Find the right cloud partner

Plot a clear path to cloud

Empower business managers with SaaS

Lawrence Miller

2nd Oracle Special Edition
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SaaS For Dummies®, 2nd Oracle Special Edition

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

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Publisher’s Acknowledgments

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Elizabeth Kuball

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Introduction

Software as a Service (SaaS) allows users to subscribe to and use application software in the cloud. A modern cloud suite provides complete software for your entire business so that you can subscribe to certain SaaS applications as needed, such as accounting, HR, marketing, project management, sales management, service, and supply chain.

A modern SaaS cloud application suite enables users to personalize software for their role. With a modern SaaS suite, you can easily connect your entire business from any device, anywhere. You can connect to other clouds and integrate your existing systems. Modern SaaS applications are designed to be secure at every layer of the cloud. Modern best practice processes and embedded data-driven intelligence are built in — not added in later.

Foolish Assumptions

It has been said that most assumptions have outlived their uselessness, but we assume a few things nonetheless:

» We assume you’re a business manager, not an IT person, perhaps at a large or midsize organization.

» We assume you want to improve business efficiency and productivity, and you’d like to know more about how cloud apps can help.
We assume that your business is facing new challenges in today’s dynamic global environment with higher-than-ever expectations from customers, employees, and partners.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, we occasionally use icons to call out important information. Here’s what to expect.

- **REMEMBER**
  This icon points out information you should commit to your nonvolatile memory, your gray matter, or your noggin.

- **TIP**
  This icon points out helpful suggestions and useful nuggets of information.

- **WARNING**
  These helpful alerts offer practical advice to help you avoid potentially costly and frustrating mistakes.

Beyond the Book

There’s only so much we can cover in 64 short pages, so if you want more information, just go to [www.oracle.com/cloud/applications](http://www.oracle.com/cloud/applications).
Chapter 1

Recognizing Modern Business Challenges and Opportunities

In this chapter, you look at the trends driving modern business challenges and opportunities.
Understanding Digital Disruption

In an age when rapidly developing technology is driving seismic change and disruption, businesses are faced with a stark choice: Embrace the accelerated pace of change or risk succumbing to it. Cloud technology — itself a primary source of disruption — offers organizations of any size and in any industry a platform for successful transformation and sustained growth.

The keys to success are twofold. First, organizations must have a clear understanding of their short- and long-term strategies, and second, they must choose a comprehensive solution that establishes a solid foundation for agile growth. Business transformation begins with digital transformation, but it doesn’t end until you’ve fostered an agile culture that brings fresh solutions to business challenges. In fact, it may never end — the need to continuously change simply carries on!

The World Economic Forum states: “To survive disruption and thrive in the digital era, incumbent businesses will need to rethink every element of their business. And they need to act now.”
Recognizing Competitive Pressure

Today’s competitive environment is more intense and fast-paced than ever before. The cloud has fueled new business models — such as Netflix and Uber — and toppled many traditional brick-and-mortar business models — such as the insurance and software industries. At the same time, the cloud has helped tear down entry barriers for all businesses and all industries.

Staying agile and flexible is critical for any business to survive and thrive in this competitive environment. Expensive capital investments with long payback periods or “soft” return on investment (ROI) calculations have become too risky for many businesses.

Cloud computing enables businesses of all sizes to get projects started quickly and deliver products and services to the market faster than many competitors.

Meeting Consumer Expectations

The customer experience has also become more critical than ever before. Digital disruption and competitive pressure both play a role in driving consumer expectations.
Digital disruption has equipped consumers with vast amounts of information, including social media reviews about products, services, and businesses — literally at their fingertips.

There are also more businesses vying for your customers’ business and all too willing to lure them away. So, it’s imperative that businesses today focus on delivering a superior customer experience throughout the entire customer life cycle.

Customer experience today is as important as the product itself, oftentimes even more so. Customers have more influences than ever as they make decisions, from social media and digital forums to review sites on the web.

Looking at the New Responsibilities of the Line-of-Business Manager

Once upon a time, in the not-too-distant past, every department and business line within a company relied upon the IT department for their information technology needs. Today, business managers (and individual employees) are increasingly making IT decisions and turning to the cloud to address their technology needs.

The same shift of influence toward business lines and away from IT is happening elsewhere in the organization.
This change is happening in large part due to the proliferation of cloud-based Software as a Service solutions, which usually don’t require installation and maintenance by the IT staff. Business units gain the ability to shop and buy for themselves, basing their decisions on cost and the capabilities of the solution. That doesn’t mean IT is out of the picture. In fact, the advance of cloud solutions can free up your IT department to become more engaged in innovation and strategy for the business.

In Chapter 2, you’ll learn about the many SaaS solutions that are available to address your business needs.
This chapter explores how cloud-based solutions can help department heads and line of business (LOB) managers transform their organizations with Software as a Service (SaaS)-based solutions designed for their specific business functions.
Getting Sold on the Cloud

Few professionals need the mobility and interconnectivity of the cloud more than those in sales. They tend to be on the go all the time, away from desks, in airports, on trains, at coffee shops, in prospects’ lobbies. They need to access a whole lot of stuff, and they need access on their laptops, their tablets, and their phones. Cloud-based sales force automation (SFA) solutions provide everything a salesperson needs to stay productive and push deals forward.

