



# HEAD IN THE CLOUDS FEET ON THE GROUND

Adopting cloud computing is rarely an easy decision, but in today's new normal it turns out to be remarkably advantageous. Martin Ferguson shares his experience of making a timely, and considered, move to the cloud.

## WHO WOULD BE AN EARLY ADOPTER?

The case for embracing new working methods and digital transformation was a tough one for many companies to swallow. The early sales pitch based on lower costs never really stood up to scrutiny, and what about those security concerns?

Surely the cloud means less secure... or does it? Those businesses with the foresight to embrace the cloud are those who are now enjoying the benefits, as the way the world works continues to evolve.

*The cloud might not be not all things to all people, but what it undoubtedly offers is flexibility, agility, scalability and even - if done correctly - security. Having implemented many digital transformation projects we've identified the core elements that must be considered to ensure success.*

## GET YOUR IT HOUSE IN ORDER

Don't try and migrate to the cloud without fixing your underlying IT. Strengthen your core, ensure that your user management (like Active Directory, for example) is well managed, aligned, process-driven and secure.

Ensure that your underlying network is well built, has plenty of spare capacity (those VOIP calls need room to deliver quality voice) and fully documented.

Secure your perimeter (and your internal networks), check your firewalls and then check them again. Remove rules you don't need, identify every potential hole and lock it down.

And don't ignore your users. Secure their devices too; ensure they're running business approved software that the IT team knows how to support – and restrict users' ability to install 'rogue' software. Implement a regular process for upgrades to ensure their devices perform at their optimum.





## BRING THE BUSINESS WITH YOU

This is often forgotten when embarking on a transformation project, but if your users don't buy in to the change and the reasons for it, you have no chance.

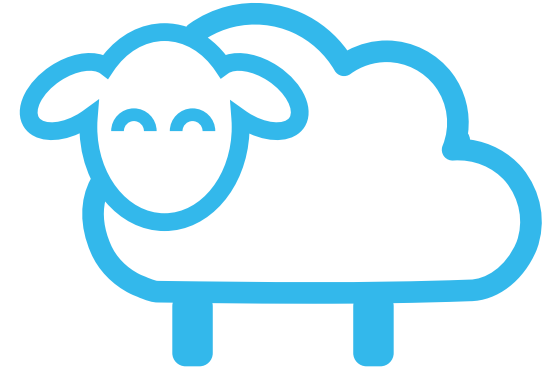
Ensure you have top down support from your senior leaders. Get them to tell everyone about it, a lot! Message regularly, sell the benefits, explain your reasoning and then message again. Be creative; use the new tools at your disposal. Listen to feedback and address it. And then message some more, and then again, and again.



## PICK SOFTWARE THAT SUPPORTS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

Notice that I did not say to buy the best. Every business is unique, and just because an application is market-leading does not mean that it is the best fit for your organisation.

Identify your specific requirements, write the criteria that each application needs to adhere to in order to deliver benefit, and use that to identify the correct application. Don't be afraid to make vendors bid against one another—there can be significant savings to be made and your COO will love you for it!



## DON'T BE SHEEPISH

Just as you should not simply pick the software that everyone uses, you should not move everything to the cloud just because that's what salespeople say everyone's doing.

Some providers will have you believe that the cloud is gold and paved with unicorns; everything must go there. We've looked at it more closely... Sure, there are systems that lend themselves to the cloud, but there are others that will perform better and cost less left as on-premise applications or services.

*Frequently a well-considered hybrid approach can deliver the holy grail of performance, productivity, cost efficiency and ease of management.*



## INVEST IN EXPERTISE

There is a commonly held belief in IT that an expert is an expert in everything. That is not the case. Unless you have the relevant expertise in-house look elsewhere, bring in the best that is available that you can afford.

Designing a new cloud platform is a tough task that requires considerable expertise, experience and knowledge. Migrating your user accounts is not something that can be done without the right tools and planning. Building a robust SCCM environment to automate laptop builds and updates is difficult. Invest in your team, get the right staff and never be afraid to remove someone if they are not completely suitable.



## CONCENTRATE ON DELIVERY FLEXIBILITY

It goes without saying that the best talent is drawn to companies that appear to them forward thinking, embracing flexible ways of working and offering the best tools.

During our transformation projects, we set ourselves a task to deliver "seamless IT". We want users to be able to work from anywhere with an internet connection, and have exactly the same experience as being in the office, no VPNs, no multiple log-ons, no fuss. If you do everything well, it's possible. You can achieve a migration that will set up your business IT systems for years, and deliver real benefit to your staff.

Companies who get it right and deliver a cloud-based transformation can manage the ever-evolving shift to the 'new normal' painlessly. Their people are working from home, embracing new technology, collaborating and getting on with their jobs.

Many other companies will probably find their IT teams are rushed off their feet, their employees are struggling to get their work done from home and business leaders will be wondering what they can do to resolve the challenges they face.

The good news is that it is not too late, and there are plenty of businesses that can help. Even taking small steps, you can help your users now and pave the way to a more agile, secure, scalable future in the cloud.

For further information email [hello@azureduk.com](mailto:hello@azureduk.com) or **schedule a call with us.**