

5 things SA businesses need to consider before migrating to the cloud

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Cloud computing has become increasingly pervasive in the South African business world. In fact, a 2019 survey found that 77% of businesses are using cloud services of some kind in their IT department, with the most popular application being the backing up of data.



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The benefits for those that do embrace cloud include reduced IT costs, faster speed-to-market, better service levels, and cloud as an enabler of the digital business.

Additionally, the imperative to embrace cloud computing has never been higher. The recently released [fourth annual Salesforce State of the Connected Customer report](#) shows that South African consumers expect the majority of their interactions with businesses this year to be online.

Furthermore, 84% of South African customers say that Covid-19 has elevated their expectation of businesses digital capabilities. In other words, businesses need to be digital, and to be digital they need cloud, but embracing cloud computing and making the most of it are two different things.

Here are five things South African businesses need to consider before moving to the cloud:

1. **Understand the benefits and risks** - There are several well-established benefits to embracing cloud computing. These include lower cost and greater speed, thanks to not having to spend money on data centres with servers, IT experts, continuous air-conditioning and expensive hardware and software.

Embracing cloud also comes with greater agility, with businesses able to simply contact their provider when they need additional performance and capacity. As important as those benefits are, businesses also need to be aware of the risks of cloud adoption.

When it comes to public cloud especially, there are security risks. Its wide accessibility makes it more vulnerable to hackers. A good provider will, however, mitigate those risks and ensure that your business' data is as safe (if not safer) than it would be on site.

2. **Know which applications suit your business** - Cloud computing isn't just about data storage. It also includes applications such as disaster recovery, hosted email, and most types of business software. A number of factors, including the size and complexity of your business, will determine which applications you need.

Clearly defining your needs will help you understand which applications actually suit your business. That, in turn, will help you find providers that are in sync with these needs and don't try to upsell you on products you don't need.

3. **Identify the right cloud deployment** - Every cloud service provider offers three different deployment models: Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). Which one you choose depends on how much flexibility and control you need. IaaS brings the highest levels of flexibility and cloud management but is more resource-intensive.



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PaaS comes with fewer IT resource requirements and faster speed to market but has restrictions on technical functionality and compute resources. SaaS, meanwhile, requires the fewest IT resources and offers rapid deployment. But it also comes with minimal application control and little to no flexibility.

4. **Consider the currency** - Although less of a worry than it once was, the volatility of the Rand and the fact that most cloud providers charged in Dollars were a long-standing complication for cloud adoption in South Africa. Fortunately, many of the biggest cloud providers have switched to Rand pricing.

Even then though, currency fluctuations can result in major price increases from year to year. It's important, therefore, that businesses not only consider providers that charge locally but also those that have kept their charges consistent over the years.

5. **Know who'll manage your cloud deployment** - While it's definitely possible for small and medium-sized businesses to manage their own cloud deployment, the rapid pace of technological change can make it confusing and time-consuming.

A good cloud deployment partner will guide your organisation through that transition and ensure that it sees all the benefits of the cloud with minimal interruption to your operations.

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