SYNTAX

Whitepaper

The 5 most important questions to ask before migrating to Azure

- Prepare your environment for the cloud
- Take a long term approach
- Keep your data secure

SAP Platinum Partner

Introduction

More enterprises are trusting their workloads to public clouds and recent research from Gartner shows there's little sign of that trend changing anytime soon.

In fact, 80 percent of large enterprises have moved at least a quarter of their applications to public cloud services, such as Microsoft Azure, with little sign of slowing down. The most recent Gartner market analysis projected out a five-year forecast of 20% compound annual growth for worldwide public cloud services spending.

These trends are driven by the many benefits of running applications in the public cloud, such as:

- Gaining an on-demand infrastructure that allows you to manage complex workloads in the most cost-effective manner.
- Simplifying your IT management, as you won't need to maintain your own data centers or devote your in-house team to mundane cloud admin.
- Scaling quickly and easily. This agility is vital when setting your enterprise up for future success.
- Driving innovation and transformation. According to a recent survey, digital transformation is the #1 driver for enterprise public cloud adoption.
- Spinning up servers quickly for development and testing – with no long-term costs or commitments.

With these benefits, it's not surprising that enterprises are choosing the public cloud over hosting their data internally. Research by Gartner validates those benefits as parts of broader initiatives across industries to minimize risk and optimize costs, particularly through the reduction in capital expenditures. Ultimately, the question for each organization is which cloud provider makes sense.

Is Microsoft Azure right for your enterprise?

When it comes to public clouds, most organizations choose from among the three biggest operators – such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.

While all of these services offer compelling benefits, Microsoft Azure's features make it uniquely suited for enterprises.

In particular, many CIOs find that Azure has less of a learning curve. This allows them to get up and running quickly and drive immediate value from the public cloud.

Azure is referred to as the "enterprise cloud," because users in large organizations are often familiar with other Microsoft tools such as Office 365, Exchange, and SharePoint. If your enterprise relies on Microsoft, Azure may be a natural fit.

A recent State of the Cloud Report revealed that 45 percent of enterprises run Azure apps – up from 34 percent last year. With this rapid growth, it's not surprising that Forbes.com called Microsoft the "world's leading enterprise cloud provider."

> Many CIOs find that Azure has less of a learning curve. This allows them to get up and running quickly and drive immediate value from the public cloud.

5 questions to ask before you migrate to Microsoft Azure

Even with multiple reasons supporting a move to Azure, you may have questions about how to migrate your workloads efficiently, securely, and cost effectively.

If you speed through your migration, you'll encounter problems down the road. And if you go too slowly, moving a few workloads and then stalling, you'll never achieve the agility that the public cloud has to offer.

Here are five questions that will help ensure a successful migration:

1

How do I architect my environment for the public cloud?

2

Are my current, private cloud services available in Azure?

3

How do I keep our data secure in the public cloud?

4

Is it possible to maintain our governance and standards in the public cloud?

5

How does moving to the cloud change skills requirements and process workflows?

1

How do I architect my environment for the public cloud?

Your architecture will look significantly different in the public cloud than it looks on premise.

To succeed in the public cloud, you must architect around Azure's best practices for performance, availability, and disaster recovery. If you don't follow Azure's guidelines, you may not be able to take advantage of Microsoft's service-level agreements (SLAs).

For example, you must design around maintenance windows that you have no control over. You must also understand how Azure's configurations and offerings will impact your performance.

While Microsoft provides guidance on how your applications should run in Azure, it doesn't explain how things should work in your environment. Before moving to Azure, you must take stock of your applications, integrations, and other items that may change when you move them to the public cloud.

> Your architecture will look significantly different in the public cloud than it looks on premise.

2

Are my current private cloud services available in Azure?

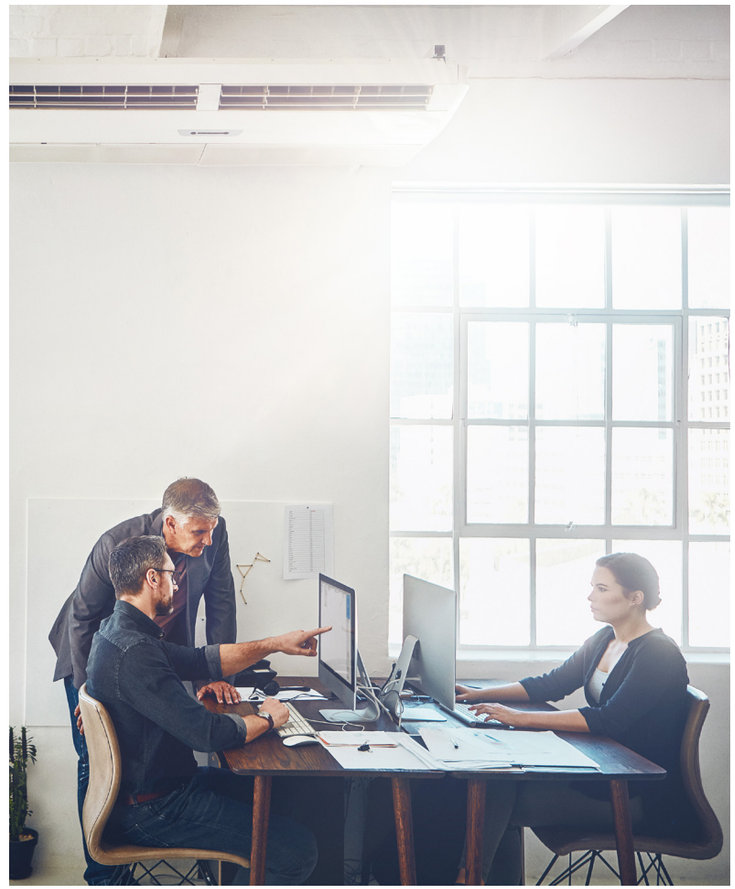
All of the tools you use in your data center may not be available in Azure. Your public cloud options are much more limited.