Robust sales cloud solutions are so much more than contact lists, schedules, and sources of prospects. They really get to the heart of the challenges facing those in sales leadership roles: How do you put your perfect sales plan into action and make it really fly?

On that level, the challenges revolve around getting the most out of your sales force. As a vice president of sales, for example, it’s critical that you identify who your top performers are, recognize them, and keep them happy, while helping the B team develop into top players, too. You need to provide the best training at the outset, and be aware of coaching opportunities when there’s still time to turn problems around.
Imagine what would happen if you could magically show up to coach a salesperson while an issue is still top-of-mind, perhaps even still occurring? Wouldn’t that be a lot more effective than discerning a problem while reading an after-the-fact report?

A cloud-based SFA solution provides answers to all these sales challenges and more. For example:

- **Maximizing your talent**: Give members of your sales team access to every morsel of information they need to succeed while in the field, and make sure they can access SFA tools on any device. Keep tabs on how they’re doing while they’re out in the field.

- **Improving the selling and buying experiences**: Give your sales reps more time to engage face-to-face with customers, while also providing them with the right information at the right moment.

- **Closing the gap**: Start with a reality-based forecast that draws upon the most solid information. Then track the trends in real time, making changes quickly if needed. Gain credibility with accurate forecasting and planning for the sales vice president.
Creating a plan: Move past gut decisions and use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to guide selling actions. Build a sales plan that your team can take out and pursue for a big win. Set the right goals and incentives, and use cloud-based intelligence for territory management.

Predicting your customers’ behavior: Perform white-space analysis and determine the most likely opportunities for cross-selling and upselling. Spend the most time on the most high-probability deals. Use predictive analytics to provide insights that help you identify the next likely purchase a customer will make, based on what similar customers have purchased in previous encounters.

Leveraging Powerful Marketing Advantages

As tailored marketing becomes more of a reality, customers seem to be increasingly expecting a more personalized marketing experience. They’re losing patience with invasive marketing tactics that don’t address their immediate concerns and needs. Companies that meet the
The challenge of making personal connections are creating more impactful and satisfying customer experiences — and increasing their sales. Customers will give your brand permission to market to them if you provide a worthwhile customer experience.

Of course, it takes some big data to pull it off, and that data must be managed in seriously sophisticated ways. There’s no better solution than a cloud-based marketing automation system — the marketing cloud.

The goal is to orchestrate a highly personal and useful marketing experience across multiple channels: web, social, mobile, email, and any other digital channel. You need marketing content that matches where the viewer is in the customer life cycle, to achieve better engagement, improve retention, and make it more likely that a potential customer will become an actual buyer — and on top of that, a loyal one who becomes a brand advocate.

Social marketing is, of course, an incredibly powerful way to have customers amplify your marketing voice, but there’s also incredible value in listening to and analyzing what’s being said out there. Do all that and you’ll end up
with a boatload of data, which means you need a way to aggregate and analyze that data.

How can the cloud help? Consider what a comprehensive cloud-based marketing automation solution can help you accomplish:

» **Make it personal.** Create data-driven customer experiences that are tailored to every visitor and viewer, yet are unified across the various channels. Capture and display the online behavior and social interactions of customers and prospects. Ensure that your content strategy speaks directly to the target, across the sales process.

» **See what works.** Track how each campaign and program contributes to revenue, and do so with enough speed and nimbleness that you can adjust course as needed. Measure the impact of specific content at each point in the sales funnel, and analyze the “digital body language” of each customer and prospect.

» **Track revenue performance.** Take smart action to optimize top-line growth by identifying revenue drivers and monitoring performance.
Connect marketing and sales. When it comes to B2B marketing, ensure that the sales and marketing teams are on the same page and a single platform, so that everyone’s onboard with the same goals, strategies, and metrics. Do a more effective job of identifying, engaging, and qualifying potential buyers before passing them along to sales as leads.

Create a strategy for paid, owned, and earned. Leverage the platforms that’ll help you create and distribute content for your paid and owned assets, such as your website and social media channels. At the same time, activate your marketing data to discern how to proceed with paid advertising.

Build a better database. Use targeting and segmentation, data, profiles, and preferences to generate better-quality leads. Get better leads for business buyers, while creating more relevant experiences for consumers.

Providing Exceptional Service Before and After the Sale

Customer experience has become at least as important as the product itself. One of the many make-or-break components of the customer experience is service. Create a
great product, deliver a stellar shopping and buying experience, but then drop the ball on service, and your loyal customer advocate may become a social media nightmare.

Important as it is, this is an area where even the best companies sometimes stumble. And it’s not hard to see why. For one thing, different areas of support are often siloed, and to customers it appears that one hand has no clue what the other hand is doing.

Also, for some companies the contact center has had a tough time keeping up with call volumes, because too many people are calling to ask questions that didn’t even need to be answered by a human being. On top of that, some of the tougher questions may stump the contact center employee.

These are challenges that a cloud-based customer service solution can address well. Here are just a few of the answers that a cloud solution can offer:

**Help customers help themselves.** Free up your call center representatives for the tougher calls with self-service sites that offer guided answers. Supplement that with online chat, click-to-call, co-browsing, and virtual assistance. Make it all happen regardless of the device the customer is using.
Get it together. Unify all your customer service touch points to better understand customer needs. Bring contact center, field service, web, mobile, and social onto the same cloud-based solution so that service agents have a 360-degree view of the customer, in a single, unified desktop integrated with other critical systems.

