

LEVERAGING THE MOBILE CLOUD TO EXTEND ERP APPS

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MID-MARKET ORGANIZATIONS ARE always seeking ways to enhance their existing ERP applications and make them more accessible to their employees. The two most effective approaches to turbo-charge existing ERP applications are to add mobile cloud technologies and Business Intelligence (BI) capabilities to the mix.

These powerful additions will allow mid-market customers to easily connect and manage large-scale data, enabling them to make more informed business decisions in real-time. By extending that data to the mobile cloud, remote workers gain immediate access to the most critical information right at their fingertips.

When properly integrated with ERP technology, the mobile cloud will drive impressive breakthroughs for mid-market companies. Dramatic cost and operational efficiencies, expanded real-time collaboration with customers, vendors and

partners as well as faster and more personalized customer service are among the key benefits for end-users.

Below we've outlined some best practices for integrating mobile cloud technology and BI tools into existing enterprises.

Integrating Cloud Technology to Enable Mobility

Upgrading to a cloud computing architecture can be a daunting process for mid-market customers. However, if the right planning and research are completed in advance, users can ensure a successful and seamless upgrade process. Here are the key steps to take to ensure the right outcome:

Understand Cloud Technology

Have a thorough understanding of cloud architecture and its associated benefits before you begin an upgrade. That way, you can make a solid case for server consolidation and virtualization. Well in advance, make sure you

have a solid project plan that includes accurate timelines and the right IT talent to complete the upgrade. Know that you will need a very deep and specialized IT skillset to build virtualized environments. In fact, you may want to consider working with software providers or IT consultants – for both initial and ongoing guidance.

Know the Costs Involved

Moving to cloud technology can save your organization a significant amount of money, however it is recommended that you understand where you need to drive efficiencies. Have an accurate understanding of your existing IT and infrastructure expenses. In doing so, you will be able to clearly see areas where you can save additional money by migrating to cloud technology.

Follow Realistic Timelines

Moving to cloud technology (whether public or private cloud) may take some time. Therefore, try

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to get a good handle on how long it will take to start the upgrade process in your organization. Know how long it usually takes for IT projects to pass through your company's procurement process. And, factor in the time required to obtain budget approval and add consensus across your organization.

Conduct an Audit

Work with your internal corporate teams — specifically Finance, Operations and Manufacturing – on a complete audit of ERP-related policies, processes and the

technology resources that support them. The audit should examine the readiness to integrate with cloud technology.

Create an ERP Playbook

Once the audit is completed, business and IT decision makers should work together to create an Enterprise Application Playbook that documents organizational goals, processes and supporting IT resources. This playbook should cover processes and technologies that will strengthen your overall business, such as improved compliance with key business

operations via automation. Playbooks should be updated regularly to account for shifts in business goals, new technologies – like the mobile cloud – and other meaningful factors.

Deploying Mobility

The ability to manage mobile devices before they are put into production is necessary in order to protect company assets and data. The benefits of such a deployment can be realized by enabling the secure, real-time accessibility and scalability throughout the organization.

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