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How to futureproof your cloud roadmap for enhanced resilience and innovation

Daniel Schneider
Business Development Manager,
Hybrid IT Services at Fujitsu

Whilst today's world of global interconnectivity has helped organizations to evolve and develop a wider reach, the unexpected events of the past few years – such as the pandemic, climate crisis and geopolitical conflict – have made the economy and working world more complex and in turn, revealed some structural fragilities.

Moreover, these events revealed that single source approaches and supply chains without built-in resilience can be challenging for businesses and must be reconsidered.

The ability to overcome unprecedented challenges and innovate at speed is essential for businesses looking to remain agile in the face of uncertainty. Cloud technology facilitates this resilience, helping businesses modernize and transform their strategies for the future.

Cloud-powered businesses can deliver end-to-end visibility across their supply chains and ecosystems, optimize business operations to save costs and drive organizational agility to help fulfill customer demands.

We saw the potential of cloud when global events such as the pandemic struck in 2020 or the Suez Canal incident impacted supply chains in 2021, challenging business operations. Businesses implemented cloud-based systems enabling their employees to work safely and securely from any remote location. Due to this upscaling, **76% of enterprises now have more than one cloud provider, compared to 55% a year ago** (which might be as a result of each business' requirements as well as responding to rapidly changing customer expectations) and spending in the **cloud market is estimated to surpass $1 trillion in 2024**.

The capabilities of resiliency, innovation, scalability, and speed make cloud a vital component to developing an organization's IT environment. However, cloud ecosystems aren't a static entity. But rather, a fluid collection of technologies, connections, platforms, and services. Having an effective cloud infrastructure - sourced by expert system integrators if you don't have the capabilities within your own organization for example - will provide a wealth of configuration and management capabilities that will best support each organization's requirements.

Many businesses acted quickly to withstand the challenges of the past few years and to reflect to changing customers' needs. And having experienced the capabilities of cloud-based infrastructure, now is the best time to consolidate and work on longer-term strategies to further build resilience, nurture creativity, and enhance operational efficiency.

In this article, I highlight the mistakes to avoid, where businesses should lay their focus next in terms of cloud management and what they can do to future-proof digital resilience.

"The low-hanging fruit of cloud cost management is finding idling resources and simply turning them off, but in a well-architected environment, there should be well-documented - and optimally - automated tagging of resources, so cloud expenditures can easily be associated with the teams or products responsible for them."

James Sanders
Principal Analyst for Cloud and Infrastructure at CCS Insight

Common mistakes to avoid for long-term value:

- **Not defining a clear strategy:** moving to the cloud must be strategic and well planned out. It should be driven by the <u>opportunity to innovate</u> and gain visibility of your whole operations rather than because it's maybe a less costly option. It's not enough to simply move to the cloud. You should develop a long-term strategy for the rollout and management to ensure smooth day-to-day operations, as well as the safety and security of your data.

- **Not implementing guardrails:** put simply, guardrails are preventive security controls that allow developers the flexibility to innovate within the boundaries of defined usage policies. Implementing guardrails can be significant from a financial governance standpoint as well. But having them in place from the outset is important because once the company grows in its cloud usage, and the complexity increases, it becomes more complicated to implement guardrails at that point.

- **Not utilizing identity and access management:** granular identity and access management policies ensure that users are granted access only to fulfill their tasks. Having clear boundaries on who can operate what and what they're allowed to create, change, or turn down is essential for every enterprise. This also prevents a misconfiguration or vulnerability from occurring before it becomes exploitable, which is essential for every enterprise.

- **Not assigning responsibility:** we asked James Sanders, CCS Insight's Principal Analyst for Cloud and Infrastructure, for his thoughts on commonly made mistakes with cloud management that can be easily rectified, and he says: "A proficiently-architected environment should have well-documented - and optimally - automated tagging of resources, so cloud expenditures can easily be associated with the teams or products responsible for them." Cloud management should be a continuous process that is operations-led rather than it being a finance-led process. In all organizations the operations professionals have a firm understanding of the IT systems that have been built or inherited along the way. So adding the task of explaining to the accounting team why cloud compute resources are necessary is not a good use of time for anyone.

