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# Built for change: How to lead IT through disruption

A guide for CIOs and project managers on how to keep projects on track in an ever-changing world

In the not too distant past, most businesses had a set process for handling technology change. The IT organisation decided which changes would make it into this year's budget and which would be deferred. A dedicated team of resources defined the project, which progressed in a linear fashion from needs assessment, solution design and procurement, implementation, testing and finally, the launch - ideally on time and on budget. At the end of the project, participants relaxed and enjoyed the accolades for a job well done, ready to repeat the process for the next item on the list.

In today's rapid-paced environment, many of us may struggle even to remember when "change" was a choice and when a technology project had a defined beginning and end. Companies must be prepared to shift business operations at a moment's notice—if not for a global pandemic, then in response to evolving compliance regulations, escalating customer demands, or disruptive competitors.

The most successful businesses view change not as a challenge but as an opportunity. As they seek new

ways to grow and delight their customer base, they leverage business-enhancing technologies (such as artificial intelligence and blockchain); architectures (such as Internet of Things and edge compute); and networks (such as Wi-Fi, 5G, broadband internet, and virtual private networks).

In this environment agility is the overriding business objective. Without the luxury of time—to scope and implement technology changes serially—organisations must build processes and infrastructure that can support rapid and unexpected shifts in direction. Whether that's adapting to changing workloads, managing new security challenges or driving down operating costs, agility is key. They also need the support of their technology partners to make this happen, it's no longer enough for them simply to deliver a product or service.

In this guide, experts from Colt, Oracle, and Frost & Sullivan provide perspectives and recommendations for making your business agile enough to survive and thrive in today's fast-paced global environment.




# Frost & Sullivan: Becoming change resilient

Accepting constant change as the “new normal,” organisations are investing in IT and network infrastructure, software platforms and processes that support agility. The flexible cloud model, on-demand functionality, scalable capacity, and AI-enabled automation can all speed up app delivery and improve market responsiveness.

Yet few businesses are prepared for a major disruption – whether a worldwide pandemic, regional natural disasters or social unrest, seismic regulatory changes or unplanned turnover in company leadership.

The problem is that, for most businesses, the journey to the cloud has been a little too leisurely and meandering, without a strong roadmap.



According to the Frost & Sullivan 2019 Global Cloud Survey, 65% of IT decision-makers worldwide say their organisation has adopted a “cloud first” approach for new applications, but are less likely to prioritise migration of legacy applications to the cloud.

As many businesses discovered during Covid-19 shutdowns, that approach left some of their most critical legacy business workloads vulnerable, with IT technicians facing limited access to the company data centre.

To build operations that facilitate both constant changes (e.g., tweaking products and pricing in response to market and competitive moves) and disruptive change (e.g., keeping critical business

**Word of Advice:** IT investments should not simply be about making changes in your company, but about making your company change-resilient. This way, you will be better prepared to quickly and efficiently turn the next challenge—minor or major—into an opportunity.

**Lynda Stadtmueller Vice President, Network, Data Center & Cloud, Frost & Sullivan**



operations running seamlessly, regardless of where employees, suppliers, and applications reside), organisations must approach each initiative with an eye toward agility. Here are three tips to ensure your key initiatives move you along that path:



**1. Choose a platform-based solution, not a point-solution.** The right platform is open and secure, enables flexible deployment on-premises or in major public clouds, easily integrates with your critical business workloads and databases, and supports next-gen AI and analytics functionality to allow you to continually optimise your operations. Such a software-based platform offers much-needed staffing flexibility during a business crisis, requiring less vendor-specific knowledge and enabling remote management.



**2. Align your network strategy with your cloud strategy.** With more business users – employees, suppliers, and customers – accessing applications remotely over a range of devices and networks, the network is even more integral to application performance, security, and cost. To maximise the value of cloud apps and ensure business agility during a disruption, choose scalable, on-demand bandwidth and application-aware routing.



