



HOW-TO GUIDE

How to move to the cloud

BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN THE CLOUD

Determining your cloud migration strategy

Businesses need resilience and agility built into their infrastructures to stay ahead in today's fast-moving environment. Cloud-based enterprise software provides businesses with a secure and reliable platform that enables quick responses to opportunities and market needs.

However, many business leaders are hesitant about moving enterprise applications to the cloud, thinking, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." The trouble is, what worked yesterday, may not work today and tomorrow. The good news is that organizations that have waited to make the move to the cloud, now have more opportunities than ever before to choose a path that best serves their strategic needs.

This executive brief details why organizations should strongly consider moving to the cloud now, explores various cloud-migration options and strategies, and provides advice on what to look for from cloud service providers.

“ Infor provides us the software we need to power our digital transformation. The cloud-based platform makes it easier to accommodate our growth plans and gives us the industry functionality we need.”

CHRIS SMITH
CIO, Liberty Steel UK

Why you should move to the cloud

Moving to the cloud can provide organizations with significant business benefits, such as the ability to innovate faster, grow the business more aggressively, and even reduce risk by ensuring compliance is maintained. Moving to the cloud can also help organizations avoid scenarios that can cause damage to the business, such as:

- Critical system failure of aging on-premises hardware and infrastructure
- The loss of technical expertise for legacy applications
- Complexity in integrating systems from mergers and acquisitions
- Legacy bottlenecks that prevent the adoption of innovative technologies
- Inadequate resources to defend against increasingly sophisticated security breaches and malicious attacks
- Expanding IT costs caused by customizations, upgrades, and maintenance

To learn more about these potential business-damaging scenarios in detail, read our [best practice guide to business continuity in the cloud](#).

Cloud migration options

As applications age, gaps between the functionality they provide and the functionality an organization needs often grow progressively further apart. In addition, the cost and effort required to maintain needed capabilities on current systems typically become increasingly difficult to manage. As these deficiencies become inhibitors to new opportunities, the need for cloud migration becomes greater than ever.

When creating a cloud migration strategy, a crucial first step is to consider the strategic priorities of your business. Determine which path to the cloud will drive the most value by focusing on one of the following options:

“Infor’s cloud infrastructure, network services, and industry-specific application design will give us more reliability, security, and scalability.”

JOHN KENEFICK
Chief Information Officer, Pechanga Resort Casino

“We trust in Infor ION® because it will allow information to flow smoothly between our applications, third-party applications, and analytics—in a secure environment.”

VITTORIO BOERO
CIO, Ferrari

Core business operations

Moving core business functions—such as financial management, operations management, manufacturing management, supply chain management, and inventory management—to the cloud can produce significant returns, but typically take a longer time to realize.

Key indicators that core enterprise resource planning (ERP) capabilities should be moved to the cloud first include:

- You need to improve the connectivity of your ERP system to internal and external applications
- Core capabilities, particularly industry-specific functionality, are lacking in your current solution
- You want to provide employees with improved access to ERP functionality across geographies or device types
- You need to improve data capture in your ERP system to feed enterprise analytics

Key business processes

Focusing on a narrower set of business processes that mainly affect specific departments within an organization may be a way to balance risk with return on investment (ROI). Often these “edge” solutions allow businesses to generate benefits that free up resources for larger initiatives.

Moving edge applications to the cloud first might be the right move for your organization if:

- Your business is prioritizing near-term business value
- You prefer shorter implementation cycles and a simpler ROI model
- You need advanced capabilities beyond typical ERP features to support business processes or objectives

Digital gateway

If your organization still needs to keep its core and edge applications on-premises for now, then implementing a digital gateway in the cloud may be the best strategy. A digital gateway is a highly scalable cloud integration platform that provides an opportunity for on-premises-based businesses to easily integrate various Infor® and non-Infor applications—regardless of their deployment (on-premises, private cloud, or public cloud)—to execute business processes.

A digital gateway replaces the need to have traditional point-to-point and batch integrations, and is the first step toward a modern integration platform. A digital gateway helps build out an API strategy to support an organization's future needs around cloud, abstraction from core ERP systems, and the ability to extend functionality (such as adding mobile services to legacy applications).

A digital gateway might be the best strategy when your organization has any of the following scenarios:

- Migration of core and edge applications are not possible in the short term
- You need to integrate a mix of on-premises and cloud applications
- You prefer to use a single, secure API and web service hub for all of your applications
- You need one place to control and monitor all the asynchronous interfaces in the organization

“ Infor CloudSuite™ gives us the agility and transparency we need as our value chain becomes more global and more complex. We now have complete confidence that Infor CloudSuite is the right platform for our global business.”

LACHLAN FARRAN
Chief Operating Officer, Rip Curl

“ We now have an outstanding disaster recovery approach and are HIPAA compliant. We are confident our data is more secure in the Infor Cloud.”

BILL HOFRICHTER
Chief Operating Officer, Concordia Plan Services

Enterprise analytics

By moving analytics to the cloud, businesses can aggregate enterprise-wide data and break down data and organizational silos. This enables a data-driven culture where meaningful insights can be continuously reviewed to help teams work better and improve decision-making.

Moving analytics to the cloud first might be the right move if:

- Your organization is prioritizing business insights and wants to become more data-driven
- You want to continue using your current on-premises applications while leveraging data across application silos
- You want to address critical business issues such as scalability, performance, security, elasticity, and risk management
- You are seeking opportunities to apply advanced tools for machine learning or artificial intelligence (AI)

It's important to keep in mind that cloud strategy is not “one-size-fits-all.” The key to an effective migration strategy is to consider your complete technology ecosystem when identifying priorities. Many factors must be considered when creating a plan—including budget, change readiness, available skills, risk profile, and strategic objective.

