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6 **Steps** to Avoid an Unacceptable, Unstable Cloud Migration

The public cloud is the future of business — Gartner reports that by 2025 more than 95% of new digital workloads will be cloud native, and 80% of companies say that they will close their on-premise data centers by the same year (compared to only 10% in 2020).

What this means: Many, many companies are migrating to the cloud right now.

But not as many are doing it successfully. In fact, McKinsey reports that three-quarters of cloud migrations currently go over cost and nearly 40% exceed planned timelines.

Why do so many issues abound? Largely because of poor planning, lack of knowledge about what's truly required for a successful cloud migration, and missteps in testing and training along the way.

Avoid an unstable, unacceptable migration by following these six steps and accelerate your successful IT landscape modernization to achieve the goals, outcomes, and ROI you expect from the cloud journey.

Enterprises That Will Close Their Traditional Data Centers

Percentages of Respondents

10% — Today

80% — 2025
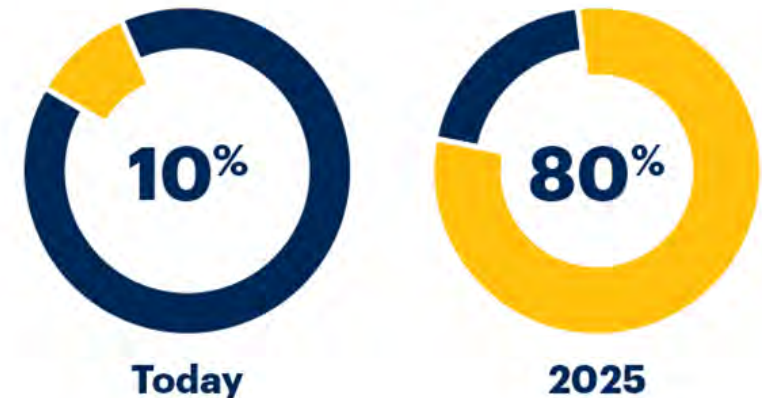
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Gartner

6 STEPS OF A WELL-EXECUTED CLOUD MIGRATION

1. Define Your Strategy and Align Stakeholders

As with any significant business initiative or transformation, defining your strategy clearly and completely is the first critical step to a successful cloud migration. Know who will be involved in your migration planning and execution and ensure all are included in this step.

Together, define the scope, timeline, budget, and expected business outcomes of your planned cloud migration and get all stakeholders aligned around them. Keep in mind that cloud migrations — even those initially seen as single-unit or -department initiatives — typically have wider-reaching impacts.

Further, the transition from on-premise to cloud environments impacts different business units and teams in different ways. It's at this stage in the process that you want to gain perspective on potential impacts, understand both shared and separate goals, and address concerns your team members have about the migration.

Taking time to align your team now enables greater collaboration and more seamless execution throughout your migration and gets contributors at every level of your company — from IT management and company executives down to day-to-day support teams — all swimming in the same direction toward common goals.

2. Assess Your Current Environment

Next, it's critical to understand your current environment in its entirety — the components of your IT infrastructure, complexities, dependencies, and existing issues that may exist. This step is essential for mapping your cloud migration execution plan and determining the steps that need to be taken to move your organization from its current to future target state.

It's also during this step that you select your cloud provider based on capabilities, gaps, and future operating goals you have for your cloud environment.

Other areas of focus include security, performance efficiency, scalability, and of course, cost.

Remember that your cloud migration is only your first step toward achieving other key parts of your IT and business strategy — like being more agile and data-driven, implementing DevOps, DevSecOps and/or FinOps, and offering more innovative, flexible customer experiences, and more.

Knowing where your current environment stands, identifying your target state on the cloud, and choosing a provider with the right services, features, and capabilities to get you there is an investment in your company's future.

On the flip side, failing to do a current state assessment could miss including critical systems and IT infrastructure or application footprints essential to your migration.

The result? Having to repeat activities, replan and migrate systems, and take on the time and cost implications that come along with unexpected changes in project scope.

