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State Of Public Cloud Migration, 2020

Or How To Get Your Cloud Migrations Right The First Time

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The Move To Public Cloud Starts With A Successful Migration Strategy

Although most companies have migrated some infrastructure to public cloud, most enterprise workloads still run in on-premises data centers. Technology leaders want to migrate more workloads and infrastructure to public cloud, but they are frustrated by the process of assessing their existing workloads, identifying a migration strategy that aligns IT and business needs, and ensuring they have the right talent and skills in-house to execute a migration on time and on budget.

To encourage faster migration of a broader set of workloads to public cloud, enterprises seek not only cost optimization, but also strategy advice, powerful migration tools and professional services, and skill development.

Key Findings

Firms turn to consultants for cloud migration strategy advice, but they rely on their cloud providers to execute their cloud migrations.

Firms migrate to cloud for faster software development, better use of data, access to emerging technology, and use of compelling employee and customer experience (CX and EX) solutions.

Cloud migration benefits IT and business. It improves IT operations efficiency and security, amps up infrastructure performance, and gives business users apps that scale to meet demand.

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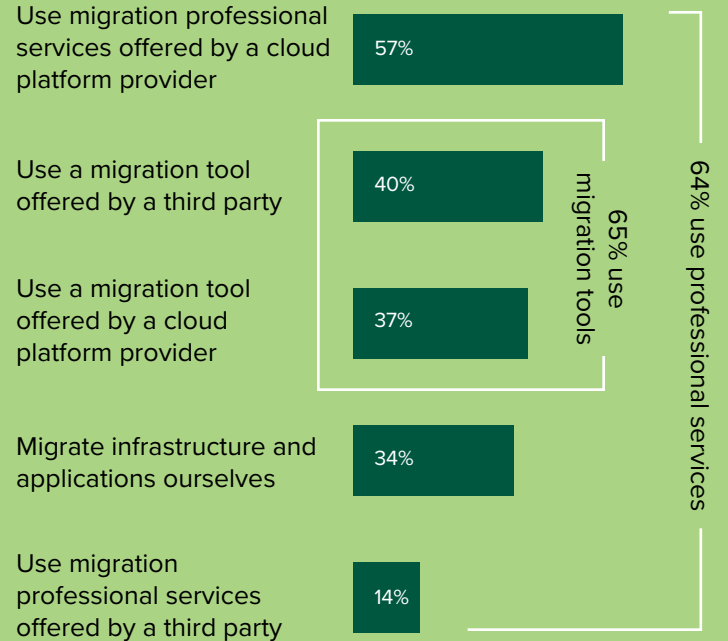
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Make Sure You Have The Right Migration Tools And A Skilled Partner

When asked about their most recent or planned cloud migrations, IT pros indicated strong preference for using migration tools and professional services. Sixty-five percent indicated they used or plan to use a migration tool; 40% sourced or will source tools from a third party, and 37% sourced or will source tools directly from their cloud platform providers.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of IT leaders said their firms use migration professional services — with a strong preference for cloud provider migration services. Decision makers reported their companies are more than four times as likely to procure services from their cloud provider than from a third-party services firm, suggesting IT pros want to go straight to the source for migration services.

"Which of the following reflects how you went about your most recent cloud migration/which of the following reflects how you plan to go about the migration process?"

(Select all that apply)

