



SAP: Driving the Cloud Decision

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in Hosting Services

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Many companies today are taking the Cloud plunge...

But with so many choices in today's market, often times which Cloud to choose is the bigger decision. This decision process is no easy task.

When it comes to your valuable SAP and non-SAP applications, which are much more complex and regulated than many other software solutions, the process of choosing the right Cloud provider is that much more difficult. Being an SAP technology firm, and certified experts in IBM and HP hardware, Symmetry understands the challenges in hosting your entire environment, and understands the complexity of all of it.

As many companies have been looking to outsource more than just SAP, the temptation to deviate from SAP-focused Cloud providers has been a growing trend.

When selecting a Cloud provider, companies can generally start ruling out initial vendors by data center certifications. Mission-critical applications should be located in Tier III and above data centers, as these locations provide better redundancy than most companies have come to expect. Once the data center has been reviewed, the next phase of decision criteria is what sets Cloud providers apart. Although these criteria can vary depending on each company, in general, these would include:

- Technology (Hardware/Software)
- Processes and Procedures
- Certifications and Compliance
- Support Model
- Application-Specific Knowledge
- Scalable Pricing Model

As with any industry or specific software product, there are certain nuances to the list and there is no exception when it comes to SAP. The general difference that needs to be emphasized with SAP is that unlike your standard software such as Microsoft Outlook, Web servers, FTP Servers, etc..., SAP runs the majority of the company once implemented.

As an example, if a company's web page was not accessible, customers might have to call in an order until the issue is resolved. Although cumbersome, the company could still function. If production SAP was not accessible, that scenario could wreak havoc on a company. Orders would not be able to be placed, invoices could not be sent out, parts could not be allocated and product could not be shipped. Depending on the implementation and usages, that list could be just the beginning of how the company would be impacted.

What this list translates to is a much better Cloud offering for not only SAP but non-SAP applications as well. By choosing an SAP-focused Cloud provider, companies have the security and peace-of-mind knowing that ALL their servers and applications are held to the same standards and are provided the same protection and robustness as SAP.

Specific industries such as banking only host with Cloud providers that focus on their market, companies running SAP should be no different.

As companies are making the Cloud provider decision, specific criteria such as SAP should be weighed appropriately. After all, if 75% of a company's business relies on SAP, then 75% of the hosting decision criteria should focus on SAP. At the end of the day, no company can make a bad decision by going with an SAP-centric Cloud provider if their company cannot function without SAP. As all other applications and servers are migrated along with SAP to these providers, they will surely be better off than most.

SAP-Focused Cloud Providers understand the criticality of SAP and have tailored their offerings appropriately.

The advantage to these Cloud providers is that the Cloud solutions they offer is inherently much more robust than a standard Cloud supporting SAP and non-SAP mission critical systems. SAP-Certified Cloud providers such as Symmetry have to go through an exhaustive audit and comply with strict tolerances such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Is committed to growing Colleagues' skills through training plans, certified ITIL skills, certifications in SAP technologies
- Has enterprise class datacenter facilities that meet stringent SAP audits around fire suppression systems, infrastructure redundancy and failover testing, physical security, access controls and regular audits
- Meets or exceeds all SAP audit requirements around network topology, port blocking, network intrusion detection systems
- Has proven backup and DR expertise including backup and recovery systems and testing, customer DR scenarios and strategies, and multiple datacenters that house a DR infrastructure that meets SAP's extensive requirements
- Has an event and incident management system to track and audit all datacenter and managed services activities including change management, problem management, asset and configuration management, continual service improvement and customer satisfaction, SLA goals, availability and continuity, as well as security policies, audits and vulnerability tests



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