

# Change management paves the way for successful cloud migration

Cloud adoption has accelerated in South Africa over the past decade, driven mainly by large enterprises moving into private cloud environments. This trend is increasing now that global vendors such as Microsoft have launched their data centres in the country, which will see growth in the public cloud.

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Benefits of cloud include increased efficiency, scalability, agility, simpler administration and management, and most attractively, lower cost. However, if the migration is not well handled, these may not be fully realised. Change management is the step that is often missing and is essential to pave the way for successful cloud migration.

## Challenges around the cloud

There are several common challenges around cloud adoptions. People and processes need to adapt to new technologies, which takes time, and if not effectively addressed can limit effectiveness. Many businesses also struggle with defining objectives around cloud strategy.

Time, costs and security concerns around data migration can also be problematic. Moving legacy data into the cloud is a slow process requiring significant bandwidth and man hours. Data must also be kept secure while it is being transferred, and once it is actually in the cloud.

Other challenges include the need to modify architecture and incorporate new infrastructure, as well as resistance to change once new systems are in place. Accurately estimating the total cost of cloud migration can prove difficult, due to the abovementioned factors as well as the business impact of moving data and

services to new platforms. The commonality behind these challenges is change to business, and therefore change management can effectively address them all.

## **Managing the change**

Change management provides guidelines on how to manage processes, tools, techniques and people to achieve required objectives, in this case, cloud migration. It incorporates a number of organisational tools and strategies to help with the realisation of change. This begins with education and communication so all stakeholders are aware of the change and the post-implementation benefits. Participation and involvement encourage stakeholders to be an active part of the change process.

Awareness must be built to help stakeholders understand change. It is important to define who will be affected so that communication on the change and its outcomes can be delivered in a timely manner. A support structure needs to be created.

In addition, through analysis of strategy, risks and potential bodies of resistance need to be identified, and tactics to address them developed. Training is another key component to ensure that new tools are understood and solutions adopted. Finally, facilitation and continuous support are critical to help track the impact of change and monitor the effectiveness of the new solution.

## **The benefits of change management**

Change management helps organisations to respond faster to challenges, align existing resources and assess the overall impact of change to mitigate any negative effects. It also assists with maintaining organisational efficiency during change and reduces the time taken to implement change, because it defines a process to be followed which minimises the chance of error. The risk associated with change is reduced and return on investment increased.

For individuals change management provides support to create a positive perception of change, and ensures effective planning, communication and strategy. This minimises resistance, improves collaborative cooperation and productivity, and reduces the stress and anxiety that are often prevalent around organisational change.

## **Change management is the key to cloud success**

Change management essentially reduces disruptive elements and emphasises the positive aspects of change. It offers a formal process and way of communicating with employees to ensure they are engaged so that change can be implemented swiftly, saving time and resources.

By reducing cost and complexity and ensuring that the benefits can be fully realised, change management paves the way for successful cloud migrations.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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