Keep an ear to the ground. Monitor social media channels for service-related comments and potential issues, so that you can respond and engage customers proactively.

Share the knowledge. Underpin all service channels with a single knowledgebase, so it’s easy for customers and agents to find the right information that’s consistent and accurate. Make it easy for agents to author and publish to the knowledgebase so it becomes a living, growing repository that is constantly updated.

Improve the contact center. Give your contact center agents the tools and technologies they need to deliver the caliber of service customers will rave about on social media, no matter what channel or device your customers are using to reach you. Help your team answer complicated questions and resolve complex issues quickly. Build upon virtual assistant web self-help with live-agent assistance and guided interactions, and give agents the power to co-browse (viewing a customer’s screen to walk through online tasks).
Foster customer advocacy. View service as the nursery for establishing and building customer advocacy. An exceptional and personalized service experience, delivered through preferred channels, can have more impact than anything else on getting customers to recommend your company and refer others in your direction.

Build loyalty. Generate repeat business, increase order size, and keep customers loyal with the right engagement through the contact center or during the online experience.

Convert shoppers to buyers. Build up your online service options to increase conversions to sales. Make effective use of online chat, click-to-call, co-browsing, and virtual assistance to reduce shopping cart abandonment and enhance opportunities to cross-sell and upsell.

Anticipate the needs of customers. Don’t just react to customer demands. Instead, anticipate their needs, intentions, and behaviors so you can behave proactively. Offer more robust and personal self-service options to head off inbound contacts and improve customer satisfaction along the way. Connect with customers using the platform they prefer.
Finding and Retaining Top Talent

Are you a human resources leader or a miracle worker? Odds are you’re expected to be both these days. Executives want you to increase operational efficiency and cut costs, all while streamlining core HR functions.

At the same time, you need to find, hire, reward, and retain the best talent. You must help build a working environment that’s collaborative and productive, and make an ever-greater contribution to the organization’s business vision and execution.

Thankfully for HR professionals who are used to limited legacy human resources management systems, the cloud has delivered empowering functionality that finally gives them a seat at the strategy table.

It takes the right cloud solution to be able to handle both local HR needs and the challenges that go along with being a global organization. Like any cloud solution, one focused on HR possess the deep social, mobile, and analytical capabilities required to compete effectively today.
So, what can a world-class HR cloud solution do for your company? Here are some thoughts:

» **Find the best and brightest.** Acquire talent through effective recruiting and socially sourced referrals, and develop existing talent. Make the recruiting and onboarding process simpler, with intuitive applications and mobile accessibility that allows you to keep the ball rolling, even on the go.

» **Track the talent.** Gain a better understanding of internal and external sources of talent, and anticipate the talent you’ll need. Identify areas of attrition within your organization, and get in front of staffing issues before they happen.

» **Get everyone collaborating.** Maximize knowledge sharing and collaboration among employees by giving them access to such capabilities as social sourcing, performance management, goal and career management, and social learning.

» **Better equip your workforce.** Gain data insights with predictive and embedded analytics, allowing HR staff to respond to complex questions, forecast performance and risk, and make better decisions.
Make information easy to access. Serve up HR applications and information wherever your staff might be, no matter what kind of electronic device they might have in their hands.

Streamline global processes. Handle local compliance needs regardless of the country, and stay up to date with changes in your organization.

Make payday happen efficiently. Get paychecks out accurately and on time, in locations around the world, complying with the many different local compensation regulations.

Pay for performance. Reward your top talent with attractive and competitive compensation packages, while keeping overall labor spend in line.

Optimize workforce management. Keep tabs on absenteeism and productivity easily, even from a mobile device.

Encourage diversity. Use the cloud to build recruitment programs that encourage diversity.

Teach your employees well. Build a collaborative learning environment that delivers a combination of in-person and online training tailored to the audience.
Create a high-performance culture. Align personal goals with the corporate strategies and targets, and give employees social tools for networking, collaborating, and encouraging one another.

Mobilize the workforce. Equip people to take on new responsibilities or move quickly into new roles as business requires.

Spot the leaders of the future. Use talent intelligence and review to identify high-potential employees and perfect your succession planning strategy.

UNIFYING FINANCE AND HR

The need for closer collaboration between finance and HR has never been more important. Finance has become the co-pilot to the business, providing the forward-looking guidance management needs to maximize the next market opportunity. HR plays an essential role in ensuring that the business has the talent it needs to execute on digital strategies, and create an agile company culture.

Oracle recently commissioned new research to understand how closer collaboration between finance and HR could support digital
transformation and unlock new benefits. Among 700 finance and HR respondents, 79 percent reported improved process quality, 79 percent reported better data quality, 76 percent reported more collaboration, and 73 percent reported better organization improvement.

One key finding from the research is that companies overwhelmingly view closer finance and HR collaboration as a strategic necessity, yet many aren't as agile as they need to be to make the transition to a truly digital business model.

