

The role of the cloud aggregator

Many companies embark on their cloud journey, only to regret their early decisions and approaches further down the line. This is according to Andre Schwan, deal solutions manager at T-Systems South Africa,

“This is largely because the problem statement and the expectations that were created at the beginning of the cloud transition were incorrect. The result is that either the performance is not as expected, or the business case fails,” says Schwan.

Research by McKinsey shows that this is mainly due to the fact that companies fall into the trap of confusing simply moving IT systems to the cloud with the transformational strategy needed to get the full value of the cloud.

“It is important that enterprises understand their current baseline and how it all fits together, including data movement patterns and application use patterns. They must also understand which business processes their applications underpin,” says Schwan.

He advises that organisations start with a business strategy and design that supports these processes and applications.



Andre Schwan

“Just moving what you have into the cloud will not achieve the business value expected or opportunity. It is essential that we design for business outcomes and use all options available to realise these outcomes in the most effective manner,” he says.

Enterprises must overcome two main obstacles. The first being legacy IT that was designed and built in the traditional IT paradigm, which is not suitable to the cloud. Simply moving legacy apps does not make them more dynamic.

“The second is that the skillsets required to design, build and run systems in the cloud is significantly different from that of traditional IT. In most cases, a re-design of the organisation is needed, and staff need to be reskilled,” says Schwan.

Sonja Weber, lead delivery solution manager at T-Systems South Africa, notes that the impact of a lack of organisational support and readiness has been widely underestimated when it comes to successful cloud migration.

“No business case will survive the resistance of the people meant to use it, which means that user adoption is a major driver for getting value out of your cloud environment,” she says.

Furthermore, she says that the “lift and shift” approach only works for applications that are suited to it. For most legacy applications, enterprises will probably end up with more cost, less performance and a more complex environment to manage.

“The whole point of digital transformation is to evolve to a simpler state that is more agile and offers the business more opportunities by capitalising on modern automation and analytical capabilities and opening up new channels to market,” says Weber.



Sonja Weber

“The business threat that we’re countering is that if we don’t grab an opportunity, someone else will and more often than not, it is small new companies, who are by nature of being new, are normally digitally native.”

Weber says organisations also need to understand that they will probably have a hybrid solution for some time, so when selecting technology platforms, they need to consider interoperability, data transfer costs and a private cloud design.

“Be very selective when it comes to your cloud provider – multi-cloud providers with a track record of managing complex environments are your best ally in this journey, especially in the early stages when you’re still adjusting your origination,” she says.

In addition, organisations should avoid technology or platform lock-in, and rather adopt industry standards and platforms that use these standards.

“Do not make once-off decisions in isolation. Start with a sound digital transformation strategy and let that lead your decisions,” Weber concludes.

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