

A Successful Journey to the Cloud is Taken Step-By-Step

How a phased approach to cloud migration increases success and decreases cost

Five years ago, we might have asked if your organization would consider a cloud migration in the future. Today, the more accurate question is: When is your company going to pursue a cloud migration?

“The Cloud” is one IT buzz word that’s here to stay. And for good reason: Cloud-based solutions have the ability to increase efficiency and accuracy, decrease costs, and increase the ease of scalability for the majority of your business processes. It’s no wonder that spending on public cloud computing in Canada is predicted to double from \$2.3 billion CAD in 2016 to \$5.5 billion CAD in 2020. Currently, the global cloud computing market in 2018 has been valued by Forrester Research at \$178 billion USD, and it’s set to grow at a 22% compounded annual growth rate.

But with the sheer number of solution providers on the market today, determining the correct platform to translate all your business processes becomes an overwhelming undertaking. In response, many organizations are seeking the assistance of third-party managed service providers.



Cloud Migration: An Analogy

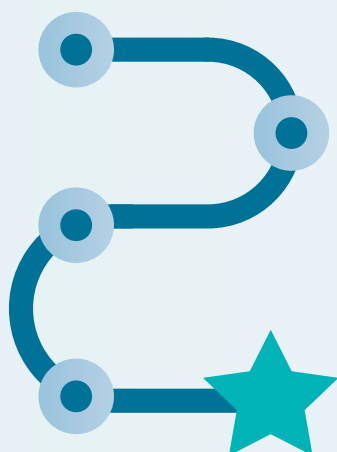
Let’s imagine for a moment that you have a health concern requiring the assistance of a medical professional - say, high blood pressure. Being the diligent character you are, you decide to bring this concern to two separate doctors and choose your doctor based on the proposed treatment plan that works best for you.

Dr. A goes straight for his prescription pad. He fills out a long list of medications, touting their virtues at every opportunity, and glossing over the side effects. He tells you to take the pills indefinitely and promises to cure your high blood pressure forever, quickly rushing you out of his office.

Dr. B, on the other hand, conducts a detailed intake assessment, asking you about your lifestyle, medical history, and current challenges. She outlines a number of different treatment methodologies, and uses your unique feedback to prescribe a tiered approach: You’ll try one medication for six weeks, combined with lifestyle changes, and she’ll monitor you throughout. If your blood pressure does not improve, she’ll tweak the plan for you until you’re 120 over 80 again.

Which doctor are you going to choose?

A step-by-step approach to migration



While there are some very obvious differences between doctors and managed cloud providers, it's easy to see the parallels in the analogy above. Many organizations seeking the assistance of a cloud migration specialist find themselves in a sales-oriented environment, being forced into an "all-in" solution that may or may not suit their needs.

Carbon60, a managed service provider, takes a very different approach to the cloud migration process, acting instead as a partner to their clients every step of the way. The organization seeks to understand the clients' needs, educate them on the available solutions, and gradually complete the migration process in a manner that decreases risk, empowers team members to absorb the necessary knowledge about the new platform, and make adjustments to the program over time as the business grows. First, and most importantly, Carbon60 takes the time to ask the hard questions, thoroughly weighing the client's options to determine if a cloud migration is indeed the right solution for them at the current time.

■ What factors should you consider before migrating?

Before determining whether the cloud is the right place for your workloads, consider some of the following questions:

What are my biggest concerns?

66%² of IT professionals list security as their number one concern in moving to the cloud. Individuals who are new to enterprise cloud solutions often hold the belief that their data will be less safe in the cloud than stored in their on-premises solution. This couldn't be further from the truth! All of the platforms that Carbon60 recommends, including AWS and Azure, undergo thorough 3rd party audits to ensure security. These solutions are well-architected to guarantee security in the cloud is properly configured and proactively monitored.

Who do I have on my in-house team?

By nature, migrating to the cloud involves a certain amount of training. There's an inherent mind shift in the transition, and this comes naturally to some team members more than others. Before beginning, you'll need to take an accurate inventory of your team, and identify the most open-minded of the bunch. These will be your champions during the process, encouraging the others along as the training commences and new procedures on the cloud are rolled out.

Why do I want to migrate to the cloud?