**3. Don't go it alone.** In normal times, the pace of market change and the complexity of new technology mean that businesses have little time for trial-and-error. During a critical disruption, the urgency is even greater. Yet few businesses are prepared: 59% of IT decision-makers say they struggle to hire and retain qualified staff for important IT initiatives like Digital Transformation and cloud. As a result, more businesses are choosing expert partners for assistance in designing, implementing, and managing their transformation initiatives. For optimal results, choose a partner with expertise across IT, data, cloud, and network.



## Oracle: Get going with the cloud

### Which mission critical functions are customers now looking to move to the cloud, and how far through the journey are they?

Though many customers are using the cloud, typically SaaS, most are just starting to use the cloud for mission critical workloads. We see applications in a few buckets: packaged enterprise applications, like E-Business Suite or JD Edwards, or custom ones; High Performance Computing (HPC) like automotive design simulation and custom cloud-native development.

The challenge for each is different: Packaged and custom enterprise applications typically have lots of interdependencies with other systems and business processes, so customers move cautiously with those. HPC workloads are sometimes held back by sunk costs in existing hardware, but they move to the cloud fairly easily, and with great results. The custom cloud-native begins in the cloud, but since it is a new development, there are often many small experimental projects for every one that runs at scale. Some of the more mature customers have already moved their core critical applications and are modernising those applications, or leveraging the data from those applications to aggregate with newer data sources and applications.

### Which challenges do you or your customers see most often when undertaking a cloud migration, and what is your best piece of advice for handling this?

Initially, customers moving to the cloud worry about how to migrate a system and if they have accounted for all the interconnected pieces. Then they start

rethinking their processes around how they manage things – like you never have to do a hardware refresh, and you can dynamically scale resources up and down. We know this is a benefit of the cloud, but customers’ typical planning and budgeting processes aren’t designed for this. And after that – getting into longer-term challenges is refactoring systems to benefit from available shared services, like corporate-wide data lakes, data pipelines, etc. We believe the next stage after that is natively multi-cloud, enabling customers to finally move the bulk of their IT to the cloud. With that comes multi-cloud management and governance.

**An experienced partner can help the customer know what to assess in their environment, to budget the right amount of time, and to pick the right tools and processes to begin.**

### What happens to migration projects when outside disruption occurs?

A lot of our customers accelerated their projects because they needed the scalability of the cloud – some of them needed to scale up to meet sudden new demand. Others needed to move to the cloud to be able to temporarily scale down their usage, without sacrificing any reliability.

### How can the CSP partner help customers keep projects on track?

Planning based on experience with the cloud is probably the biggest predictor of success, but this is where a customer new to cloud is at the biggest disadvantage. An experienced partner can help the customer know what to assess in their environment, to budget the right amount of time, and to pick the right tools and processes to begin. Sometimes customers will bring the best practices that they learned on-premises to the cloud, and discover that they aren’t a great fit, so an experienced partner can be sure that the project sets the right architecture upfront.



**Word of advice:** We often talk about “cloud” as if it is all one thing, and there are many common design principles across all the major clouds. But each one has its own set of strengths. It is worth understanding how those strengths map to your needs. Oracle Cloud is built from the ground up to align with the needs of enterprise and performance-intensive workloads, especially those running Oracle applications or databases. For that set of requirements, we think customers will have a massively different experience across the different cloud vendors. But at the end of the day, the real advice is to just get going. Pick a small project and start building some cloud muscle.