Investing in a single, unified cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) and human capital management (HCM) system to run your business provides new insights into how change impacts budgets, forecasts, talent, resource allocation, and much more. The benefit of an enlightened digital enterprise is that you can make better decisions and optimize all your assets. You’re also spending less on things that don’t advance the agenda of the company or empower employees or customers, and spending more on your core strengths.

Fueling Financial Excellence

Today, CFOs serve as a source for new insights driven by data and analysis of operations. They’re working closely with business line leaders to solve old challenges and identify new opportunities. CFOs have always looked to technology to automate, but today they’re increasingly fans of technology as a vehicle for driving value across the organization.

CFOs have, in fact, found a lot to love about the cloud. They appreciate its ability to reduce IT costs and increase predictability. But far beyond that, they recognize that digital technologies and cloud-based solutions bring greater analytical capabilities and operational knowledge, they make such advances more accessible through mobile platforms, and they encourage collaboration through social channels.

These days, the job of a CFO isn’t much like the finance roles of old. Sure, CFOs are still all about maximizing profits and keeping costs in line. Their goal is to be a strategic partner for the entire business.

Here’s a rundown of some of the reasons finance leaders are opting for cloud solutions, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) applications:
» **Streamline the financial close.** Use the cloud to gain visibility into sub-ledgers across the organization, streamline account reconciliations, and dramatically reduce the time and cost to complete a close.

» **Forecast with accuracy.** Say goodbye to disconnected spreadsheets, manual processes, and fragmented reports. Align planning across the enterprise so that you can develop agile forecasts for all lines of business, and respond faster and more effectively to change.

» **Uncover growth and profits.** Turn traditional finance activities into more automated processes, allowing more time for data analysis to determine which customers/services/products are winners, and what you can do to improve profitability and lower cost.

» **Squeeze blood from every turnip.** Keep operating margins alive and healthy despite sluggish economies, by uncovering new efficiencies.

» **Put risks in their place.** Spend less time reacting to unanticipated risks and direct more of your efforts toward effectively mitigating them. Use cloud-based solutions to gain a consolidated view of enterprise risks, spread best practices, and strengthen the internal controls framework.
» **Turn technology upside-down.** Don’t fear disruptive change; embrace it and turn it into an asset. Replace traditional finance tools — especially spreadsheets and third-party reporting tools — with cloud solutions to modernize the organization and enable it to respond more nimbly to change.

» **Find new efficiencies.** Get rid of that separate data warehouse that handles transactional reporting, and use the cloud for integrated invoice scanning and mobile expenses. Link transactions with employee collaboration.

» **Make reports a snap.** Stop spending so much time preparing financial reports, by using self-service reporting capabilities driven by real-time data. The benefit: more opportunity to analyze the numbers using analytics built into cloud applications.

» **Live in the moment, not in a snapshot.** The cloud delivers dynamic real-time information using real-time business data. Gone are error-prone spreadsheets populated with exported static snapshots of data.

» **Leverage all your enterprise data.** You’ve continually collected a plethora of company data, so why not use it? Use cloud applications to partner across the business and drive data-based decisions with real-time information.
Keep a closer eye on process complexity. Use the cloud to more intelligently monitor processes, reduce errors, streamline inefficiencies, stamp out rogue behavior, and as a result, improve the bottom line.

Leverage the cash on the balance sheet. Track cash movements more effectively so that you can make better investment decisions. Gain visibility into enterprise-wide cash requirements and currency exposures to ensure liquidity. Stop relying on assumed settlements and next-day statements by using improved balance information.

Collaborate with suppliers. Get your suppliers onto the team by giving them instant access to agreements, purchase orders, invoices, and advance shipment notifications.

Get contracts in line. Ensure greater compliance by using the cloud to produce standardized agreements and shorten cycle times.

Perfect your procurement. Use collaboration, process automation, and business intelligence to build better direct and indirect procurement processes. Deploy cloud solutions to manage your off-contract spend, and you’ll find that employees will be happier. Integrate all sources of demand into your sourcing solution so you can negotiate better deals.
» Get a handle on projects. Load project data into the cloud so that all decisions are based on a single set of facts. Get project team members onto the same collaborative page with mobile and social tools. Line up project resources and schedules in the cloud to maximize productivity.

» No more ERP upgrade projects. Enjoy the benefits of SaaS to ease implementation, tame maintenance, streamline integration, and speed up ERP solutions. Large upgrade projects become historical relics because SaaS solutions deliver regular and planned updates.

» Be prepared globally. With SaaS solutions, your financial infrastructure for global growth is often just a few clicks away when you need languages, regulatory compliance, reporting, and tax compliance for a new market in a new country.

Transforming the End-to-End Demand-Driven Supply Chain

The digital supply chain and new technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), sensory data, and autonomous fleets and drones are revolutionizing the modern supply
chain and business operating models. Never have we seen the availability of real-time data and visibility to support an end-to-end business’s operations. The question is whether this is being effectively applied across the people, process, and technology elements to transform the business’s competitive capabilities. For example:

- Are we considering the stages of business readiness to ensure we are leveraging business value from these technology investments?

