

A management approach for migrating to the public cloud

KUWAIT: Yasser Zeineldin, Managing Director, LiveRoute and CEO, eHosting DataFort explains how the complex process of migrating to the public cloud can be enabled by adopting a management approach.

The benefits of migrating to a public cloud platform are now becoming increasingly well known. Whether small and medium businesses or large enterprises, there are multiple large-scale benefits. While using a cloud platform, businesses no longer need to invest in hardware and computing infrastructures. These are now hosted in the cloud platform. They can choose to opt for the services that best suit their businesses and pay for them based on their usage. This is the pay as you use model.

On the flip side, businesses that choose to migrate to using a public cloud platform need to accept a vanilla formula of features and usually have limited flexibility to change them. But the smooth functioning and uptime of the cloud platform is managed by a specialist hosting provider. Hence, businesses do not need to navigate and invest in the challenges of keeping themselves abreast of the latest technologies.

For businesses that have been using technology on-site and wish to access the benefits of a cloud platform, there are migration best practices to move forward. These ensure that an established way of working on-site is smoothly rebuilt on the cloud platform without minimum interruption to day to day business.

Moreover, security practices that have been established on-site need to be migrated and reset to work in the cloud without failure. These often require discussion with the cloud hosting service provider as well as with any third-party suppliers. By following a management-based approach to migration, business can ensure that they encounter minimum interruption to their day to day business.

When initiating a project that involves migration to the public cloud, making a checklist of critical factors is crucial. This helps to prioritize and draws attention to a roll back plan in case things do not run smoothly. Here is a list of the top seven factors that you should take into consideration.

1. Database structure and applications

You want all your data to be migrated in its original format and want to use it off the cloud in the same way. However, many databases that run from the cloud have different structures than their on-site counterparts. This is one area that you really need to look into from the beginning. The same differences are likely to appear in applications that have cloud and on-premises variants.

2. Identify the operating system

The performance of an application and its database are also dependent on the operating system and its version that is running



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on-site. If the public cloud environment is using a different operating system or a different version of the same operating system, plan for variations in performance and response.

3. Monitor all points of cross-over

The migration team must monitor the progress and success of the public cloud migration at various cross-over points including IP servers, IP gateways, storage application and third-party suppliers. Legacy applications that are being managed by outsourced suppliers, associated with long-term support contracts are high probability points of failure, at least in the initial stages. They need to be given more time and attention to reduce the impact of failures.

4. Application architecture

Not all applications are cloud ready. Ascertain that the applications that you are using on-premises are ready to be used in the cloud. Scalability and open APIs are a critical part of cloud robustness and cloud-ready application architectures.

5. Identify all redundancies

During an on-site to public cloud migration, redundancies and backups and roll back plans are a great idea. But once the migration plan has been completed and signed off, keeping redundancies in place play no role, and are an added cost. Decommission these resources in a planned manner.

6. What's inside those SLA agreements

Having a closer look at the service level agreements with all third-party suppliers involved in the migration, as well as responsibilities before, during, and after the migration is critical. Who is responsible for verification of the data integrity post migration, who is responsible for the security of the cloud platform once completed, and who is responsible for a specific failure, are important eye openers.

7. Objectives of migration

What are the short, medium- and long-term objectives of the cloud migration activity? How are they to be balanced during the roll out? Single-tenant or multi-tenant options can make a big difference in costing but can give huge returns in application availability and response and finally customer experience. When do you need to go all out, is an important cost to benefit question and key component of the strategy.

A critical success factor in any cloud migration is to build digital readiness for the business. On the other hand, for a customer, the expectation is a flawless application performance that is responsive without delay and displays information that is expected in the way they want it. A botched and mismanaged cloud migration exercise, may not only delay the digital transformation journey of the business, but will also play havoc with building and retaining its new and ever changing digital and Internet customers. There can be no bigger loss than this one.