



CROWN
Workforce Management



Navigating the Cloud: A Comprehensive Guide to Cloud Migration

Everything you need to know about successful cloud migration.

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Overview

As technology continues to advance, businesses are increasingly turning to cloud computing to streamline their operations and reduce costs.

This can be seen as 75% of organisations that use cloud services indicate they have a cloud-first strategy and 70% of enterprise workloads will be in the cloud by 2024. However, cloud technology is not only for enterprises. It is feasible for businesses of all sizes and industries to migrate to the cloud, with it being one of the most transformative projects a business will undertake.

This eBook aims to provide a comprehensive guide to migrating to the cloud, covering everything from the benefits and challenges of cloud computing to the steps involved in planning and executing a successful migration. Whether you are a small business owner or an IT professional, this eBook will give you the knowledge and tools you need to make the transition to the cloud with confidence.

Why Migrate to the Cloud?

Better Flexibility and Scalability

Migrating to the cloud enables businesses to become more agile. After migrating to the cloud, it is possible to scale resources up and down as required. Whereas with on-premises infrastructure, businesses need to invest in hardware powerful enough for handling peak usage, even though reaching this level is a rare occurrence.

Similarly, many organisations have on-premises applications that are not used 24/7, however, the server running them needs to be running non-stop. With cloud computing, businesses only need to pay for the time the workload is being utilised. This makes the cloud perfect for SMBs and start-ups, as the cloud resources can grow as the business grows, without the need to outlay capital expenditure for on-premises hardware.

Improve Security Posture

In the past, it was a common belief that cloud services were less secure than on-premises infrastructure, but in recent years, that sentiment has changed. Both on-premises and cloud services require security expertise, but cloud services have many security features, and all alerts can be monitored from one place. All cloud service providers are also constantly investing in securing the cloud. For example, over 3,500 security professionals are working around the clock at Microsoft to protect Azure.

With a cloud solution, there is also no risk of downtime due to fire, theft, flood, or other natural disasters as the environments can be geographically redundant. It should be noted that if your business is looking for the highest level of control over security, an on-prem solution can sometimes be the right choice.

Move From CAPEX to OPEX

Many providers will state that moving to the cloud will save your business money, but that is not always the case. Depending on your use case, it can be cheaper to continue to use legacy hardware that has already depreciated in value. However, there are risks to sweating old hardware like this, as it will typically run slower, use more electricity, and may incur additional support costs. Whereas, moving to the cloud ensures your business does not experience these challenges but also enables your business to move IT expenses from capital expenditure to operating expenditure.


For example, rather than your business having to outlay £10,000 every 5 years, your business could pay a monthly fee for the services being used on Azure, Amazon Web Services or Google Cloud Platform. This is particularly beneficial for businesses that are constantly growing, or relatively young, without substantial capital behind them. For businesses with older hardware, with the constantly rising cost of electricity, it can also be cheaper to move to the cloud, rather than pay the additional electricity and cooling bills associated with an on-premises solution.

Improve User Experience

A brand-new shiny server should have an exceptional and polished end-user experience, however as the years pass the server will slow down and the user experience will degrade. This can be frustrating for users, and even result in lost revenue due to lower productivity. This is particularly true for businesses that attempt to reduce costs by waiting until the last possible opportunity to replace their servers in an attempt to save money. In comparison, a cloud service will always have a top-notch user experience, as the service can dynamically adapt to the load, so even if many users are using it, they will all have the same experience.

What workloads can be migrated?





The Cloud Migration Roadmap

8 steps for successful
cloud migration.

1. Define Business Objectives

Before any business undertakes a cloud migration project, they need to define what the objectives are for the business.