- Electronic data interchange (EDI) has long been an elusive panacea for companies trying to electronically exchange business documents and data with their upstream and downstream supply chain partners to improve demand responsiveness including:
  - Customers
  - Buyers
  - Sellers
  - Suppliers
  - Manufacturers
  - Distributors
  - Freight and logistics carriers
- Financial institutions
- Contract manufacturers
- Other key stakeholders (such as research partners or consumer insights from big data and social media)

The issue is that proprietary, highly customized software, data islands, and systems have made it a real challenge to scale EDI solutions and support business-to-business (B2B) integration. Ongoing integration and maintenance complexity has made the challenge and costs prohibitively expensive and resource-intensive for companies to continuously invest in.

Cloud-based SaaS solutions overcome many of the challenges of EDI and business model integration, especially planning, enabling global scale, and relatively easy integration with existing systems and IT investments.

With one supply chain architecture in the cloud, supply chain partners can easily access a robust, full-featured SaaS solution with only a web browser and Internet connection. This capability allows global business partners of any size, at any point in your supply chain, to easily participate in the business, which in turn allows you to digitize your supply chain operations leveraging emerging disruptive technologies such as IoT, AI, and blockchain.
Look for the following features and capabilities in a supply chain management (SCM) solution for your business:

» **Perform real-time complex, multidimensional profitability analyses.** Maximize margins by rapidly slicing and dicing historical, planned, and forecasted sales data in planning processes such as sales and operations planning.

» **Derive accurate costs to make balanced business trade-offs.** Synthesize and analyze planning costs and implications across multiple manufacturing locations, processes, suppliers, and contract manufacturers to derive “should be,” simulated, and actual delivered costs.

» **Optimize operational costs and working capital.** Create unlimited cost scenarios and simulations, perform comparisons that impact the business, and drill deep into product and supply costs to identify cost outliers and trade-offs across business operations that involve multiple applications, supply sites, and business processes.

» **Identify most profitable product mix.** Perform actual (versus estimated) cost and profitability analyses at the point of sale to identify the most profitable product mix and break-even point in real-time, not historically.
Enable comprehensive materials management. Get access to complete receiving, inventory management, and shipping information to optimize and balance the supply and demand network.

Go global. Plan and manage your operations centrally but virtually, execute locally, and scale to align and support your growing global organization.

Enable proactive monitoring. Track and monitor service levels to track and ultimately meet customer request dates and quantities, and then proactively monitor order delivery and performance at risk.

Optimize fulfillment processes. Optimize the sourcing and fulfillment of an order to ensure you meet customer service-level agreements (SLAs) and ensure the most profitable leverage of your extended supply chain network to enhance system-wide fulfillment efficiency and effectiveness to meet market demand.

Improve multi-enterprise visibility. Expand your company’s capabilities by enabling multi-enterprise processes and visibility of performance, so that the right product is available and delivered at the right place and time.
» **Improve supplier collaboration.** Collaboratively achieve contract manufacturer compliance and alignment, and track supplier commitments to your business plans. Enable collaboration that will enhance supplier and demand responsiveness reliability.

» **Respond faster to supply and demand exceptions.** Deploy end-to-end integration to sense and respond to alerts in the partner network. Track demand changes to be both responsive and proactive to supply and demand change signals.

» **Simplify trading network management.** Unify administration of trading partners with all country-based regulations to a performance analytics-based network and platform supporting the business operating model.
One of the great advantages of the cloud is that you can get started in just minutes. Of course, that can also be a significant disadvantage. Without a well-planned cloud strategy, many organizations find that individual line-of-business managers and employees often find their own Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions in the cloud. Those solutions may not necessarily integrate with other important applications in your business, may have limited functionality, and, worse yet, may not be secure or compliant.
In this chapter, we look at some important things to consider when choosing a cloud provider to help your organization plan its journey to the cloud.

**Transforming Your Business**

A complete cloud suite is composed of a set of SaaS solutions that connect your end-to-end business processes, such as finance, customer service, human capital management, marketing and sales, supply chain, and others, yielding improved business intelligence from across the entire business, not just a part of it.

In the past, organizations usually customized and implemented systems using their business processes as-is, essentially “paving the cow path” rather than adopting best practices. With cloud applications, every business can take advantage of nearly 200 published business practices incorporated into SaaS applications. Learn more about Oracle’s Modern Best Practice at [www.oracle.com/modernbestpractice](http://www.oracle.com/modernbestpractice).

A complete cloud applications suite is modular yet connected — enabling you to subscribe to individual SaaS applications as your business grows and your needs change, while eliminating data silos to transform your
entire business. In a digitally competitive organization, all departments must be able to easily share information and collaborate seamlessly. Individual departments must be able to make important decisions based on the best real-time data available from across the organization.

A complete cloud suite intelligently transforms your business by connecting front- and back-office operations, unifying internal company and external customer data, and consolidating vendor relationships. This can help your business save more money and have the ability to incrementally increase revenue.

Accelerating Transformation and Innovation

An innovative cloud suite enables you to transform and future-proof your business in important ways:

» You receive innovations automatically updated within your SaaS applications on a periodic basis that you can activate as you need them.

» You can easily extend or build your own SaaS applications using cloud platform services, such as Platform as a Service (PaaS).
You can future-proof your business and access leading-edge applications, such as artificial intelligence or Internet of Things (IoT), that complement your SaaS applications and are easy to use, easy to connect, and easy to adjust, to produce even better outcomes faster for your business.

Download your copy of Public PaaS For Dummies at www.oracle.com/goto/paasfordummies to learn more about PaaS.

