GETTING STARTED WITH A MULTI-CLOUD STRATEGY

Cloud adoption has been accelerating over the past few years. Enterprises are after the speed, agility, simplicity, and lower costs that it provides. Gone are the days of managing an expensive data center. IT managers love the benefits the cloud provides, but various studies show that they are afraid of lock-in. A [Bain/Morgan Stanley study](), for example, shows this fear growing with each passing year. The best way to alleviate these concerns is to implement a multi-cloud strategy. Before the cloud even existed, companies used multiple database vendors. So, this strategy is not new.

Every company has several various types of data they use. Most cloud companies specialize in one area, so being able to use multiple clouds allow companies the agility they need. You have probably heard that a 'jack-of-all-trades' is a master of none. That phrase is the key to why a multi-cloud strategy was invented in the first place. There is no reason to be locked into a service that cannot evolve with the data it handles.

Benefits of a Multi-Cloud Environment

Moving to a new system can be daunting, especially when another entity holds your data. However, there are many advantages to this type of strategy.

Some of these benefits include:

- **Improved Disaster Recovery** - Backing up your systems can help in the event of an outage.

- **Avoiding Vendor Lock-In** - This risk management strategy will ensure that both you and your data has control through needed flexibility. It is expensive and time consuming moving in and out of the cloud.
- **Vendor Flexibility** - Never put all of your 'cloud eggs' in one basket. Instead, maintain your negotiating power, leanness, and your agility. If your vendor changes its strategy, SLAs, or pricing model, it is best to be able to move quickly.
- **Cherry-Pick Services** - No single cloud provider has the best services for everything, so it is smart to tailor the best service for your situation.

The cloud promises services at the right place, time, and cost. However, the impact of the cloud on traditional IT environments and the number of technology choices can be overwhelming. There are many issues to consider when moving to the cloud.

Your Data in the Multi-Cloud

Each enterprise will adopt a different mix of traditional and cloud services to achieve its goals. Organizations must match the platform to the types of service requirements. Here are some questions to ask when adopting a multi-cloud strategy.

- What types of applications are best suited for traditional or cloud environments?
- What are the risks and how could they affect my business?
- What is the cost of migrating to the cloud versus what the business will save in the future?
- What compliance or government regulation is required?
- What level of automation is needed?
- What is the security strategy?
- Are the right people in place to manage this strategy?

All clouds are not created equal, so it is imperative to know what you want your data to do to narrow down the best cloud vendor. By having a great planning stage, implementation of the multi-cloud strategy will be easy. For example, an application that is only going to run a few hours per day will not be a good fit for something that is always running. The cost can dramatically be lowered by going to a vendor who is a better fit.

Choosing the Best Cloud

The first step in choosing a cloud provider is to match each application's requirements to the cloud's features and services as well as the technical requirements. Most enterprises with a multi-cloud strategy are running each application in a single cloud. Is this method the best for your data? Choosing the right cloud for each workload is not as difficult as it may seem in the beginning. For example, a public cloud meets the goals of many enterprises.

What are your database needs, core services, and additional services? The answers to these questions will play a significant factor in what vendors you consider. The variable cost model of cloud computing makes comparing prices complicated but offers significant opportunities for savings. Prices are constantly changing,so it can be difficult to make an apples-to-apples comparison. On average, computer resources will account for 75-80% of your cloud costs.

When evaluating cloud providers, it is important to know if they offer support and the costs of such service. Some support models are priced as a percentage of your cloud spend. If your cloud spend

is significant, your support costs will be greater as well.

Challenges of a Multi-Cloud Strategy

A multi-cloud strategy can be more complex to run compared to the traditional single-cloud approach. The entire process is highly dependent on good planning. Businesses should familiarize themselves with the advantages and disadvantages when making optimal choices. Since a multi-cloud environment is more involved, having the right people for the job is crucial. Most cloud interfaces vary, so one person knowing every system is rare. One option is to hire a consultant to set up your cloud, which can be very cost efficient in the long run.

Another big challenge is security. Organizations should have a thorough discussion regarding security before committing to any providers. Every person on the project should know how to respond in case of a data breach or loss. Security and privacy are cited as some of the biggest reasons why companies are not in the cloud. Ironically, it is usually the company and not the provider that leaks data unintentionally. It is up to us to protect our own data. The cloud vendor may have some nice tools, but it is up to the organization to implement them to the greatest benefit of the data.

A Multi-Cloud Strategy Works

The advantages of a multi-cloud strategy far outweigh any disadvantages. Since most organizations are in business to make money, we can safely say the top reason is that a multi-cloud strategy contributes to cash flow by saving money. You can learn how BMC can save you money with your multi-cloud strategy here. Usually, issues and solutions become more complex when people make them sound more complex. A good multi-cloud strategy is one that has been well thought out, planned, and mapped to your needs. The planning phase of a strategy should take longer than the implementation.

The best planning phase is one that is torn apart numerous times by security and data experts. It is only after it is bulletproof that you should move onto the implementation phase. Having the best plan and the best people will ensure that your strategy lives for a very long time. Contact BMC to learn more about incorporating a multi-cloud strategy into your organization.