This will guide the entire process, so it is essential this step is completed correctly. If correctly done it also has the power to completely transform the way a business works. In some cases, the business objectives may be pre-decided, such as end-of-support for critical technologies

However, when looking at business objectives, they will fall into a variety of categories, such as:



Fiscal

- Faster access to data
- Reduced IT costs
- Terminate a datacentre



Reach

- Expand into a new market
- Personalised customer experience
- Meet compliance regulations



Agility

- Reduce time-to-market
- Reduce provisioning time
- Increase remote work efficiencies



Sustainability

- Track and control carbon emissions
- Reduce carbon footprint
- Drive sustainable innovation



Customer Engagement

- Reduce development time
- Reduce time for customer support
- Increase amount of data collected



Performance

- Reduce downtime of services
- Improve speed to access data
- Reduce disaster recovery time



2. Evaluate the Digital Estate

Once the business objectives have been decided, it is time to evaluate the current digital estate.

The digital estate is comprised of IT assets that power business processes, this includes assets such as virtual machines, servers, applications, and data. This stage is essential as without taking inventory of the digital estate there is no way to know what deployment model or migration strategy will be most effective, and without it, this will lead to not meeting the objectives set out in the previous stage.

There are tools available to help take inventory of the digital estate that provides a scan showing all virtual machines, servers, network mappings and dependencies and the results of these scans will help define workload alignment in later stages.

In this stage, other stakeholders will have information that should also be captured, such as the service owners, the asset usage, dependency maps for workloads and the classification of data. Once this inventory is complete, businesses can use this information to define the strategy for migration.



3. Define Cloud Migration Strategy

After the previous stage, most businesses will have found numerous workloads that can be migrated to the cloud to meet the objectives set in stage one.

However, not all these workloads will have the same migration strategy or cloud rationalisation. The term cloud rationalisation refers to the process of evaluating assets to define the migration strategy for each asset. There are 5 common methods of rationalisation:



Rehost

Rehosting, also known as lift-and-shift, is a cloud migration strategy that involves moving applications to the cloud without making any changes to their architecture. This is the easiest and quickest way to migrate to the cloud, but it also comes with the highest ongoing costs and least flexibility. It is generally not recommended for most applications.



Refactor

Refactoring an application or workload to a Platform as a Service (PaaS) model is a more complex migration process than rehosting but offers scalability and better alignment with business objectives. It's suitable for workloads requiring minor changes to reap cloud benefits.



Replace

During the cloud migration process, some businesses find that the workloads or applications they are using have SaaS (Software as a Service) equivalents that meet business requirements and will enable them to achieve their objectives. This approach has many benefits, but it also means that the business is locked into that vendor, and there will still be a migration process.



Retire

Often when completing the evaluation of the digital estate, businesses will discover they are hosting legacy workloads that are no longer required. If this is the case, the workload can be retired, with any data being retained in necessary.



Retain

Finally, there are certain cases where workloads or applications are not ready or should not be migrated to the cloud. In this case, a hybrid cloud model is used, and the strategy will be reviewed regularly.

4. Decide on Cloud Deployment Model

After the cloud migration strategy is defined, businesses can decide on the right cloud deployment model for them.

For on-premises applications and workloads, there are three primary cloud deployment options:



Public Cloud

A public cloud-based deployment is the most common cloud computing deployment model. With this model, the resources and hardware are owned and operated by a third-party service provider and used over the internet. All the cloud services are owned and managed by a provider, such as Microsoft Azure.

With this model, you are sharing the same resources and hardware with other organisations. You are doing this through a provider or operator who will manage the system on behalf of the organisations operating from it. This option reduces costs, enables scalability and is extremely reliable



Private Cloud

Private cloud deployment is the opposite of a public cloud deployment. Instead of being based on a public server, a private cloud system is based upon hardware that is used exclusively by one organisation. This system can either be on-premises or hosted by a third-party service.

The major difference here is that the hardware used for private cloud infrastructure is yours and is suited to your needs specifically. This is like an on-prem infrastructure but comes with the added scalability and benefits of a cloud-based system.



