EXPOTECH GUIDE: 10 VITAL STEPS TO CONSIDER FOR A SUCCESSFUL CLOUD COMPUTING IMPLEMENTATION

1. ARE YOUR APPLICATIONS CLOUD READY?

Are you using applications that are already web-based? Will your applications benefit in a Cloud-based architecture? Migration of legacy applications to a Cloud-based infrastructure will not provide correct benefits. An assessment to determine an application's readiness for the Cloud needs to be considered. It's in this step where the determination for private or public Cloud is revealed.

2. IS TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SERVICE AVAILABLE?

With Cloud services you entrust a lot of your business data to the service's servers. It's imperative to have a representative to consult with in case thing go wrong. Before choosing any Cloud-based service, make sure you'll be able to receive adequate technical support from the provider you choose.

3. ACCESS AND OWNERSHIP OF YOUR DATA

The application, operating system and hardware is owned by the Cloud provider. It clearly needs to be acknowledged in the contract that data can be taken away whenever you want to. A Cloud subscription gives you access to functionality of the application or function that may be used. If the access somehow is removed, will you be able to access this data so you can take it with you? The only way to ensure this is by making sure the contract allows for the access to the back-end data. An offering of an export capability, even after the expiration of a contract, needs to be considered.

4. INCONSISTENT DATA VOLUMES

If you need flexible computing, Cloud is an excellent solution. When storage capability grows, so does moving it. This can be a timely process especially if you need to work with that data in real-time. It's important to analyze the contract and find any clauses in the agreement that charge for data volumes.

5. IS ANY PART OF THE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCONTRACTED OR OUTSOURCED?

There are many chains of sub-processors that can be involved in Cloud computing. In Europe, there's a data protection law that requires the controller to independently authorize all subcontracts and to enter into direct contracts with all processors. In the United States, it's left to data controllers or processors to determine the appropriate technical and organizational measures. It's imperative to confirm security arrangements that meet the countries laws.

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6. COMPLIANCE

It requires a high degree of transparency on the part of the service providers when it comes to Cloud computing services for data and the applications subject to compliance regulations. Organizations considering using Cloud services should perform a gap analysis between specific requirements identified in the set of controls provided and the relevant regulations by the Cloud service provider.

7. ANALYZE COST

Overhead cost and migration vary widely based on the target Cloud platform. Without taking the target into consideration, the Cloud application migration cannot be completed. Analyzing the cost will help you decide whether or not to proceed with moving a specific application to the Cloud from a return on investment perspective. Operational expenditure, capital expenditure and overhead cost involved with the migration must be considered.

8. STRATEGY OF MIGRATION

There are various migration options available. Defining your migration strategy involves the understanding of these different options. Options to consider would be:

- Establishing business priorities
- Meeting business priorities
- Evolving a strategy that offers a fine balance between costs

There are two options that enterprises have with a Cloud infrastructure. The options are private or public and the choice is driven by the priorities of the business model and go-to market strategy. They are constrained by factors such as security, migration costs, technical feasibility, etc.

9. DEALING WITH DOWNTIME

The Service Level Agreement is essential and no business should start operations with a Cloud computing vendor without it. Anything less than a 99.9% is unacceptable. Uptime with Cloud computing is guaranteed to nearly 100%. Providers should be able to do this due to their multiple data centers and it should be a necessity to ensure uptime. Downtime should be clearly indicated and a clear vendor strategy should be discussed on how to deal with it if the problem should it arise.

10. DATA MIGRATION

Vendors should explain to their clients how data migration will be implemented. This will not only help with security of the data but also deal with the future efficiency of the application. Detailed plans with corresponding time frame should be expected from the vendor. This ensures proper migration without having to deal with future insecurities.

These ten step should be carefully considered and reviewed by any business looking to achieve a Cloud Computing solution. You will run into pitfalls if the right vendor is not selected.

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