Offloading Hybrid Cloud Management for Strategic Advantage

The 451 Take

Enterprises are increasingly turning to hybrid cloud environments as offering the best of two worlds – joining the public cloud advantages of scalable, pay-as-you-go infrastructure with private cloud's control and predictability. This approach requires placing workloads where they'll yield the greatest benefit for the business, whether that means modernizing software to enhance the customer experience or securing access to mission-critical applications and data.

To remain competitive, organizations are undergoing a transformation – of their IT environments, their procurement routines, their development and operations practices, and, ultimately, their business processes and culture. The changes required are unique to each enterprise, but the gains to be made are too compelling to ignore: greater IT cost efficiency, business agility and resilience.

The transition is not without challenges, however, and the consequences of missteps can be considerable: wasted spending, technical debt and, in some cases, reverse migration of applications and data, not to mention disgruntled IT staff. With a wider variety of environments to handle, IT departments need to keep multiple applications in tune across public and private clouds. Recent 451 Research data shows that 65% of enterprises with hybrid cloud deployments are contracting out some workloads, and IT systems monitoring and management is the top target for managed services, sought by over half of survey respondents.

Important Factors Supporting the Business Case for Managed Services

Source: 451 Research, Voice of the Enterprise: Cloud, Hosting & Managed Services, Workloads and Key Projects 2019

Q. Which of the following factors are most important in supporting the business case for your organization's use of managed services in connection with cloud or hosted infrastructure/applications?

Factor	%
More cost effective	62%
Frees our IT staff to focus on other projects	45%
Better performance/availability	41%
Access to specialized expertise we don't have	35%
Security is improved	34%
Speed/the work is completed faster	32%
Lack the staff to do the work ourselves	30%
Provider will do better quality job than our organization	15%
Access to better management tools	14%
Other	3%

% of respondents (n=136)

A managed services partner can bring a wealth of experience in helping organizations plan and execute a digital transformation strategy, identifying which applications can be effectively shifted to off-premises platforms and services, which are best left on-premises, which can be refactored for modern-day operations and development, and which can be decommissioned and replaced with net-new development. The keys are to establish clear business outcomes that can be enabled by IT, to take a holistic view of the existing estate, and to iterate as the transformation proceeds, technology choices improve and the needs of the business evolve.

Business Impact

BE HONEST ABOUT SKILLS GAPS. 451 Research data shows that enterprises cite 'cloud platform expertise' as the top area where they face an acute IT skills shortage. It's no wonder: off-premises deployments are growing, cloud providers are adding services at a breakneck pace, and competition for talent is intense. Even organizations that have sufficient in-house resources to sensibly manage hybrid and multi-cloud environments need to consider the opportunity cost of doing so – engineers preoccupied with 'keeping the lights on' are missing out on chances to help IT move the business forward. Our research shows that 35% of enterprises are seeking outside services to help fill this gap.

PRIORITIZE MANAGEABILITY. Organizations are spoiled for choice in today's IT services market, but the downside of uncoordinated adoption is great – businesses migrating workloads off-premises may end up with an assemblage of poorly managed, wasteful IT assets in the public cloud that can expose them to security risks, inefficient operations and unforeseen costs. The ongoing transition to hybrid cloud is an opportunity to get things right, establishing and enforcing policies in far-flung environments with an eye toward putting control and accountability where they best serve the goals of the enterprise.

AUTOMATE TOIL. Improvements in device monitoring, telemetry and software-defined infrastructure make it possible to automate routine tasks, allowing engineers to run systems more efficiently and freeing them up to focus on business challenges. 451 Research found that freeing up IT staff to focus on other projects was cited by 45% of survey respondents as supporting a business case for using third-party services. Procedures that can be successfully automated include patch management, incident logging, resource provisioning and scaling, and configuration management.

STAY ADAPTABLE. The shift to hybrid cloud environments requires changes at the personnel, process and technology levels, and is bound to cause disruption, but essentially the choice is to adapt or fall behind. Digital transformation does not have a beginning, middle and end – it is a continuous, iterative commitment with the potential to keep enterprises on a secure competitive footing while freeing IT to drive new value and innovation.

Looking Ahead

The benefits of hybrid cloud in the enterprise are just beginning to reveal themselves. In a recent 451 Research survey, 57% of IT decision-makers said they were pursuing an integrated on-premises/off-premises environment as part of their overall strategy, many of them using multiple public clouds in addition to on-premises resources.

Securing and managing IT assets in a shifting and multivariate environment will be table stakes for businesses wanting to take full advantage of new technologies and platforms. Ideally, hiring a managed services partner to accomplish this will pay for itself: achieving more cost-effective operations is the top reason IT decision-makers are contracting out IT management, as cited by 62% of respondents. Ten years ago, few organizations could have foreseen the revolutionary impact that as-a-service offerings and cloud-native applications are having today, but the services and ecosystems maturing around these technologies point to the need to make bold choices and modernize environments for the years ahead.

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Hewlett-Packard Enterprise provides a suite of services and solutions to help enterprises maximize the value of their hybrid cloud programs. Starting with HPE Right Mix Advisor, determine the right environment for each workload. For hybrid cloud environments, HPE GreenLake can manage the cloud experience as well as bringing true IT consumption on-premises. As a managed service, HPE GreenLake Hybrid Cloud takes an automated approach to managing cloud operations, with ability to manage cost, compliance, and other risks in public and private cloud environments.