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Driving value and innovation from your cloud strategy

A special report written by Trustmarque in partnership with Raconteur.

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Driving value and innovation from your cloud strategy

As organisations seek to maximise the value of cloud and spearhead new innovations especially in AI, they need to reassess their approach to the cloud.

Cloud computing was once a disruptive technology, today it's a pervasive reality. The pandemic with remote working was a strong stimulus for its wholesale adoption. Right now, it's used for everything from managing client data and AI, to supply chains. But concerns over cost mean organisations are looking to maximise the value of cloud services, minimise its risk and innovate, all at the same time.

Cloud computing is still very appealing - agile, elastic and scalable in nature, it's at the core of many IT initiatives to modernise, digitalise services, utilise new tools and be competitive. Leveraging the cloud strategically is vital. Yet it's important for organisations to achieve a balance between utilising the cloud's full potential, whilst safeguarding against cloud risks - data breaches, security and privacy issues.

"Over time the cloud has proven its worth. The big question now is -- how do you calibrate this value in full and how do you continue to capture maximum value over time? This is where the big debate is," explains Ade Omotomilola, head of cloud and data and analytics at Trustmarque, a leading provider of cloud solutions and one of the most highly accredited IT services providers in the UK.

He explains: "What's changed is the question on what's possible through cloud adoption. The horizon has opened up. The possibilities for innovation are super abundant, particularly in artificial intelligence. It means organisations now need to structure themselves differently than in the past to take advantage of exponential advances in technology. Cloud adoption is part of that process."

Every organisation has a unique cloud roadmap

Every organisation is on a different stage of their cloud journey, each has their own unique roadmap for adoption and migration, which reflects their needs. The configuration of a business in the cloud environment can determine how successful they will be at getting products to market quicker than competitors, improving margins, realising financial gains or dealing with more customers.

"During the global pandemic there was a rush to put workloads in the cloud. Now organisations are realising that their cloud journey has to be more of a transformational journey. Their operating model needs to evolve. Businesses will not maximise the value of cloud computing unless they use it efficiently and effectively, and where workloads are optimised for this environment," states Neel Dev, practice director for cloud services at Trustmarque,

which is one of the only UK-specific firms to have all six Microsoft cloud partner designations. This is invaluable when completing projects with the NHS, government departments and business, including those in financial services.

"Assessing where an organisation is on the ladder for cloud adoption is vital. We call it the cloud runway. It's a methodology that allows us to calibrate and then maximise the cloud for a business -- best practices and frameworks really do matter in this area."

Extract value and provide guardrails: Managed Services for cloud management

For instance, some organisations fail to put the right level of security and safeguarding in place in their rush to gain insight from data they've leveraged through the cloud. Trustmarque has observed this in UK healthcare settings for instance.

With the emergence of generative AI, which collates even more data to produce new content, this issue will become prominent. Understanding and delivering on compliance can often be an afterthought. When data is increasingly leveraged for competitive gain, this cannot be the case.

"Organisations need to mitigate against the risk of cloud migration. We've now got this covered with the right tools and frameworks in place so teams can concentrate on adding value with cloud, such as unlocking the potential of data or utilising new information sources, whether it's from social media, patient records or customer purchases," details Dev from Trustmarque, which is on track to become an Azure Expert Managed Service Provider.

"By deploying AI or ML on cloud data they can almost predict the future. It's an evolution from reactive data analytics to a proactive approach. Instead of understanding what happened yesterday, you can increasingly calculate what'll happen tomorrow. It's a powerful proposition. But you need guardrails in place to achieve this."

It's why cloud managed services are also increasingly popular for organisations. The growing complexity of IT systems and the need for businesses to focus on strategic, digitally-driven projects that directly fuel the bottom line, is increasingly creating opportunities for specialists to manage cloud security, migration, integration, cost and performance.

"This is the reason why cloud management platforms are coming to the fore. Organisations are looking to administer their cloud services effectively, respond to security incidents, optimise systems, as well as better understand their cloud estate. That's why we've developed a cloud optimisation managed service based on an in-house platform. This tool, called Prism for Azure, is a constituent part of our cloud management platform," states Omotomilola from York-based, Trustmarque, which employs 500 people and now owns cloud optimisation firm, Livingstone.

"One of the things that often stops cloud adoption in its tracks is the fear around costs and losing control of costs. The ability to monitor these and allocate or pull resources is vital. This is where a cloud management platform bringing together optimisation, insights and service management becomes an incredibly powerful tool."

The future is bright

"Those that provide intellectual property around cloud services that are specific to each sector will add value. This is what we're razor-focused on, especially as organisations seek more innovation in the cloud. They can only do this if they partner with consultancies that are at the forefront of this technology, especially as AI continues to evolve at pace," says Omotomilola, from Trustmarque, which has nearly 40 years' experience and offices across the UK.

"The future also lies in the consolidation of products, tools, technologies and services within the large cloud service provider space, such as Microsoft with Azure, its cloud platform, but also with Purview its data protection and governance solution and Fabric, which unifies data and insights."

Delivering cloud service at scale and at cost will be increasingly important. This is where self-service will become a key requirement, whether it's to do with AI deployments or data-analytical tools. An increasing number of products are now available in the cloud. Today they aren't being fully utilised, this will also change.

"The future's bright. Data-driven decision making is the future. We need to make this happen," concludes Dev.

"Organisations now need to structure themselves differently than in the past to take advantage of exponential advances in technology"

Ade Omotomilola,
Head of cloud and data and analytics at Trustmarque

About Ade Omotomilola

Ade is head of cloud and data and analytics at Trustmarque. Previous leadership roles include multi-disciplinary positions as head of managed services, head of operations, head of pre-sales and sales director roles at SCC, NEC Unified Solutions, Insight UK and Axial Systems.

Ade's core skills are in business and change leadership, with specialisms in complex IT services – professional services, cloud services, business / digital transformation services, outsourced services and managed services. With a change leadership remit, he works with multiple departments within the organisation, including sales, marketing, and delivery teams to help evolve Trustmarque's annuity-based service streams and the cloud and data value propositions and strategy. He is currently leading Trustmarque's transformative programme towards the Azure expert managed service provider accreditation.

About Neel Dev

Neel is a cloud practice director at Trustmarque and has been interested in advanced areas of IT since 2001. Neel has extensive experience and was involved in research and training in genomics and bioinformatics from 2001 to 2006, virtual desktop infrastructure and remote working from 2006 to 2011 and private, public and hybrid cloud for the past 12 years. Neel has worked and managed teams in these areas in organisations such as Mascon Global, Hewlett-Packard, Misco, Insight, Capita and Trustmarque.

Trustmarque is a leading provider of cloud services and technology. We are one of the UK's most highly accredited Microsoft Cloud partners with all six Microsoft designations, so you're in safe hands. We're trusted to migrate key infrastructure workloads to Microsoft Azure, with specialisms in Windows server, SQL migration and AVD.

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