Hybrid Cloud

A hybrid cloud platform is a mix of both public and on-prem infrastructure. This infrastructure combines the best elements of the public cloud whilst maintaining on-prem workloads if necessary. Hybrid cloud can also be running cloud applications on on-premises hardware, with solutions such as Azure Stack.

One use case for this is if some applications or workloads are too expensive to migrate but are necessary for the business. This is also used in businesses with data sovereignty requirements, as all the data can remain on-premises.

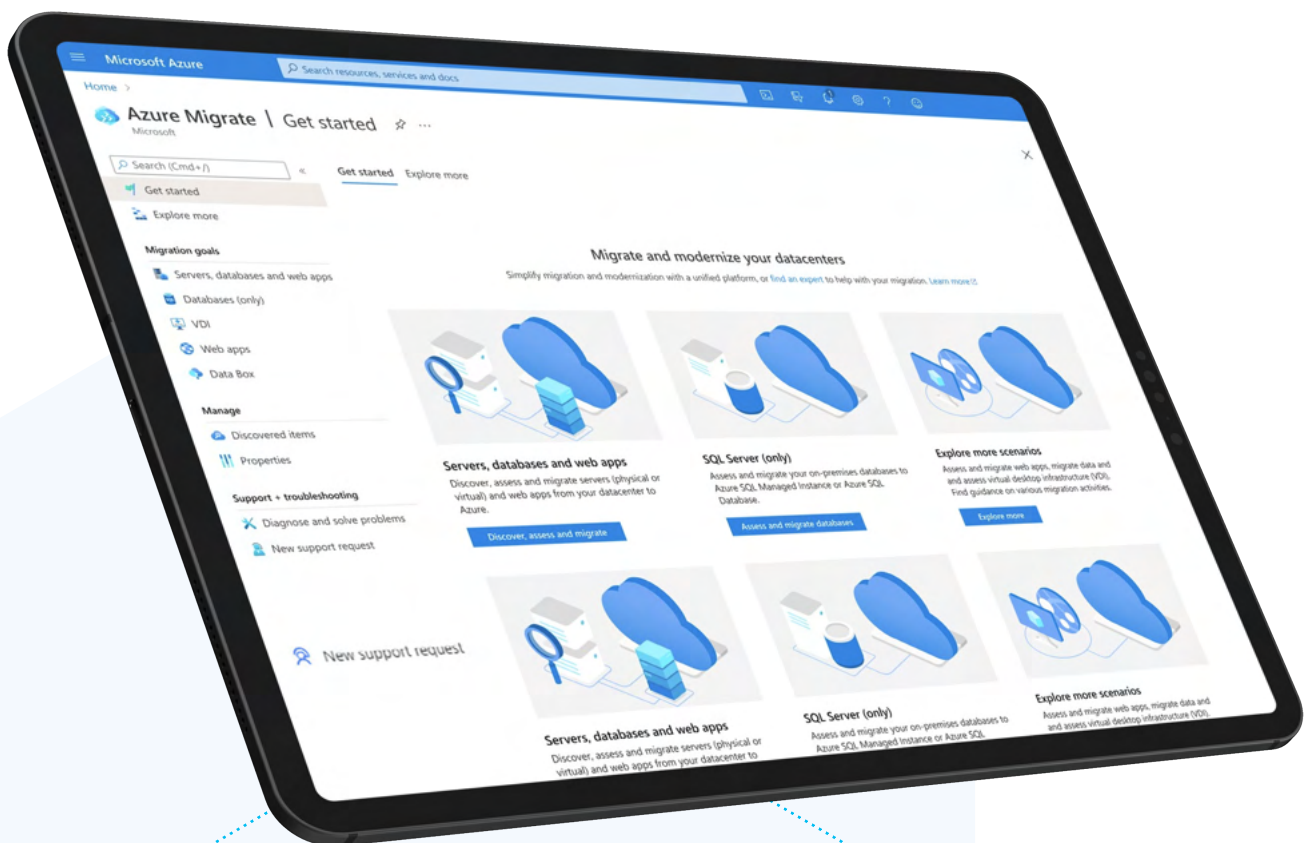
Managed Cloud Services

Third-party service providers such as Crown take care of the design, management and maintenance of the cloud platform. The provider handles tasks such as software updates, capacity management, security, monitoring and backups. Managed cloud services are designed to offload the burden of IT infrastructure management from the users, allowing them to focus on their core business activities.