**Vinay Kumar, Vice President, Product Management, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure**



## Colt: Delivering a network built for change

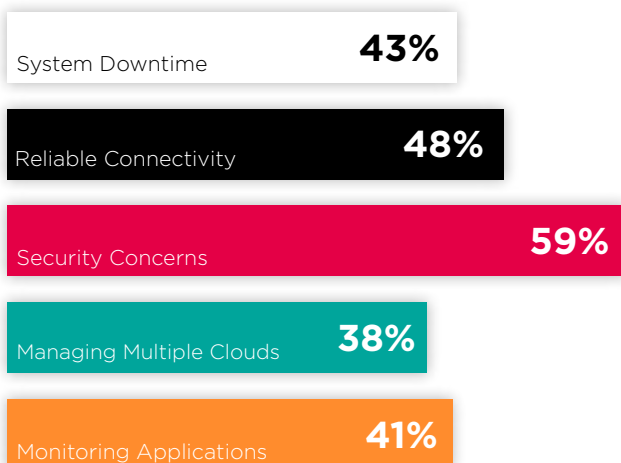
No business can function without a secure and stable internet connection and for large enterprises, it has never been more critical. Yet we often see connectivity treated as an afterthought, something teams can easily just bolt on at the end of a project without much care or consideration. In a predictable and straightforward project, this can cause significant delays and overspend. In times of disruption, the impact can be much more severe.

As cloud migration accelerates and more people work remotely, traffic volumes are both increasing and becoming harder to predict. Businesses are faced with new technologies to consider and integrate, whether that's AI, blockchain or utilising APIs to automate relationships with key suppliers and partners. We're also seeing the projects themselves get more complex, involving multiple partners from across the digital ecosystem that all need to work together.

Throughout this, connectivity is more and more critical to the end customer experience. The customers themselves see the benefits of connected devices, whether that's cars automatically sending back maintenance data and running software updates or accessing information and collaboration tools in the cloud from anywhere in the world.

Rather than being seen as simply a link to the cloud, data centre or end-user, connectivity can play a key role in managing times of change and keeping data secure. The right network can make it easier to adjust plans and react to changing demand, providing the agility to thrive rather than holding things back. It's no wonder that getting connectivity right is one of the top challenges in cloud migration.

### Top 5 cloud migration challenges



### There are three key considerations in delivering a network built for change:



**1. Build in flexibility.** Traditional network contracts and approaches are simply not suitable for today's agile and rapidly changing world. You need a network that can quickly scale up or down when needed, not one that makes you work to a level that was predicted 6-12 months ago when things might have looked very different.



**2. Lean on your partners.** Most businesses in the digital ecosystem have realised that it's no longer enough to simply provide a service or product. Customers shouldn't have to go it alone and equally they need the relationship with providers to be an easy one. The growing use of API integration is one area making a big difference, cutting out time consuming processes and making it easier to order and provision connectivity.



**3. Embrace technology innovation.** No business should deploy technology for technology's sake - but many of the new innovations being delivered today are perfectly placed to manage disruption. The growth in Universal Customer Premise Equipment (uCPE) makes it much easier to deploy and set up additional sites, add new services or quickly make remote updates and changes. The role of AI and machine learning technologies can automate time consuming, repetitive processes, while also helping predict future patterns or where problems might occur.

**Word of advice:** Planning ahead with connectivity can make or break any IT transformation project. Spend the time and effort in identifying the right partner in line with your cloud strategy and include connectivity from day one.

**Annette Geuther,  
Vice President,  
Business  
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## Conclusion

Dealing with change is nothing new – but the pace and scale of disruption today is unlike anything businesses have had to deal with before. The challenge for CIOs and IT managers is not just how to keep on track when the unpredictable happens, but how to use it to improve plans and deliver for the organisation.

Those getting it right make change resiliency an essential part of their IT strategy – not just something required in an emergency. This means getting started now on the cloud journey, whether that's a major shift of an ERP platform or something smaller. It also means including flexible and secure connectivity from the outset – working with your network to adapt to the market or global changes rather than being forced to manage with something you predicted six or 12 months ago.

In a world of constant change, an ecosystem of partners to support you in your digital journey will make or break your projects. Every business and every challenge will be different, but focussing on the areas outlined in this guide will not only help manage the challenges you know about today, but put you and your teams in a much stronger position for the future.



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