3. Establish Strong Governance Frameworks

It's important to establish strong governance frameworks not only for the duration of your cloud migration but also the post go-live period. More specifically, you need to ensure your existing team and trusted MSP are ready to handle the transition from an on-premise environment to the cloud.

Identify roles and responsibilities for each individual, team and partner, establish communication and escalation channels, and set up monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Include stakeholders from your own organization and all partners involved in your migration planning and execution so that every key contributor is on the same page and using the same outlined processes.

4. Test, Test, Test (Then Test Again)

This can't be emphasized enough — your migration team must plan to test, test, test, and test again at every stage of your cloud migration. This is a step that many organizations surprisingly take lightly, assuming their data and workloads will transfer successfully to the cloud as planned. In reality this is almost never the case.

Given the sheer size of most infrastructures and complexities within, there will inevitably be applications and other components of your infrastructure that need adjusting and updating to move successfully to the cloud.

Failing to do so can have significant consequences post- go-live — such as data loss, application failure, security breaches.

Avoid these issues by testing and validating workloads and processes in phases throughout your cloud migration. You'll achieve higher quality at each phase so that when you finally get to the product migration of your environments, it happens seamlessly and without unpleasant surprises.

5. Train Your Team or Secure a Trusted MSP

The cloud comes with new capabilities and thus new responsibilities for IT teams that didn't exist in an on-premise environment. Some examples:

Security — More vulnerable public-cloud attack surfaces require more sophisticated security tools and disciplines

Automation — Automating mundane tasks and ensuring they're performed holistically across the organization

Data Management — The public cloud massively increases data bandwidth and analytics capabilities, requiring new types of management around storage, handling, integrations, and privacy – plus, cloud providers have native cloud data management offerings to take advantage of

Your IT team must be trained and ready to take on these and other new cloud management responsibilities on Day 0 of your go-live on the cloud. Assuming your teams will learn on the job is a mistake that will lead to any number of issues that inhibit your cloud operations and cause frustration for your end users.

6. Review the Value of a Trusted Cloud Migration Partner

Cloud migration is a first and vital step to larger and even more transformative initiatives in your company's future. Making critical mistakes throughout the process — either to take shortcuts or simply don't know what you don't know — can result in significant cloud creep, overruns, security vulnerabilities, poor stakeholder experiences, and negative impacts on revenue.

Even those that take steps to plan and execute to their best ability experience many of the risks and challenges we outlined throughout the 6 cloud migration pillars, including security concerns, lack of internal expertise and resources, and issues managing cloud spend.

Perhaps the only way to be 100% confident in your cloud migration planning and execution is by working with a trusted cloud migration partner with the experience, expertise, and resources to fill your internal gaps and ensure you don't miss a critical step in the process.

This is why many companies now choose to outsource all or part of their cloud migrations and ongoing cloud management to a managed service provider. Not only is it cost-effective and reliable, but it also allows you to reassign your loyal internal IT employees to more strategic, value- adding roles while your partner handles day-to-day IT management.

What are your organization's top cloud challenges?

	All organizations	Enterprise	SMB
Managing cloud spend	82% ◀1st	82% ◀1st	80% ◀1st
Security	79% ◀2nd	78% ◀3rd	73% ◀2nd
Lack of resources/expertise	78% ◀3rd	80% ◀2nd	67%
Governance	71%	71%	67%
Compliance	73%	72%	71% ◀3rd
Managing software licenses	72%	75%	61%
Cloud migration	66%	71%	42%
Central cloud team/Business unit responsibility balancing	67%	71%	52%
Managing multi-cloud	66%	80% ◀2nd	47%

All respondents: N=750, Enterprise: N=627, SMB: N=123
Source: Flexera 2023 State of the Cloud Report

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How Protera Can Help

Protera was the first to migrate and manage SAP in production on AWS. As a SAP-certified AWS cloud and application service provider, Protera helps clients accelerate their migrations and achieve the scale, flexibility, and operational shift needed to drive value.

Whether you're launching your first cloud migration, upgrading SAP and mission critical systems on cloud, or modernizing an entire data center, Protera has experience in migrating and modernizing the most complex enterprise systems with a focus on measured business outcomes.

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