In today’s fast-changing business world, a cloud provider that only helps you keep up with your competitors and the pace of innovation is not enough. You need a cloud provider that can help you get ahead and stay ahead by increasing your business intelligence with the latest innovations, features, and functionality. With an innovative cloud, you can transform your business fast, all while making better business decisions and improving your business intelligence.

Reducing Risk with a Proven Partner

A trusted cloud suite is one that is owned by a provider with a strong industry reputation and proven track record, and managed by badged cloud professionals that are experienced in the areas of cloud security, network security, and data center security, thereby reducing risk for your business.
There are several important benefits of subscribing to a trusted cloud. First, you can lower your risk by trusting proven viable cloud security experts to manage the security of your data in the cloud. Most organizations don’t have the broad expertise or economies of scale to manage security effectively in today’s rapidly evolving threat landscape. Second, a proven cloud can help you transform and standardize processes quickly on a global scale.

How your cloud provider implements security is equally as important as what it is they do. A proven cloud is designed to be secure at every layer of the technology stack, providing key benefits:

- **Multiple layers of defense** managed by a single provider to protect your data
- **Secure data isolation:** Your data is isolated from other customer data.
- **Unlimited scale:** It provides unique scalability benefits, so your business can scale quickly when needed.

In 2017, Oracle published a white paper showing 360 million transactions per hour for complex financial activity. You can read more at [www.oracle.com/cloud/saas-scalability.html](http://www.oracle.com/cloud/saas-scalability.html).
For some organizations, where their data is stored matters. From a regulatory perspective, it might not be acceptable for your applications and data to be hosted in other countries or certain regions. Thus, you need a proven cloud provider with data centers around the world so that you can build a global cloud solution that works seamlessly and securely for your organization, while still complying with regulatory requirements in the various parts of the world in which you do business.

Many businesses benefit from the ability to achieve secure data isolation and security at multiple levels. That means keeping one set of data separate and secure from another, which is vital for protecting your corporate data.

Finally, as you compare cloud providers, be sure to consider how your applications and data are backed up, as well as how much redundancy is built into the infrastructure. If there is a disaster or some technical issue in one location, you need redundancy to ensure high levels of system availability. Your cloud provider may offer access to other advanced data security tools, including full data encryption and virtual private networking (VPN) services.

A proven, trusted cloud suite helps to transform your business and can reduce risk.
Making the Business Case for the Cloud

There are plenty of compelling reasons to explore cloud solutions — reasons that make IT people happy, reasons that please business managers, and reasons that satisfy customers. Ultimately, if you’re considering a cloud-based solution, you’ll need to make a strong business case.

Making a business case goes beyond the notion of operational expenditures (OpEx) versus capital expenditures (CapEx). A move to the cloud will reduce CapEx because hardware costs are shifted to the provider, but they’re replaced by the operational expense of paying the provider’s subscription fees. Learn more at [www.oracle.com/cloudtco](http://www.oracle.com/cloudtco) and [www.oracle.com/cloudroi](http://www.oracle.com/cloudroi).

Beyond making the financial case, your business case should demonstrate how a move to the cloud will help the business meet and exceed customer expectations, innovate faster, and maximize value. The cloud can help your business keep up with the demands of the market and open the door to new markets.
In today’s fast-paced competitive environment, being agile and scalable is essential. Being able to be what the customer expects and requires is critical. Dazzling your prospects with capabilities they didn’t even know they wanted can be a game-changer. For most businesses, that’s a far more compelling argument than simply saving money on IT hardware.
Choosing Your Path to the Cloud

Part of the beauty of Software as a Service (SaaS) is that it’s easy to get started. But it’s also prudent to look (and plan) before you leap! In this chapter, we walk you through a simple four-step process to help you get started on your journey to the cloud — with minimal turbulence.
Modernize Your Business with SaaS

The days of purchasing perpetual licenses for monolithic applications requiring complex on-premises systems, extensive user training, troublesome upgrades, meticulous capacity planning, and ongoing maintenance and support are quickly becoming a relic of the past.

Start your journey to the cloud by either replacing soon-to-expire legacy systems or supplementing legacy on-premises business applications with SaaS applications that enhance or increase operational capabilities.

Cloud-based SaaS apps offer businesses a far more flexible and cost-effective solution for running their core business applications. Advantages of SaaS-based applications include the following:

- Subscription-based or “pay as you go” usage fees.
- No expensive capital investment required for server, storage, or networking infrastructure.
- Intuitive, user-friendly interfaces requiring relatively little training — cloud apps are built with the end user in mind.
- No major upgrade “projects” that interrupt business operations — updates are handled by the cloud provider.
SaaS cloud provider and delivered continuously to ensure you always have the latest features and most secure apps.

» Seamless scaling “up” or “down” to support your changing business needs on demand — and you only pay for what you use.

» No hefty annual maintenance fees or “software assurance” — you always get the latest capabilities and features for your apps, and support is included with premium support options available.

When it’s time to upgrade or renew your existing on-premises applications, talk to your software vendor about SaaS-based options, and if they don’t offer SaaS-based apps, consider other, more modern solutions for your business.