While the answer here may be as straight forward as, "I'm at the end of a contract with our incumbent provider" or, "My hardware has reached end of life and I want to explore new options", other common answers include downsized human resources, mergers and acquisitions, and the desire to lower costs. While all of these reasons are valid, you'll need to take a long, hard look at your intentions if your answer boils down strictly to cost savings. A recent study from 451 Research found that while 38.8% of CIOs list cost savings as their primary reason for cloud migration, cost quickly becomes the number one pain point post-migration.

Sure, cloud solutions have a lower up-front capital investment, but cloud becomes an operating expense post-migration and can creep up over time. In many cases, the desire to overuse the system without budgeting or shadow IT accelerating cloud consumption results in hefty charges that can take a big bite out of the yearly spend. Clearly ensuring that you've reviewed and discussed cloud usage with all team leaders who may or may not require access down the road is an important step in the decision-making process around overall solution costing. A managed cloud service provider can also develop governance models to help manage the usage and shield against overruns.

Why take a phased approach?

Once you've taken the time to accurately determine that a cloud migration suits your company's needs, the best way to mitigate risk and ensure long-term success is through a phased migration approach. In this approach, the migration takes place gradually, providing the ability to iron out any kinks and transition business with reduced disruption, before the repercussions become more severe.



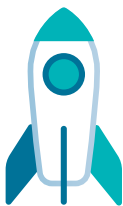
Step 1: Conduct an Assessment

Rather than simply completing a "lift and shift", Carbon60 conducts a detailed assessment of the current workloads, and the available cloud applications. In some cases, the strategy for translation may be 1:1 (i.e. switching a legacy application over to an identical cloud-based solution). But in many cases, the ability to combine functionalities and streamline vendors is a better approach. After gaining a thorough understanding of your existing system, Carbon60 will recommend the solution that will result in the most effective and efficient transition. Carbon60 operates both on their own cloud platform, as well as on other leading cloud platforms such as Azure and AWS.



Step 2: Identify Priorities

What are the current pain points in your existing environment? Are there any immediate "fires" that need to be put out first? These may include incumbent hardware approaching their termination date, or a lack of capacity on the existing infrastructure. These priorities will determine the order in which workloads are transitioned to the cloud. In cases where clients have no specific prioritization needs, Carbon60 will recommend prioritizing the low-risk workloads first, allowing them to serve as the test group.



Step 3: Soft Launch and Identify Challenges

Once the priorities have been identified, a clone is created and migrated first. Through Carbon60's QA process, this clone is run in the cloud without yet making it active. The client's team is involved, and begins work within the new solution to develop familiarity and identify any immediate issues. Once identified, Carbon60 provides a solution to these problems before the official launch. Following formal approval of the process, the smallest, most important pieces of the business are migrated at the very last stage.



Step 4: Project Management

Once the solution is launched, the Carbon60 team works with the client to allay any concerns and resolve any issues that arise. Rather than conducting the migration and walking away, this managed services provider offers ongoing support and optimization, and is available in the event of any challenges.

■ The Carbon60 difference



While other managed service providers focus on the infrastructure itself, Carbon60 focuses on overall workflow. They don't simply want to patch and monitor your operating system - they want to optimize your processes, creating a flexible cloud environment to support your business as you grow and evolve.

Depending on the size of the client's company and their individual needs, the process of cloud migration can take anywhere from 3 to 18 months. But regardless of the size or scale of the migration, Carbon60 guarantees quality first. At the end of the process, your organization will have an intimate understanding of your new cloud solution, having helped to fine tune the details according to your specific goals and challenges.

SOURCES:

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2. Forbes, "83% of Enterprise Workloads Will Be in the Cloud by 2020", <https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolombus/2018/01/07/83-of-enterprise-workloads-will-be-in-the-cloud-by-2020/-5aa27ecb6261>
3. The Enterprisers Project, "Public Cloud: 8 Stats to See", <https://enterpriseproject.com/article/2018/3/public-cloud-8-stats-see>

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About Carbon60

Established in 1999 and headquartered in Toronto, Carbon60 Networks specializes in end-to-end hosting solutions for public and private sector organizations with business-critical workloads. Based on the foundation of ultra-reliable service, Carbon60 provides flexible managed hosting solutions on the Carbon60 cloud platform as well as leading public clouds like AWS and Azure, allowing clients to remain agile to new business initiatives.

For more information on Carbon60's cloud migration services, contact our team today at 1 (888) 227-2666, or email us at sales@carbon60.com.