Migrating Your Customers to the Cloud

Whether SMB or enterprise, businesses are moving their hardware and IT infrastructures to the cloud. Help customers understand considerations for environments and service delivery when migrating data center applications to the cloud.

Why Cloud?

Whether changing platforms or transitioning business critical application over to the cloud, companies are adopting cloud for a predictable operational expense model where upgrades and patch management are handled by the service providers. Cloud solutions better enable mobile workforces for collaboration and better align access to data, varying bandwidth and storage needs. Cloud also allows for improved disaster recovery and business continuity.

Getting Started

Migrating to the cloud requires customers to plan strategically. Consider not only current needs but the future state of the business. Cloud strategies are often driven by business needs of departments, not just the IT team. Focus on how cloud enables business drivers or fixes business issues to determine which applications can move to the cloud and what should stay on-premise, which applications may perform better in a cloud environment and what will not? Help understand your customers' cloud readiness by auditing infrastructure, workloads, usage patterns and willingness to change. The following questions help determine cloud solutions for applications, compute power, storage and network service needs.

Discovery questions to get you started

1. What applications are critical for your business (in order of priority)? Consider what you use on a daily basis.

2. How many users accessthese critical applications daily, weekly, monthly? What is their process? How does it vary by user?

3. In the event of an outage, how much downtime can your critical applications and systems experience?

4. What is your current physical network infrastructure and software?

5. How many servers do you have in place? When was your last hardware upgrade?

6. What level of security does your business and data require? What level of compliance and regulation must your business adhere to?

7. What is your current disaster recovery plan?

8. How equipped is your current IT department to manage future IT needs?

9. How many employees are working remotely or need to access business data off-site?

10. How often have you experienced limitations to your data center or colocation environment?

There are 3 decisions that need to be made when migrating your customers' applications to the cloud.

Solution:

Applications identified for migration based on business and technical factors determine the type of cloud solution: Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS).

Environment:

What environment will the solution need to be hosted in, public, private or hybrid cloud (some will remain in your datacenter).

Access:

It should then be determined how best to access the migrated applications via public or private IP. Considerations to this decision should be based on your customer's security and compliance, management, app roll out and deployment and integration with other existing applications.

TIP: For those just starting their foray into the cloud. Recommend migrating services that are easier to shift with less potential impact on systems should something go wrong. Things like batch processing, analytics platforms, collaboration tools and widely adopted web apps like Office 365.

Let's talk solutions.

A variety of TBI Providers can help start conversations, develop migration strategies and recommend the right products/services to meet your customers' business objectives.

Hosted Infrastructure

Moving a data center, or portions of a data center to the cloud helps organizations ease the pain of storing valuable information in-house and deploying on-premises servers. Cloud solutions help eliminate the need for remote access hardware, helps with data replication and virtual access, and provides an operational expense model.

More than likely customers are considering or already using AWS, Azure, Google or IBM, but for those reticent to make that move, TBI offers CSP alternatives for IaaS:

- CenturyLink
- Evolve IP
- NaviSite
- Rackspace
- SingleHop
- TierPoint
- Zayo

DaaS

Desktop as a Service is best pitched to small and medium size business, those with seasonal employees, a large number of remote users or those with significant legacy operating systems.

DaaS alleviates the burdens of an IT department manually managing employees' desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets and smartphones. DaaS helps with desktop management tasks, upgrading, patching, adding applications and help desk issues. It's easy to deploy new items and provides secure access for employers with remote and BYOD employees. Also, it allows business to scale up or down. It provides streamlined and consistent access on any device.

- CenturyLink
- Evolve IP
- NaviSite
- NTT

Managed Hosting/Hosting Services

Offer up companies that help your customers migrate workloads into the cloud, manage applications and ongoing oversight of that cloud environment. Carriers that provide managed hosting refer to managing pieces or the entire environment: server, operating system, applications, data center, cloud storage and backup and consultative services.

- CenturyLink
- NaviSite
- NTT
- Rackspace
- RapidScale
- SingleHop
- Tierpoint
- Verizon
- Zayo

Cloud Connections

The benefits of using cloud for infrastructure like server and data storage are plentiful: the top being accessibility and shareability without maintaining hardware or software. Provisioning of data is incumbent on the user and helps save money while offering scalability. Connecting to these web services is where the customers' choices get more involved. Regarding end user experience, your cloud environment is only as good as your connection to it.

Connection options include:
Public IP (Internet)
Point to Point/Ethernet Private Line (EPL)
MPLS/VPLS nodes
Cloud Connects (Private end-to-end):

- AT&T
- CenturyLink
- Comcast
- GTT
- Level 3
- Lightower
- Masergy
- NTT
- Time Warner Cable
- Verizon
- XO
- Zayo