For example, you have limited options for backup software in the public cloud. Azure supports Sequel natively but may not offer comprehensive support for other databases. If you use a different platform, you must consider your database protection strategy and how you will monitor your backups in the public cloud.

Before you make the move, take an inventory of the services you currently provide within your data center. Then, get clear on which of your existing tools Azure supports. Your roadmap to the public cloud must specify which services you can migrate and which ones you must replace with something Azure supports.

Here is the information you'll want to have on hand when you decide which services to migrate to Microsoft Azure:

- A list of items in your IT environment, including your in-scope and out-of-scope servers
- Server and application version information
- Your disaster recovery point and recovery time objectives (RPO/RTO)
- Your interface requirements and whether they are currently satisfied via operating system (OS) scripts
- Info on any system that compliments the business processes you plan to perform in the public cloud
- Your cut-over considerations
- Any special requirements on decommissioning your on-premise systems



> Your roadmap to the public cloud must specify which services you can migrate and which ones you must replace with something Azure supports.

3

How do I keep our data secure in the public cloud?

If you're concerned about how the public cloud will impact your security, you're not alone.

According to a recent survey, 33 percent of IT decision makers said that security is their biggest worry when moving to the cloud. Meanwhile, 20 percent of respondents cited data privacy as their top cloud concern.

Before you move data to the public cloud, you must put the proper security measures in place. This means extending all of your on-premises security, such as firewalls, into Azure. While Azure offers a number of security features, Microsoft will expect that you bring your own security into its public cloud.

A good place to start is with data classification, as you can't protect your data unless you know where it lives.

4

Is it possible to maintain our governance and standards in the public cloud?

It's easy to lose control over your standards in the public cloud.

Users can simply click a button and upload sensitive data to unauthorized services. If they have credits with a public cloud provider, they don't even need a credit card to spin up a new environment.

Since shadow IT is such a convenient option, it's not surprising that 20-40 percent of enterprise technology spending happens without IT's permission.

In addition to unapproved spending, your planned expenses can also spin out of control in the public cloud.

For example, you may lose track of who is maintaining your environment and not realize how many virtual machines (VMs) you have in the public cloud.

If you review all of your VMs, you may find that you can get rid of 30-50 percent of them. Just this one step can create huge cost savings, as you won't need to pay for VMs on an ongoing, monthly basis.

5

What's the impact on skills requirements and process workflows?

In an on-premise IT operating environment, many roles can be quite different than their cloud- deployed equivalents. For example, you may have an in-house storage person and a separate networking team.

This model doesn't translate to Microsoft Azure, as cloud engineers must be experts in multiple disciplines. Before you migrate to the public cloud, consider conducting a skills inventory of your team so you know where you need to pursue training to ensure that all the critical functions are covered to run your environment.

If you are short on in-house staff, look for a partner who can give you a secure path to the public cloud. A qualified partner will ensure that you follow Microsoft's best practices – minimizing your risks while freeing your in-house team to focus on other projects.

How to Get Started with Microsoft Azure

Moving to Microsoft Azure is more of a journey than a destination.

For the best results with the least risk, use a staged deployment. Start by putting some new workloads into Azure. Then, build processes around them. Once you are comfortable, you can move your existing, active workloads to the public cloud.

Visit syntax.com/Azure to learn more and see how moving to Azure would work for you.

Microsoft Solutions Partner
Microsoft Cloud

SYNTAX

Why Syntax

Syntax provides comprehensive technology solutions and trusted professional, advisory, and application management services to power businesses' mission-critical applications in the cloud.

With over 50 years of experience and 900+ customers around the world, Syntax has deep expertise in implementing and managing multi-ERP deployments in secure private, public, hybrid, or multi-cloud environments. Syntax partners with SAP, Oracle EBS, JD Edwards, AWS, Microsoft, and other global technology leaders to ensure customers' applications are seamless, secure, and at the forefront of enterprise technology innovation.

SAP Platinum Partner

syntax.com/contact