Integrate Your Cloud Apps with Existing On-Premises Systems

Another inherent advantage of SaaS-based apps is that they’re built for easy integration. Many apps have open application programming interfaces (APIs) to help developers easily create custom integrations to your existing in-house applications.
Integrating your cloud apps and on-premises applications will help increase adoption by eliminating potential silos of data and redundant or disjointed workflow processes.

Extend Apps with Social, Mobile, and Process Capabilities

Social and mobile trends have largely contributed to the rapid adoption of the cloud by consumers.

Extending the functionality of your SaaS apps to social and media platforms is the next logical step in your path to the cloud. Particularly for customer-facing apps, this is an important step as the customer experience is increasingly omnichannel, extending seamlessly across different apps and platforms.

Integrating and automating your backend process workflows is another important step. Extending your SaaS apps with process automation capabilities is an opportunity to identify process bottlenecks and other inefficiencies that can potentially be addressed with a business process automation initiative.
Enable Apps to Leverage Emerging Technologies

Finally, SaaS apps are uniquely positioned to leverage the vast amounts of data, ubiquitous connectivity, and limitless compute capacity of the cloud — all necessary to take advantage of new and emerging technologies such as big data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and the Internet of Things (IoT).

As you continue your SaaS journey, look for a cloud provider that offers a complete, innovative, and proven platform that enables you to leverage the next wave of disruptive technology today.
Chapter 5

Ten (Or So) Important Questions to Ask Your SaaS Provider

Whether you’re taking your first steps on your journey to the cloud or further evolving your organization’s cloud strategy, you need to carefully evaluate the many different Software as a Service (SaaS) offerings from public cloud service providers. Here
are some questions you should ask to help you determine if a SaaS cloud provider offers a complete, future-proof, and trusted, solution to transform your business.

Do They Offer One-Off Siloed Services or Complete Solution Suites?

You don’t want to have a different provider for each of your SaaS applications, do you? Besides being inconvenient for your users to switch between and learn different software interfaces, one-off siloed software services create interoperability and data integration issues. Instead, look for a cloud provider that offers a suite of modern SaaS-based enterprise applications including:

» Enterprise resource planning (ERP)
» Enterprise performance management (EPM)
» Human capital management (HCM)
» Supply chain management (SCM)
» Customer experience (CX)

But don’t stop there. Just because a cloud provider offers a complete suite of SaaS solutions doesn’t mean your business needs all that they offer. You don’t want an
all-or-nothing package deal – after all, we’re talking about the cloud, not cable TV! Your cloud provider should allow you to subscribe to individual SaaS applications incrementally as your organization grows and your business needs change, paying only for what you use and dynamically scaling up (or down) as the business environment changes.

To fully leverage the power of a complete SaaS solution, all your applications should be fully connected with each other to work together intuitively and seamlessly, sharing data as necessary and easily solving end-to-end business problems today while supporting a long-term strategic road map.

A complete solution must also support a broad array of customer-centric technologies, such as social, mobile, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) — all baked into the service to easily and securely share information with your suppliers, partners, and customers.

**Do They Provide Continuous Innovation to Future-Proof Your Business?**

Moving your applications to the cloud can help your business save money, but surely there’s more to your vision for the cloud than that, right?
Your cloud provider should provide continuous innovation and business improvement with capabilities that include:

- SaaS applications with built-in artificial intelligence that learn based on the data they process, helping you to achieve better business outcomes in real-time
- Enterprise performance management (EPM) cloud services with fully integrated real-time analytics to feed planning decisions and key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Data as a Service (DaaS) to enrich your current customer, audience, or prospect data set
- Cloud services that enable the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data based on industry standards
- Secure and reliable connectivity to your various on-premises, private cloud, and public cloud applications and services
- An open, scalable, and reliable platform that works with your other applications and cloud services and scales to change with your unique business needs

To successfully implement SaaS within your business, you need a cloud provider that offers an intuitive and enjoyable user experience. This includes the ability to proactively
offer a “big picture” menu (or “app store”) of modern application services to satisfy your business needs.

**Do They Simplify Business Process Changes and Connectivity?**

Your cloud provider should offer built-in modern best practice business processes enabled by mobile, social, analytics, big data, and IoT technologies. Armed with these capabilities, you can quickly and easily modify your business processes to respond to changing business needs.

**Can You View Your Business Data Holistically?**

You need to work with a cloud provider that can deliver a unified view of all your business data from all your different sources, including external third-party data, SaaS-based applications, private cloud(s), on-premises systems, and third-party SaaS services.
Are They Proven and Trusted?

Trust is paramount in choosing a cloud partner — not just for your own data, but also for the data owned by your end customers. According to a report from the Economist Intelligence Unit, 92 percent of executives say their customers are willing to share personal information such as name, contact information, and demographic details with their trusted vendors.

Maintaining customer data is a huge responsibility, especially when you consider the consequences of security mandates such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; www.oracle.com/applications/gdpr), errors, omissions, and breaches — which can involve losing face with customers and possibly accruing fines. Keep this in mind whenever you decide to do business with a cloud service provider. You’re entrusting them with your data, as well as any customer data that passes through your system.

Is Your Cloud Secure from Top to Bottom?

A secure cloud offering should be designed and built to provide multiple layers of security and multiple levels of defense including:
Preventive controls designed to block unauthorized access to sensitive systems and data

Continuous controls designed to reveal unauthorized system and data changes through auditing, monitoring, and reporting

Administrative controls designed to address security policies, standards, practices, and procedures

Ask your cloud provider to show proof of their capabilities, such as security certifications and independent audits.