Use migration professional services offered by a cloud platform provider — 57%

Use a migration tool offered by a third party — 40%

Use a migration tool offered by a cloud platform provider — 37%

Migrate infrastructure and applications ourselves — 34%

Use migration professional services offered by a third party — 14%

65% use migration tools

64% use professional services

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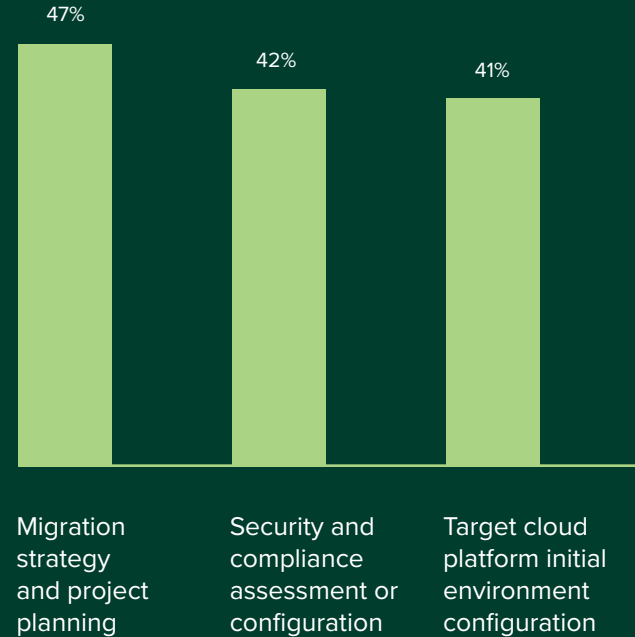
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Firms Need The Most Help In The Early Stages Of Cloud Migration

Firms need help mapping the route for cloud migration: Decision makers said they most frequently leverage outside consultants or service providers for migration strategy and project planning (47%). The next two most common areas relate to security setup and configuration (42%) and target infrastructure environment configuration (41%).

The least common areas to leverage outside help are for the app migration process (17%) and post-migration optimization for workloads or cloud (26%). IT pros are not as worried today about post-migration optimization; this confidence may be because automation is now the norm for cloud migration. Seventy percent of decision makers somewhat or strongly agreed that their migration processes are mostly automated.

"In your most recent (or planned) cloud migration, for which stages did you (or do you plan to) leverage outside consultants or other service providers?"

47%

42%

41%

Migration strategy and project planning

Security and compliance assessment or configuration

Target cloud platform initial environment configuration

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Faster Software Development And Data Insights Drive Cloud Migrations

As firms use more public cloud services to modernize their business, they prioritize software development platforms and database applications. Today's demanding customers and competitive business climate force every company to create compelling apps and surface important customer insight from data faster.

But we also found that nearly every type of app and workload is a candidate for public cloud, from internal-facing employee productivity tools to new edge and IoT solutions. While firms are more likely to replace complex back-office systems such as finance and sales support apps with packaged software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions, every one of the more than dozen workloads we asked respondents about are now running in the cloud (or will be soon). Even sales, fulfillment, and commerce workloads are currently or planned to run in the cloud for 34% of IT pros.

"Which of the following applications or workloads is your organization currently running/planning to run in a cloud platform?"

Software development platforms/ platform-as-a-service (50%)

Database applications/ systems of record (49%)

Employee tools (48%)

Internet-of-things (IoT) applications (47%)
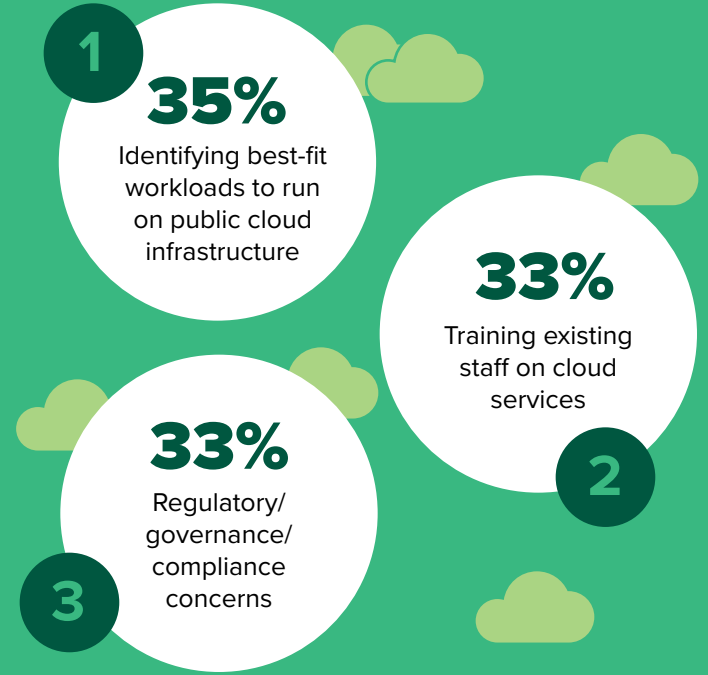
Digital experience (46%)