To learn more about cloud migration options, [read our article](#) on the topic.

Cloud migration strategy

While migrating to the cloud may appear daunting, there's tremendous value in modernizing technology ecosystems with cloud technology—including the ability to more easily keep your capabilities current and reducing the load on internal resources. According to [McKinsey](#), “By viewing cloud computing as a starting point for IT automation, companies may be able to have it all: scalability, agility, flexibility, efficiency, and cost savings. But that's only possible by building up both automation and cloud capabilities.”¹

Assembling a team to drive change

Teams that execute successful transformations bring together business and technical stakeholders to develop a complete set of requirements for both the near- and long-term.

The goal should be to consider a comprehensive set of requirements that specify how functions work with each other, how the applications need to interact with external entities (such as suppliers and partners), and how business strategies and market dynamics may affect requirements. The team should include an architecture function that identifies critical needs for integration, scalability, performance, and technology maintenance.

Building the business case

After determining requirements, your team should work with financial planning to select the ROI model for the migration's early phase(s). It's a good idea to choose initial projects that can provide a strong tangible contribution to the business once implemented.

By focusing on time to value, the early stages of the migration effort can free up resources to support future projects necessary for meeting more strategic goals that have longer-term benefits.

Preparing your data

Bringing data together from disparate systems is an essential step to realizing cloud value. By aggregating data across the enterprise, businesses can gain visibility to align operations and employees.

Ensure you have a clear and robust approach to application integration and analytics, including the definition of data exchange standards and semantic maps to contextualize data once it's been aggregated. For ongoing management of data exchanges, API-driven interfaces should be prioritized to maximize scalability and flexibility.

Selecting your tools, methodology, and partners

Identifying platform technologies for integration, user access management, data aggregation, analytics, and reporting should be done in parallel with your initial application selection. These essential technologies will help keep your business moving forward as applications are migrated, and can provide real-time reporting and insights to improve decision-making.

One way to achieve this is with Infor's 60/30/10™ software implementation methodology. With this approach, 60% of the implementation happens with out-of-the-box solutions—these are basic core functions prebuilt into the software and require no additional configuration. An additional 30% of the solution is implemented from existing functions in the software that simply need to be enabled or configured to fit specific business needs. The final 10% is done with extensions, which include the processes that are highly differentiating that make your business unique from others in your markets. This approach allows us to implement solutions much more rapidly and affordably. This would not be possible without Infor's commitment to industry-specific products.

Choosing the right partners to help you design and implement your cloud strategy is essential. Many organizations don't have the capacity or expertise to do it themselves. Your partners should recognize that time to value will dictate a phased approach with clear milestones for tangible business value. Your partners should focus on business key performance indicators (KPIs) during the implementation and post-deployment phases of the project to align with the business case.

Embrace the cloud

Organizations need agility built into their infrastructure to stay ahead in today's volatile environment. Cloud-based enterprise software provides the kind of agile platform that enables quick responses to opportunities, challenges, and customer needs.

In virtually every industry, organizations of all sizes have reached the tipping point where they're now recognizing the value of cloud deployment and acknowledging that migrating on-premises solutions to the cloud brings many benefits. This is a massive shift from the early days of cloud computing, where many organizations were worried about security, protecting intellectual property, and giving up their heavily modified solutions. Now, cloud technology providers have proven the reliability of cloud platforms and demonstrated world-class security, robust capabilities, and ease of deployment. With Infor's deep industry functionality built-in, you can implement the majority of the solution "out of the box."

Migrating to the cloud doesn't need to be an all-or-nothing proposition. The range of possible strategies outlined in this guide enable organizations to leverage technologies that improve business processes, while still relying on existing systems to deliver critical functionality that might not be quite ready to move to the cloud. Whether an organization's business systems are entirely in the cloud or exist in a hybrid environment, the cloud's security, innovation, and reliability are better able to evolve more quickly than virtually any on-premises-only implementation.

The Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights

The Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights was born from building and living our customer-first culture. The Bill of Rights articulates Infor's vision for providing modern cloud solutions and building long-term relationships based on trust and shared success. It formalizes our commitment to flexibility, transparency, reliability, and providing customers with peace of mind.

We know that plans can go awry, businesses grow, and needs change over time. We want to be your partner and support you—even as your business evolves differently than you expect.

[Learn more about the Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights.](#)

About Aktion

In business since 1979, Aktion Associates Inc., is a national ERP software reseller and IT system integrator focused on the Architectural Engineering & Construction, Distribution and Manufacturing industries. We partner with innovative technology providers to deliver vertical-specific business ERP applications. Company-owned data centers provide secure cloud hosting, disaster recovery and back up services, and the Network Operations Center (NOC) monitors managed services clients. Aktion is an IT infrastructure provider for IBM, HP, Lenovo, Cisco, VMware and Microsoft technologies. Other deliverables include network engineering, software engineering, and on-premise IT support.

Visit www.aktion.com.

¹ Nagendra Bommadevara, Andrea Del Miglio, and Steve Jansen, "Cloud adoption to accelerate IT modernization," McKinsey & Company, April 12, 2018.

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Infor builds business software for specific industries in the cloud. With 17,000 employees and over 68,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor software is designed for progress. To learn more, please visit www.infor.com.