How to migrate to the cloud in 12 steps

LINKIT
BUILDING IT TOGETHER

Inform yourself with our cloud migration checklist

A cloud migration comes in many shapes and sizes. The most common is going from on-premise to the public cloud, but migrations from cloud to cloud or hybrid options (partly to cloud) are also possible. In almost every situation, a cloud migration is the starting point of a new way of working that has an impact on your entire organization. Setting up a clear strategy, deploying the right expertise and above all good adoption are essential. In this checklist you will find a clear overview of all key steps, with references to additional relevant information where necessary. The goal is to help you make your cloud migration a success, both for the company and for your employees.

1. Recognize your stakeholders

Identify stakeholders from IT and don't forget your end users. Business stakeholders who don't know the tech are crucial in giving you all the information to build a fitting solution and will play a big role in the adoption to the rest of the organisation.

2. Define (main) users, needs and necessary applications

The goal of a cloud migration should always be to empower your people. When they are equipped with the right technology and tools, they will not only excel in the work they do, they will also do this with higher satisfaction. An Office 365 survey (Wakefield Research, March 2019) found 69 percent of the interviewed companies stated they are more productive after moving (partly) to the cloud.

To make this happen it's always important to start bottom up. Define main users (early adopters) who will not only use the new cloud tooling extensively, but can also act as advocates to introduce the new way of working in your organisation. Even more important is defining needs in the current work environment that

should be improved . Doing a thorough check of your applications is important. For instance, some can be replaced by SaaS applications, while others should stay on premise.

To get a good picture of this you can read our business case about a cloud migration at Safire LINKIT recently carried out.

> *"The goal of a cloud migration should always be to empower your people."*

3. Create a strategic plan that gets stuck

Think about timelines and dependencies. Dependencies can be on:

1. **Technology** - is a license about to end which will have to move the migration forward?
2. **People** - who to involve, how much time do they have available?
3. **Tools** - can we migrate this application without the whole landscape breaking?

> *"96% of North American companies miss the right expertise for their cloud migration."*

4 Compare the cloud providers

There are three leading cloud providers: AWS, Azure and Google Cloud. Most people are well aware of this, but do you also know where they differ from each other? And which one is the best provider for your solution? These are essential questions. If you ask a developer for their preference, it's often difficult to get an objective answer. Since hardly anyone has working experience with all three vendors, they are often set to promote the one they know.

A good overview, with technical insight, can be found in this article.

5 Get the right expertise

The cloud world changes rapidly. Engineers with recent experience in your envisioned cloud provider will be of great help in realizing your ideas in a quick and proactive way. A survey of 250 North American companies who executed a cloud migration recently, found that a staggering 96 percent came to the conclusion they missed the right expertise for their cloud migration. This means almost every company has a knowledge gap and it's better to fix it beforehand than finding out halfway through the process. At LINKIT we have a massive team of over 1000 IT staff, both own personnel and freelancers, who together can provide every level of expertise you may possibly need.

6 Explore different migration options

There are multiple options when it comes to migration. You can choose to fully transfer to the cloud or to do it partially (hybrid). Also, when it comes to moving applications to the cloud you will have a choice: will you keep the functionality as it is? (lift and shift/ rehosting) or do you take the opportunity to make alterations to improve them? (refactoring) and make them 'cloud ready'. There is no standard for this. At LINKIT we don't believe in just replacing old with new, but to make a plan for every application (rearchitecting).

7 Consider governance and security needs

Governance and security in the cloud are a totally different playing field compared to on premise. Instead of just protecting your site, you now have to protect your account. In the cloud everyone can login and since you probably do not want your business documents lingering everywhere, you need a solid lock.

Most companies use single sign on two factor authentication. Sounds difficult, but it's mainly confirming with your phone that it's really you who is logging in. This also directly influences your governance, since this 'lock' also protects all client data as required by GDPR regulation.

9 Run pilots

Proving success early is key to a successful cloud migration, especially in bigger companies. Both managers and employees often do not have the stamina to wait one or two years until they finally benefit from a new work environment. To prove success you should pilot your migration with only a few workloads. Perform a pilot by migrating physical servers or VMs from on-premises to Azure for example, using Azure Site Recovery. Or perform a pilot by migrating databases from on-premises using a Database Migration Service. Use learnings and tools from the pilot to complete your workload migration.

8 Think about training and operations from the start

You can choose to do support and maintenance yourself or to work together with a third party. Do you want to deliver support on the new environment yourself? Make sure you plan trainings on cloud tools from the start. Do you prefer outside support? Plan a moment during the cloud migration to discuss your needs in time before you go live.

10 Handle old hardware

After a successful migration make sure to shut down machines and pull them away from any maintaining processes. Do you have any on premise hardware you no longer need? You can securely have it removed and wiped, sometimes making some money with the hardware.

11. User adoption

New IT asks people to work in a different way. When it comes to adoption you will pick the fruits from the investments you made in points one and two. If done right? (don't really get this part) you managed to involve business stakeholders throughout the process, giving them a role in enabling the rest of the organization to learn a new way of working. Know that you will get more questions right after go-live and taking the time to answer those will result in happier end users. You can manage this by deciding whether you want to go live with a big bang or get users acquainted with new applications over time.

The big bang will lead to a fast and numerous amount of questions over a short period of time. When you transfer people by small groups at a time, Adoption will be spread over time. There is no right or wrong, as long as you make the right preparations. It's just what you prefer.

Want to know more about this topic? Make sure to read the article 'You can learn to adopt IT. 3 tips that make the difference'.

12. Establish SLAs, KPIs and Evaluate

From a business perspective it's important to measure improvement. Think about KPIs on cost, performance, errors, etc. before the migration. Afterwards, continue to optimize usage and savings by measuring the right indicators.

Any questions?

Do you still have question? Or would you like to have a creative session to explore ways how to perform one at your company? Get in touch with one of our experts below.

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