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Focus On Strategy, Skills, And Security For A Successful Migration

When answering the critical first question of cloud migration — "What should we migrate first?" — more than one-third of decision makers said they struggled, making this step the most frequently selected challenge. Work with a migration strategy partner to do a full IT infrastructure assessment and pick the right migration starting place. Identifying workloads that benefit most from public cloud's efficiency, automation, and elasticity will bring early success and organization buy-in for future migration.

Next, reskill your team as they must understand public cloud services before identifying what to move first. IT ops pros run workloads in public cloud, so they must also develop cloud ops skills. Some cloud providers may provide training to shorten the learning curve. One-third of leaders said establishing strong cloud governance is a challenge, so engage the security team early in the migration process.

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"Thinking of your most recent/planned migration to cloud, which of the following issues were/do you expect to be the most challenging?"

(Showing top three responses)

1

35%
Identifying best-fit workloads to run on public cloud infrastructure

33%
Training existing staff on cloud services

2

33%
Regulatory/ governance/ compliance concerns

3

Base: 406 global infrastructure and operations decision makers responsible for migrating infrastructure to cloud platforms
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Google, April 2020

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Firms Seek Migration Process Improvement

When we asked decision makers what they would do differently on their next cloud migrations, three themes emerged: deep cloud expertise, better migration tools, and solid strategy development. The most common change leaders would make is to hire experienced cloud experts, suggesting a talent and training gap. Second, respondents would invest in tools to increase performance visibility.

Rounding out the top five of IT respondents' wish list are items related to strategy: identifying best-fit workloads to run on cloud, collaborating more with business stakeholders, and spending more time on app assessment. IT pros who focus on public cloud migration as solely a cost-saving IT initiative will find themselves in a pickle; only by aligning with the business early and conducting clear strategic planning can IT pros deliver public cloud's promised value.

"In your next cloud migration project, what actions would you take to improve the success/ outcome of this project?"

(Showing sum of ranks 1 through 3 for the top five responses)

36% Hire experienced cloud experts

34% Invest in tools to increase performance visibility

32% Identify best-fit workloads to run on public cloud infrastructure

31% Increase collaboration with business/ application owners

31% Spend more time on application assessment and profiling

For IT, The Major Migration Benefit Remains Operational Time And Cost Savings

The No. 1 IT outcome organizations have experienced post migration is easier IT operations and management. Additional common benefits include improved performance, scalability, and security. Cloud and SaaS frequently outpace on-premises alternatives in terms of user experience, flexibility, and adoption, leading to improved business results.[1]

"Which of the following are the most important IT outcomes your organization has experienced/ expects as a result of migrating to cloud?"

Easier IT operations and management	55%
Improved infrastructure performance	45%
Greater ability to scale application to meet demand	44%
Improved security or compliance	44%
Improved application performance	43%
Faster software development	41%
Improved database or analytics performance	40%
Reduced downtime	37%

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Cloud Migration Supports Streamlined Operations

Cloud migration leads to both greater reliability and lower costs. Eighty-five percent of respondents have experienced improved workload performance, and more than half said that a more reliable platform for workloads is the most important business outcome they have realized from cloud migration. More than three-quarters have experienced faster software development and delivery. While lower infrastructure costs is the second most important business outcome that firms have realized, cloud migration is not just a cost play; these findings reveal that the true benefits of a move to public cloud are technology performance improvements and an accelerated pace of innovation.

"To what extent do you agree with the following statements around your company's past cloud migrations?"