How will the provider support your business-critical applications and data in the cloud? Are your applications as important to your cloud provider as they are to you?

How Do They Support Data Integrity and Portability?

Getting massive amounts of data to the cloud in a secure manner can be a real challenge. Ask what options a cloud provider offers for transferring your data to the cloud quickly and securely. Do they offer a secure dedicated connection, for example? Can you send the provider your physical drives to be locally copied in its data centers?
Your business may have specific requirements for data to be stored in multiple data centers separated by a minimum physical distance for redundancy and disaster recovery. Or, you may be required to store and process your data within a specific country or region, depending on different data privacy, data sovereignty, and data residency regulations.

Finally, if your cloud provider isn’t meeting your expectations or your business needs change — perhaps you need to move your data to another cloud provider or back on-premises — how will you get your data back? Find out what data formats are offered and whether you will incur significant data egress charges.
Glossary

application programming interface (API): A set of protocols, routines, and tools used to develop and integrate applications.

artificial intelligence (AI): The ability of computers to perform tasks usually associated with human intelligence. Today’s AI-enabled computers can recognize images, understand language, and perform complex reasoning while making decisions based on sophisticated mathematical analyses.

augmented reality (AR): The integration of digital information with the user’s environment in real time.

big data: A holistic information management strategy that includes and integrates many new types of data and data management alongside traditional data.

blockchain: A system for maintaining distributed ledgers in a way that allows organizations that might not fully trust each other to agree on ledger updates. Instead of using a central third party or an offline reconciliation process, blockchain uses peer-to-peer protocols. As a distributed ledger, blockchain provides a near real-time and indelible record that’s replicated among the participants.
chatbot: A computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the Internet.

cloud computing: As defined by the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), cloud is a model for enabling ubiquitous, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (such as networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction.

customer experience (CX): Delivering a consistent, connected, and personalized brand experience with an integrated set of applications that span the entire customer life cycle.

Data as a Service (DaaS): A cost-efficient, agile service that lets you focus on selling your products, rather than sourcing, managing, and activating data.

electronic data interchange (EDI): A system for electronically exchanging business information using a standardized format.

enterprise performance management (EPM): Cloud services with fully integrated real-time analytics to feed planning decisions and key performance indicators (KPIs).
enterpris e resource planning (ERP): Business process management software that uses a system of integrated applications to manage a business and automate various back office functions such as finance, human resources, and inventory control.


human capital management (HCM): Software that comprises a set of applications for recruiting, managing, developing and optimizing human resources, including payroll, within an organization.

hybrid cloud: A cloud infrastructure that is composed of public and/or private cloud deployment models, bound together by standardized or proprietary technology that enables data and application portability (for example, failover to a secondary data center for disaster recovery or content delivery networks across multiple clouds). See also private cloud and public cloud.

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS): Provides cloud-based infrastructure services that include virtualization, compute, storage, and networking capacity.
Internet of Things (IoT): The network of interconnected “smart” physical devices such as vehicles, home appliances, security systems, sensors, cameras, industrial equipment, biotechnology, and others.

machine learning (ML): The ability of a system to automatically learn and improve over time without the need for additional human programming.

Platform as a Service (PaaS): A category of cloud computing services in which the customer is provided access to a platform for deploying applications and can manage limited configuration settings, but the operating system, compute, storage, networking, and underlying physical cloud infrastructure is maintained by the service provider.

private cloud: A cloud infrastructure that is used exclusively by a single organization. It may be owned, managed, and operated by the organization or a third party (or a combination of both), and may exist on or off premises.

public cloud: A cloud infrastructure that is open to use by the general public. It is owned, managed, and operated by a third party (or parties) and exists on the cloud provider’s premises.

service-level agreement (SLA): A contract between a service provider and its customers that formally defines the service that is being provided and specific service requirements such as performance, problem management, responsiveness, and availability. The SLA also
typically includes penalties for noncompliance, such as credits or refunds.

**Software as a Service (SaaS):** A category of cloud computing services in which the customer is provided access to a hosted application that is maintained by the service provider.

**supply chain management (SCM):** A set of software solutions that manages and oversees the flow of goods, data, and finances as a product or service moves from point of origin to its final destination. Supply chain activities encompass everything from product development to logistics, including production and manufacturing, sourcing, transportation, inventory and warehouse management, and shipping.

**virtual private network (VPN):** An encrypted tunnel that extends a private network over a public network (such as the Internet).

**virtual reality (VR):** Technology that simulates a user’s physical presence and interactions in a realistic but simulated environment.
Find a complete, innovative, and proven SaaS provider

Become a digital disrupter in your industry and create a competitive advantage. Discover how you can lead digital transformation in your organization with cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) business applications. Find out how sales and marketing, customer service, human resources, finance, supply-chain management, and others can quickly get started using the latest SaaS line of business applications to become more agile and flexible in today's fast-paced competitive environment.

Inside...

• Deliver an exceptional customer experience
• Attract and retain top talent
• Optimize your supply chain from end to end
• Fuel financial excellence

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ISBN: 978-1-119-47194-3 Not for resale
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