

# Maximize the Cloud

Agencies must demonstrate cloud value, manage culture, and address budget impact.

**I**n the six years since the federal government kicked off its cloud first initiative, many agencies have evolved from being hesitant cloud adopters to organizations with multiple cloud platforms and cloud-native applications. Agencies involved in this transition have found that in order to get the most out of cloud, they need a holistic plan that considers not only the technology, but also the cultural, policy, and funding issues associated with this fundamental shift.

Moving to the cloud is not an easy transformation for agencies. It takes a lot of “effort and passion ... to get something done that’s different,” says Doug Bourgeois, Managing Director and Head of the Federal Cloud Market Offering, Deloitte Consulting LLP. There has been a major shift in government from a simpler cloud-first approach to more complex cloud native idea of developing applications to be optimized to run in the cloud, he says, speaking at an Aug.23rd Cloud Summit.

Agencies are considering moving enterprise systems into the cloud, but doing so without a truly focused approach to organizational change. “We focus on the technology and we really don’t address the organizational, leadership and change aspects (of) these types of initiatives,” says Bourgeois.

Leveraging cloud the right way and demonstrating its business value are critical, says Tony Cossa, Acting CTO, USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer. The cultural shift the cloud brings is the “biggest one that I’ve seen in a long time.” This change will affect the entire organization from the business side of the house to security to hosting agencies.

With any cloud migration, underscoring the value of cloud deserves the most attention, says Cossa. Agencies need to shift the discussion from DevOps and agile to how cloud can deliver savings, improve customer engagement, or the delivery of their business capabilities. “That will drive our rapid adoption and acceleration of cloud.”

Governance and policy play important roles in speeding cloud adoption as well. Agencies have to understand how to fund cloud and monitor its

consumption. “If you don’t have the proper governance and procedures in place to authorize the spin up of services and compute in the cloud then your budget could be impacted a great deal,” he says.

Agencies also have to “look deeply” at the applications and infrastructure upon which they run, the security polices around them, and the business policies and interactions, says Bourgeois. The average agency in government is using five or six clouds

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already for such services as ERP or CRM or even their public facing web sites, but policies have yet to catch up.

“It’s a symptom of the stress a cloud transformation puts on the overall governance model for IT in general,” says Bourgeois. “This is an area where the governance model really needs to be looked at as part of a cloud transformation and modernized.”

Agencies also need transparency, clarity, and control over security policies across different cloud environments. They must change their policies and procedures to support consumption based budgeting, and redefine operational roles and responsibilities. Agencies must be disciplined because there is so much overlapping functionality across different cloud platforms and capabilities. Agencies must also understand how to use the investments they have and know how to operate under a software-as-a software model.

Transparency and visibility into how dollars are being spent is critical. “Put governance in place that ensures you don’t have a lot of duplication of technology and ... of business systems,” says Cossa. “Try to drive more value through an architecture framework that reuses investments that you have already made.”