- **Not allocating resources in finding talent:** the skills shortage we're experiencing makes it difficult for businesses to find the right skilled talent to oversee cloud management. Also, upskilling employees can be costly and take a long time. So, instead of making these investments that can become quite expensive over time, organizations can bring in expert service providers who take care of cloud management on a daily basis. Some organizations in this process find that it's better use of resources for their own workforce to focus on business-related aspects while configuration, management, and security is left in the hand of partners. Professional service providers can bring in the skills and experience on how to build a safe and resilient infrastructure from working with a multitude of customers every day.

Recommendations

Don't underestimate cloud spend waste

Having an appropriate cloud management system enables organizations to understand if or where there are wasted resources in their cloud environment so they can take the right action. For example, they can ascertain if their use of public cloud is oversized and as such too costly, or if it's being properly used.

Also, cultivating a collaborative company culture that applies best practices across the different teams that use cloud will enable your cloud management strategy to be successful. This allows every team to take ownership of their cloud consumption, while meeting a mandated boundary and budget requirement.

Transformation, innovation and speed

An area where cloud services can bring additional value to customers is making data visible and usable. For example, if data collected in isolated IT systems can be consolidated in a cloud-based system, businesses can become significantly more data-driven and agile in their decisions.

In this regard, using cloud infrastructure makes it easy to use emerging technologies such as machine learning or artificial intelligence on a pay-per-use basis, making it more cost-effective because you don't need to do the investment for traditional deployment.

When these emerging technologies are applied to the rich data pool, businesses can gain insights that help to transform operations – deliver products and services quicker, improve personalization, or in manufacturing for example, streamline processes – creating market differentiation. This ultimately leads to greater growth and the ability to innovate at pace.

Building future-proof resilience

Establishing a secure **cloud environment with clear procedures and boundaries** is a journey that cannot be achieved overnight. It requires good expertise – a mix of internal knowledge and external guidance.

Also, going multi-cloud with a managed service provider has the advantage of utilizing more than one ecosystem. Digital ecosystems are made up interconnected information technology resources (suppliers, customers, trading partners, applications, and third-party data service providers) that can function as a unit.

This means the best platforms can be tailored to each business' requirements. For example, a company can choose a platform that meets their security needs as well as its budget, but not be locked into using only a single vendor. The benefit of this is businesses have the choice to select what's needed when it's needed.

In addition, using different ecosystems or platforms allows businesses to collaborate with numerous partners who have the tools and best practices to build a secure and resilient cloud environment.

WHITBREAD

Whitbread wanted to move away from its traditional data center to the cloud to increase agility. With 820 hotels in the UK and over 80,000 rooms in great locations, we engaged Fujitsu to manage our cloud migration, using Fujitsu Springboard™ for Azure as part of the Fujitsu Cloud Managed Service (FCMS): an accelerated approach to cloud adoption, management, and governance. It provides an open, transparent, and agile migration path with a clearly defined landing zone, outlining the policies and standards across architecture, security and governance.
This ensures a seamless transition that will foster innovation, improve sustainability, enhance operational visibility, and lower costs.

"This is our first step to achieving modern and agile ways of working with greater visibility across our infrastructure and applications."

Simon Maddock
Head of Infrastructure at Whitbread

How Fujitsu can help

At Fujitsu, we support our customers by enabling a co-creation approach that goes beyond mere IT support. We help you with your cloud journey, while providing a best-in-class experience so you can focus on your core business.

Fujitsu's Cloud Managed Service (FCMS) helps to manage, orchestrate and automate your cloud environment. We also ensure your systems are running efficiently, your cloud is configured securely – by utilizing granular identity and access management approaches – and that you can manage your cloud spending and budget.

Get in touch to learn more about how we can help your business build up a resilient and future-proof cloud environment.

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