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ENSURING THAT YOUR ENTERPRISE IS CLOUD-READY

OPT FOR INVESTMENT PROTECTION AND FLEXIBILITY ACROSS ENVIRONMENTS WHEN ACQUIRING ON-PREMISES IT INFRASTRUCTURE.

It's clear that cloud computing is leading an IT transformation, becoming the deployment model of choice for many workloads. But in the rush to the cloud, most companies realize they can't transition all workloads at once—even if they want to. The challenge, then, is to come up with a transition plan that enables them to support on-premises applications and workloads today while ensuring an easy, non-disruptive migration to the cloud when the time comes.

OPTIMIZE FOR TODAY, PLAN FOR TOMORROW

The shift toward private clouds is driven by IT departments looking to bring the same benefits public clouds provide—agility, flexibility, lower cost—to on-premises infrastructure and applications.

Myriad reasons exist for keeping applications in-house for the short term or, in some cases, for the foreseeable future. These include regulatory compliance issues, security, data sovereignty requirements, the need for low latency, and use of custom legacy applications that won't run on public cloud platforms.

The goal, then, is to create an IT architecture that is consistent across on-premises and cloud environments. With such an architecture, it will be easier to transition an application from on-premises to a private or public cloud. In short, in-house applications will be "cloud-ready."

Achieving a cloud-ready architecture means using a consistent technology stack—including hardware, operating systems, databases, and applications—across deployment models: traditional on-premises IT and private cloud as well as public cloud. Such an approach makes using a common management interface—across all three deployment modes and the entire infrastructure—possible.

MAPPING YOUR CLOUD-READY JOURNEY

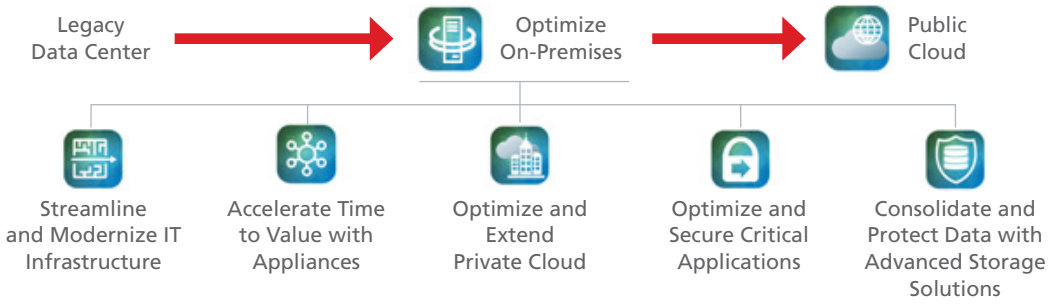
The path forward will vary, depending on where an individual IT organization is starting. Each organization will take a unique journey, following its own timeline.

That said, most organizations can follow one or more of five use cases that describe the requirements they face on their journey—and thus, the best path forward.

1. Streamline and modernize IT infrastructure

The first use case applies to an enterprise that doesn't have immediate plans to move to the cloud in a big way but does want to streamline its infrastructure. Over time it has acquired heterogeneous hardware and software platforms, each requiring experts who know how to operate it.

MAKING SURE IT DECISIONS TODAY ACCOMMODATE THE FUTURE



Here the goal is to reduce complexity by replacing older servers, storage, and backup systems with modern systems that are architecturally compatible with systems powering private cloud and public cloud services. Oracle engineered systems can deliver dramatic improvements in performance, availability, security, and efficiency while lowering operating costs.

2. Accelerate time to value with appliances

Many IT organizations have to do more with less, and faster, to respond to competitive threats. In such a situation, an appliance strategy can provide great benefit.

Oracle appliances come preconfigured to serve different purposes, such as to support a database, a private cloud environment, UNIX, or big-data applications. Because appliances are easy to deploy and operate, requiring less time and fewer specialized IT skills, IT departments are able to implement and manage them quickly, with a reduced learning curve.

3. Optimize and extend private cloud

Many organizations first implement private cloud to achieve lower costs and greater agility for generic, noncritical workloads. But most self-assembled generic private clouds take months to build out—decreasing agility—and require expensive personnel to build, tune, and manage. They typically use Linux distributions and virtualization software that require expensive licenses and support contracts to run generic workloads.

Because generic private clouds treat all applications equally, they are inappropriate for demanding and/or business-critical databases and applications. The cafeteria menu application is simply not as important as your ERP system. Yet the business is looking for the same private cloud benefits: lower costs and greater agility for these critical workloads.

The solution is to adopt platforms that are optimized for cost or optimized for performance. Generic workloads can run on the Oracle Private Cloud Appliance, optimized to deliver low-cost computing for Linux, Solaris, and Windows applications. More-demanding applications—Oracle Database, Oracle E-Business Suite, SAP, and the like—operate better on purpose-built engineered systems. Utilizing an Oracle architecture that is consistent across environments, organizations can implement a private cloud that is both cost-optimized for generic applications and performance-optimized for more-critical applications. This provides an easy path to public or hybrid cloud, with unified management across environments.

4. Optimize and secure critical applications

Business-critical applications require peak performance and security. But in many organizations, the infrastructure supporting these applications has been built over time, is lagging in modernization, and is now an inconsistent mix of platforms. The result is an overly complex environment that doesn't always deliver the required performance or security.

Here the solution is to employ high-end SPARC-based servers to optimize performance while improving efficiency with the highest security, whether implemented on-premises or in the cloud. Moving to a single platform will also bring cost savings and unified management.

5. Consolidate and protect data with advanced storage solutions

Most every company is facing data storage and protection challenges. With the explosion of data volumes, simply adding to an existing storage infrastructure is no longer affordable or effective.

The better approach is to implement Oracle modern storage solutions engineered to eliminate data loss and cut recovery times. These cloud-ready appliances enable you to consolidate existing storage while ensuring the security of your data and dramatically improving performance.

TAKE CONTROL OVER YOUR FUTURE

For each of these use cases, Oracle delivers cloud-ready systems that have precise equivalents in Oracle's own public cloud. In this way, the public cloud appears as a compatible extension of what already runs in your data center, making it easier to move when you're ready. Even if you have no immediate plans to move to the cloud, it's a nice option to have. In the meantime, you're able to bring many benefits of the public cloud into your on-premises infrastructure.

Other white papers in this series will more deeply explore specific use cases, providing a better sense of what it means to be cloud-ready. For more information, please go to oracle.com/it-infrastructure.