrid cloud hosting strategy focused on the right goals. This shouldn't just involve management and IT; it's important to get feedback from all levels of the organization. Workers need to feel free to give feedback — including criticism. Flashy features that seem like a great idea to management might not actually be useful on the ground floor. Alternately, executives might not realize how poor UI or inefficient workflow affects productivity until a worker explains the problem.

Hybrid Cloud Hosting is Both the Journey and the Destination

IT isn't a static tool anymore; it's a rapidly evolving agent for strategic growth and change. Organizations that can synthesize agile business practices and up-to-date IT insights will gain the most from hybrid cloud bridging. By fostering a collaborative environment, where management, workers and managed services partners work together, your organization can lead the hybrid cloud future.



For more information, please contact our Business Development Department at:

www.SymmetryCorp.com
salesinfo@sym-corp.com
888-SYM-CORP (796-2677)

Symmetry
400 South Executive Drive
Brookfield, WI 53005



SAP is the trademark of SAP AG in Germany and in several other countries. IBM is the trademark of International Business Machines Corporation, registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. All other products mentioned in this document are registered trademarks of their respective companies.