



Why Digital Transformation is Useless Without The Blessing of Your People

Businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the critical role that cloud technology and its effective adoption has to play across their organisation. Yet, how cloud technology and operating models are designed and implemented properly within the broader organisational landscape remains undefined for many.

The transition to cloud computing is happening at a head-spinning pace. According to [Fortune Business Insights](#), the global cloud market value is expected to grow from US\$408 billion in 2022 to US\$1,712,44 billion by 2029.

Yep, it's a staggering amount of money but, when you look at the advantages of migrating to cloud-based technology and ways of working, it's not hard to understand why industry analysts attach so many zeros to their market valuation calculations.

There are often any number of reasons behind a business transformation to cloud-based computing. However, for many businesses, those gains are negated by failing to effectively communicate with the people most affected by such a move.

The question of 'why transform?' is a consideration that goes beyond convincing C-suite decisionmakers. Providing a compelling answer to this question is something that involves everyone in your organisation and, in many ways, the success of your digital transformation relies on everyone in your organisation having your back and wanting to come on the journey with you.

It's an IT Thing – Or is It?

There are multiple reasons for organisations wanting — or needing — to transform their technology platforms and critical business applications. Often, it's to remain competitive and/or because the technology they're currently using is reaching its end of days.

On the other side of the coin, a shift to the cloud may be perceived as a purely transactional call ('we wanna save a bunch of money or we've got a cost out requirement so, therefore, migrating to the cloud is gonna save us a heap of dough', etc, etc.). Whatever the reasons though, cloud technology is a major enabler of an almost revolutionary transformation in the way many businesses operate.

The transformation of an organisation from a 'rack and stack' IT infrastructure to a cloud-based model is almost always seen (exclusively) as an IT project. But it's time for everyone to dump this assumption.

Of course, your IT team will deal with the bulk of the ‘nuts and bolts’ of your cloud architecture – its capability and its implementation – but, to really take advantage of what the cloud will do for your organisation, it’s imperative to frame this transition as a company-wide people and process change management project.

Due diligence and change management processes often have an enormous amount of resources allocated to them. However, many organisations come up short in effectively articulating their transformation case to those who’ll experience its impacts the most: its operational staff. This lack of “buy-in” results in needlessly blowing out costs and an unnecessarily slower implementation timeframe.

Mission Critical: What’s In It For Me?

Failing to engage and consult with the people who are going to be the most heavily impacted by your transformation is something Contino witnesses across many organisations – the ones who haven’t come to us first, of course!

Without exception, when any organisation moves to the cloud, there’s a bunch of ‘ways of working’ processes that need to be adjusted as part of the process. Why? Because operating in the cloud is different than operating in traditional hardware data centres.

Many organisations don’t articulate the ‘why?’ part about the cloud or, by extension, the ‘why the cloud is such a critical enabler to effective transformation in their enterprise’. It may help to consider it in this light: It’s not a matter of simply replacing the ‘tin’ you already have with ‘tin’ in the cloud, because your critical applications and business data will be living in a completely different type of ecosystem.

Our experience tells us that effectively communicating the relevant benefits to stakeholders is just as important as the time, financial resources and energy that go into planning and designing an organisation’s cloud infrastructure and their future operating model to support it.

Here are some of those benefits that can be communicated:

- While architecture and capabilities vary across different industries and organisations, cloud computing has a proven track record of delivering customer service improvements and efficiency gains through access to better data insights and analysis. Not only does this help lighten the day-to-day workload for many team leaders and their people – ultimately giving them more time to focus on their core responsibilities – it also improves their professional competencies that will undoubtedly improve how they do their jobs. But take a cursory walk through an organisation that’s neglected to communicate the ‘what’s in it for me’ (WIIFM) throughout the implementation phase of a cloud transformation, and you’d be hard-pressed to find a department that’s aware of these plusses.
- Transforming and embracing cloud technology makes you a more attractive destination for technical talent. In today’s incredibly tight and competitive labour market, skill shortages are one of the biggest impediments that enterprises face while undertaking their transformation. Undoubtedly, that’s a positive for Contino because that’s where we can help by imparting our knowledge and experience, as well as upskilling customer teams along the journey.
- Innovation in your business can be enabled quickly and easily via the cloud. Building brand new digital products, adding new features, pivoting your business in response to changing market conditions or customer needs, reaching more customers and delivering them a better experience – all of these things should not be constrained by draconian procurement processes or hardware supply chain delays. Empower your teams to be self-reliant, convert their great ideas into reality and experience real, high-value outcomes for your business in weeks not months or years. That’s not a pipedream – that should be BAU!

The Anxiety of Not Knowing

It's far too common for department leads to discover their critical business system is moving to the cloud when someone involved in the project contacts them to let them know that it's happening... so 'let's get started!'

Not surprisingly, for many managers, there's little understanding of what that actually means. Their internal rhetoric might sound like this:

'I don't have any skills in my team about the cloud and you're telling me I have to move to the cloud. Why? Save me a bunch of money, sure, but how are you going to make me more efficient and effective? How are you going to make my business application more stable, more resilient? My team and I still have our day jobs to do!! How are you gonna do that?'

All of those messages either don't arrive, or are left too late, and project team members spend what could have been valuable project time doing the majority of their work explaining and justifying to a department head why they need to do it.

Instead, what we need to be doing is embracing the right communication strategy. This means articulating the WIIFM to a critical system owner in a business, which could sound like this:

'It will give your teams more skills and it will make them more effective. We're going to make your critical business system more reliable and resilient meaning you'll have less outages and downtime to deal with. As a result you'll be able to dedicate more time to doing the things that make a really positive difference for the business and that are motivational for your team.'

Answering the 'why' is a vital part of taking your people on a journey, and taking their team members on that journey with all of us. They have to be part of the solution, rather than putting up roadblocks along the way because their fight-or-flight response kicks in, and there's a potential fear their job will be taken away.

In actual fact, we want to do the opposite, which is sitting alongside your people and upskilling them as part of the journey. We all want to make them better skilled, equip them with greater empowerment, and provide them with a better understanding of the changes. By doing so, they can contribute to the business, and its digital transformation journey in a more meaningful and positive way.

Wrapping It Up

'What's in it for me?' is a fundamental questioning aspect of human nature. And, if the time is not invested into answering this question with the needs of a specific audience in mind, the people of that organisation will neither be professionally nor emotionally invested in any change management journey.

Applying this thinking to your 'why transform?' strategy could be the key component to ensuring a successful cloud transformation project.