5. The Migration

Now that your business has decided on what workloads will be migrated, and where to, you can then create a migration plan. Every migration is different, but it should always be an incremental approach, where one workload is migrated at a time.

This will take more planning and time, but it reduces technical risk as with each workload your cloud adoption team will become better at migrating workloads. Within Azure, there are a plethora of tools designed to make migration easier, however, the process does require technical expertise and experience to ensure success.



6. Secure the Cloud Environment

One of the reasons why businesses move to the cloud is to improve their security posture. However, businesses need to create processes and implement controls to ensure their cloud environments are secure.

For on-premises applications and workloads, there are three primary cloud deployment options:



Access Control

This includes who can access the workloads and backend of the workload, and how their identity is verified. Businesses should aim for Zero Trust, using identity and network controls. All accounts should also have Multi-Factor Authentication enabled.



Security Operations

Azure is packed full of features that enable businesses to detect, respond and recover from attacks. Microsoft Defender for Cloud includes threat hunting which will constantly search cloud environments for poor security practices or intrusion from bad actors. Microsoft Defender for Cloud also has alerts for any signs of intrusion, which can be actioned by a Security Operations team.



Asset Protection

All cloud workloads deal with some amount of data, and often this data is sensitive and in the wrong hands could be disastrous for a business. Thankfully, within Microsoft Defender for Cloud, there is an asset inventory tool which shows the security posture of any resources connected. It also provides recommendations for ways to improve security and protect assets.

7. Establish Governance Plans

As with many elements of ongoing cloud maintenance, governance is an iterative process, and every business will have its own compliance and governance requirements.

Some common governance and compliance regulations include GDPR, HIPAA, PCI-DSS, GLBA and ISO 27001. These regulations will outline what governance measures your cloud environment will need. However, most businesses will create a minimum viable product for governance, followed by iterations of governance maturity to address risks. During this stage, there are 5 common disciplines of cloud governance to consider.



Cost Management

Cost is a primary driver for cloud migration. Therefore, it is important to establish guidelines for managing costs for all cloud platforms.



Security Baseline

Addressing security concerns can be a complicated matter, and each organisation's security needs vary. Once security requirements have been identified, it is necessary to implement cloud governance policies and measures to ensure that those requirements are met consistently across all aspects of the network, data, and asset configurations.



Identity Baseline

Failure to apply identity requirements consistently can increase the risk of security breaches. The Identity Baseline discipline centres on guaranteeing that identity controls are implemented uniformly throughout all initiatives related to adopting cloud adoption.



Resource Consistency

The smooth operation of cloud systems is reliant on maintaining uniformity in resource configuration. Governance tools can aid in achieving a consistent configuration of resources, thereby minimizing risks related to onboarding, drift, discoverability, and recovery.



Deployment Acceleration

Incorporating centralisation, standardisation, and consistency into the deployment and configuration process can enhance governance practices. When deployed through cloud-based governance tools, these factors can expedite deployment activities and facilitate cloud management.

8. Manage Cloud Costs

Whilst cost savings are a common driver for cloud migration, if businesses do not implement cost controls and manage their cloud costs, they may receive an unexpectedly large bill. Thankfully, there are many tools built into Microsoft Azure and other cloud providers that make it simple to manage and optimise cloud costs.

On a basic level, businesses can view their cloud spend by service or resource and set a daily or monthly budget. Azure Cost Management also has a built-in forecasting tool, so businesses can see if they are going to exceed their budget and take steps to mitigate this. For businesses looking to optimise their cloud costs, there are several methods to do so.