(Showing sum of strongly agree/somewhat agree)

85% We have experienced consistent or improved application/ workload performance due to a recent cloud migration

78% We have experienced increased speed of application development and delivery due to a recent cloud migration

Most common business outcomes

1 MORE RELIABLE PLATFORM FOR WORKLOADS

2 LOWER INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

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Firms Demand Strong Security, Advanced Cloud Services, And Ease Of Use From Their Cloud Providers

The top attribute that IT pros look for in a cloud solution is security and compliance, with 87% of respondents saying that knowing a vendor has the best security and compliance is critical or very important to them when choosing a cloud provider. The next three most important vendor attributes are technical capabilities (86%) and ease of use and performance (85% for each). Interestingly, the least important attribute is cost: Only 57% of respondents said the lowest price was critical or very important.

This prioritization gap between features and cost shows that organizations are shifting away from making cloud decisions based on budget and instead evaluating the true value of cloud for the business.
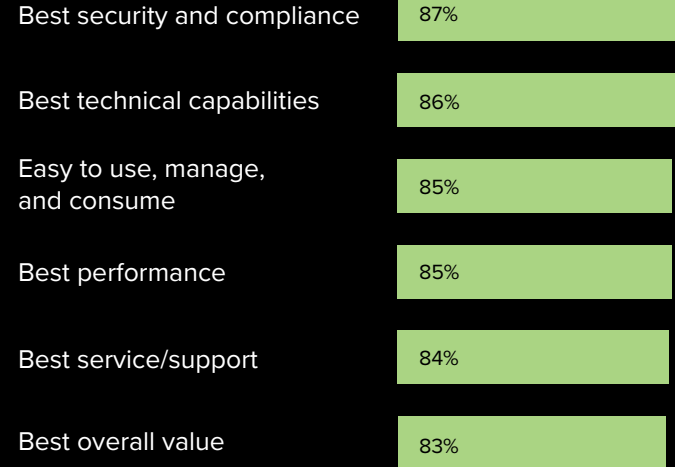
Firms are making cloud decisions based on business value, not budget.
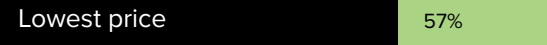
"When considering cloud vendors, how important are the following attributes in making a decision?"

(Showing sum of critical and very important)

TOP 6

Best security and compliance	87%
Best technical capabilities	86%
Easy to use, manage, and consume	85%
Best performance	85%
Best service/support	84%
Best overall value	83%

BOTTOM 1

Lowest price	57%

Conclusion

Despite migration challenges, technology leaders have shifted many apps and workloads to public cloud, and they are not finished; 63% plan further expansion in the next 12 months. Based on our in-depth survey about the current state of cloud migration, we found:

- IT pros need help with their migration strategies. Strategy and planning are the most common areas where firms hire outside help, as well as the areas they wish they could spend more time soliciting business input for their next migrations.

- Firms leverage public cloud most commonly for workloads related to app dev, data management, emerging technology, and tools that support EX and CX — but all workloads are fair game.

- Public cloud migration leads to IT operational efficiency and business benefits like performance, reliability, and scalability.

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Contributing Research:

Forrester's Infrastructure and Operations research group

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Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Google. Forrester Consulting conducted an online survey that asked questions of global infrastructure and operations decision makers across industries, responsible for migrating infrastructure to cloud platforms. The custom survey began in March 2020 and was completed in April 2020.

ENDNOTES

[1] Source: "Quantifying The Business Value Of SaaS," Forrester Research, Inc., February 15, 2019.

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester Consulting provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders succeed in their organizations. Ranging in scope from a short strategy session to custom projects, Forrester's Consulting services connect you directly with research analysts who apply expert insight to your specific business challenges. For more information, visit forrester.com/consulting.

Demographics

REGION

North America, 55%

Europe, 45%

DEPARTMENT

IT, 100%

RESPONDENT LEVEL

C-level executive, 26%

Vice president, 8%

Director, 37%

Manager 30%

COMPANY SIZE

500 to 999 employees, 13%

1000 to 4999 employees, 48%

5,000 to 19,999 employees, 23%

20,000 or more employees, 16%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

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