

YOU'VE DECIDED TO MOVE YOUR ERP TO THE CLOUD—NOW WHAT?

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Previously, I outlined different cloud models that a company can choose from for their ERP solution and the tangible ROI benefits companies can receive after switching to a cloud-based solution. In this article, the third installment of my cloud series, I will share an overview of the initial steps a company must take to transition to the cloud.

Step One: Evaluate

Now that you have decided to transition your business to the cloud, the first step of cloud adoption requires you to evaluate your existing ERP system, technology and environment. Does the vendor you use have cloud capabilities? Many do not, which means you may have to change vendors before transitioning your ERP—see step two for more information on this.

Assuming your existing ERP vendor does have cloud

capabilities, you must now assess your current technology and the surrounding environment. Does anything need to be replaced or updated? Is using the cloud a viable option in your geographic area? These are questions that must be answered before your cloud implementation can begin.

Step Two: Choose a Vendor

Whether you decide to stick with the ERP vendor your company is currently using or switch to a different one, choosing the right vendor and cloud solution is one of the most crucial elements in transitioning to the cloud. The cloud vendor you choose should be able to adapt its technology to your business needs, demonstrate the reliability and security of the platform, have impeccable customer service and be able to share its proven results.

Below are some questions you can ask potential vendors to see if they're the right fit for you.

1. *Who are your references?*
2. *Can you share case studies that outline your successes?*
 - Note: If the company offers to share ROI potential using an ROI tool, it's important to remember that while these tools can be helpful, they often outline the best scenario for ROI. Having an actual reference and/or case study is a more reliable way to determine ROI potential for a cloud offering.
3. *What cloud recovery offerings does your company have?*
4. *Who will manage the cloud? For example, if something goes wrong, do we manage it internally or will your staff help, and also where are the boundaries regarding who manages applications and infrastructure?*
5. *Does your company meet my industry's compliance needs (e.g., HIPAA, FedRAMP, etc.)?*
6. *How do you secure and protect data from potential*



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cybercriminals and hackers?

After you have satisfactory answers and select a vendor, it's time to move onto step three.

Step Three: Begin the Migration

Now it is time to decide whether your company is going to migrate all of its business processes to the cloud or start off with a small facet. If you are concerned about moving all processes over at once, you can consider taking a smaller step like only transitioning email to it. If that implementation goes well and

you begin to see results, you can move more and more elements of your day-to-day operations over to it. This piecemeal approach also helps you get buy-in from across your organization; implementations are only successful when those impacted have a stake in the success of the project and therefore feel empowered to champion the upgrade.

Conclusion

Now that your company has migrated to the cloud, it's important to remember that you

must remain an active participant in its upkeep—security and IT needs do not disappear just because you cannot physically see the data storage equipment. That said implementing a cloud-based ERP using a tiered approach will offer your business greater flexibility and manageability, among its other many benefits.

As part of my next article in this series on moving to the cloud, we'll explore how you can start to identify short- and long-term benefits of your new system.



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