Retire Services: This is not an optimisation strategy for when businesses initially move to the cloud, but over time if there are any resources that are not being used they should be removed.

Azure Advisor: Azure Advisor is a service that finds virtual machines with low usage. With this information, businesses can resize the machine, or even shut them down.

Right-Sizing VMs: Ideally, all VMs are running at high utilisation rates to optimise costs. VM size should be reviewed regularly to ensure your business is not wasting money on under-used resources.

Auto-Scaling: It is possible to automatically scale the number of virtual machine instances that run a workload. This auto-scaling can not only save your business money but also create a better experience for users.

Reserved Instances: For workloads that require a consistent computing capacity, it is possible to pre-pay for 1 or 3 years of usage and receive a discount for doing so. This discount can be up to 72% compared to the standard pay-as-you-go pricing.

Reserved Instances: If your business already has Windows Server or SQL Server licenses for onpremises infrastructure, you can save money with the Azure Hybrid Benefit. With this, your business does not need to pay for the license for the cloud resource.

The Real First Step – Work with a Trusted Advisor

Migrating to the cloud can be a complex process and it requires experience and expertise. Whilst many in-house IT departments may have the expertise, they will have less experience with migrations when compared to a managed service provider (MSP).

Working with a trusted advisor, or managed service provider will also reduce the risk associated with migration, such as loss of data or downtime, as the MSP can help your business avoid common antipatterns.

Outsourcing migration also ensures that your in-house IT team can continue to work as normal, without taking on additional workload, which could cause issues in the wider business.

Therefore, in most cases, it is more cost-effective and efficient to work with a third party for cloud migration and involving them as early in the project as possible increases the likelihood that your objectives will be met.

Many businesses also outsource the security and cost management of cloud workloads to the same MSP, which reduces your chance of falling victim to a cyberattack and keeps your bills down, as they will review the controls in stage 8 regularly.



Crown Managed Cloud Services

We offer a comprehensive workforce management solution integrated with a fully managed cloud service based on Microsoft Azure, a world-leading cloud platform.

Leveraging the flexibility and security of Azure, you can be assured of a smooth and efficient migration to enjoy the benefits of cloud, tailored to your unique business needs.



Deep Security & Compliance

Ensuring the security and compliance of your data in the cloud is our top priority. We implement robust security measures and adhere to industry standards to safeguard your sensitive information from cyber threats and ensure compliance with relevant regulations, UK Government guidelines and data protection.



Continuous & Resilient Operations

Our service operations are 24/7, without down times for backups etc. You can rely on proactive monitoring to ensure uninterrupted access to your applications and data.



Scalable with Business Needs

As your business evolves, so do your cloud requirements. Our service is designed to scale seamlessly with your business needs, whether you're experiencing rapid growth or adjusting to changing market conditions.



Microsoft Azure Certified Experts

Our team comprises Microsoft Azure certified experts who possess the knowledge and expertise to maximise the potential of the Azure platform for your business. From initial migration to ongoing optimisation, you can trust our professionals to deliver exceptional results.



UK-Based Support & Data Centres

We understand the importance of data residency requirements, which is why we do not outsource to off-shore third parties. With UK-based data centres and our support services, we ensure that your data remains within the UK borders and provide prompt assistance whenever you need it.



Ongoing Development & Maintenance

Our commitment doesn't end with migration. As part of our service, we provide ongoing development and maintenance services to keep your cloud environment up-to-date and supported.

With Crown Managed Cloud Services, you can rest assured that migration of your business functions to cloud is in capable and experienced hands.



Crown Workforce Management works with a wide range of public and private organisations. We also offer a dedicated duty management solution.

If you want to make sure your people are empowered to use their time as efficiently and effectively as possible, talk to us.

**For the latest insights and trends in
workforce management, follow us on:**

