



Cloud Governance

Accelerating Maturity through
Continuous Improvement

Table of contents

Executive Summary	3
Cornerstones of Cloud Governance	4
Path to Maturity	5
Getting Started	6
Conclusion	7
Contact Us	7

Executive Summary

Cloud governance comes at a pivotal time for any organization that establishes a cloud strategy, which will serve as the means to transition towards a future state of cloud services delivery. *How* an organization manages cloud adoption will influence future state transition success for key stakeholders and the mission. In support of cloud strategy, organizations should consider implementing the mechanisms required to provide technical leadership and guidance across cloud-based solutions and consistency with the broader cloud vision.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Without cloud governance, organizations could potentially increase the risk of common pitfalls of cloud modernization because of the degree of change it generates. Some organizations “lift and shift” applications quickly to a Cloud Service Provider (CSP) but may also migrate legacy on-prem technical debt to a new platform. This legacy on-prem technical debt can prevent the achievement of cloud efficiency in the long-run, which could leave organizations playing catch up with platform engineering standards and financial tagging procedures. In other cases, some organizations may stand up an additional CSP environment without a comprehensive understanding of application needs and the differentiated capabilities of the new environment. Having “multi-cloud” without a robust business case and clear guardrails limits the ability of organizations to deliver mission critical capabilities efficiently and hinders cloud adoption. Operating “multi-cloud” requires planning and management of standards, processes, and services to minimize duplicative capabilities and to maximize the use of each CSP to deliver higher value to the mission.

Organizations have an opportunity to set the foundation for future cloud activities early to help minimize the risks of change across the organization while positioning itself to deliver resilient, secure, and scalable cloud services efficiently.

Cornerstones of Cloud Governance

Governance should be built into every facet of any cloud operating model. And integrating cloud governance into the existing governance approach provides a path towards the successful adoption of cloud in a way that provides value to the mission.



Financial Operations – Develop a strategy and policies that create a partnership across business, technology, and finance plans and budget for cloud resources. Use resource tagging and analysis of usage data to monitor and control cloud spend, forecast cloud consumption, and optimize as needed.



Security and Reference Architecture – Establish a multilayer approach and baseline to security and enact policies to ensure security requirements are consistently enforced and updated in the cloud environment to keep data safe. Define and continually improve the architecture.



Change Management – Enact a strategy and policy to enable agility and reduce time to implement changes in the cloud environment. Leverage change management software to capture and manage the change request lifecycle.



Data – Develop a strategy to address a variety of data types and structures, validate solutions are cost effective, availability of data matches data use, data is actionable, insights can be captured from historical and new data, and enable data driven decisions. Ensure storage of data meets organization's security in-transit and at-rest requirements.



Human Capital – Perform constant review of human capital to ensure necessary roles and skills are filled in alignment with current and future IT initiatives organization-wide.



Training & Modernization – Align modernization goals and plans with training initiatives to ensure skills evolve as the modernization plan is implemented. Customize the training plan for all business areas and talent levels.



Cornerstones are layered throughout each step of the governance lifecycle providing a foundation with continuous monitoring and improvement built in.



Path to Maturity

The iterative nature of operating cloud governance facilitates the development of documented, standardized, and integrated policy and process. Once established, the end-to-end visibility allows focus on goal-driven decision making and planning for innovation and increased ROI.



Plan – Understand requirements, pinpoint potential cloud services and necessary skillsets, and identify avenues to assess feedback loops.



Transform – Author technical standards for the organization, test and operate technical capabilities and operationalize governance through policies and workflow automation configured within the cloud management platform.



Innovate – Augment plans and systems to promote proactive responses to ever-changing best practice standards and compliance.



Example activities that enable iterative maturity development

Plan



- Understanding the business patterns and requirements to create a logical understanding that drives technology selection
- Create clear, data-driven goals by identifying KPIs that align with overall cloud strategy
- Maximize collaboration by setting shared responsibility expectations

Transform



- Create solutions that adhere to organization architecture standards through creation of dashboards, run books, SOPs, etc.
- Create a uniform understanding of mission by socialization standards, tools and training offerings
- Mitigate risk by implementing tools and templates to track issues, decisions and action items

Innovate



- Operate to Innovate: Grow governance guardrails into second-nature thinking where new capabilities, such as self-service catalog, can be achieved
- Increase confidence and resiliency by continuously pinpointing and resolving vulnerabilities and risks
- Promote fresh perspectives by revising standards and policies, KPIs, and available trainings based on continuous feedback loops

Getting Started

Any organization can start on the path of maturity whether at the start, middle or end of the cloud journey, but how to continuously improve becomes paramount. Organizations can incorporate and align the existing governance approach to enable and facilitate cloud success. A cloud governance model that is in line with the cloud strategy can provide the north star required to optimize all aspects of cloud activities.

Here are ideas to get started:

- 1 Cloud Governance Charter**
Formalize your cloud governance capability with guiding principals, key stakeholders, roles, objectives, and voting procedures. The charter should also define the extent that cloud governance will be incorporated into the existing governance approach.
- 2 Concept of Operations (CONOPS)**
Outline key roles and functions of the governance and define how it will operate within the organization. Include procedures such as cloud intake, multi-cloud guardrails, vendor sourcing and resourcing tagging as applicable.
- 3 Cloud Governance Change Management Strategy**
Implement your plan to bring stakeholder groups, communication channels, reporting structures, processes, training and collaboration together to implement and execute cloud governance.
- 4 Implementation Guidebook**
Define and socialize the steps needed to operate cloud governance and provide either new or updated standards, procedures, and processes- as applicable - related to cloud services delivery including cloud intake/onboarding for System Owners and Program Managers.

Conclusion

Cloud Governance presents an opportunity for IT leadership to find success in the cloud no matter where the organization is in its maturity. Cloud Governance provides the structure, organization, processes, and procedures needed to fully utilize cloud services, drive innovation and increase business agility.



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Thank you.

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