



IT Transformation

The IT Transformation Questions
Every CIO Should Ask

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What does the business need most from IT in 2017? Efficiency, efficiency, efficiency.

According to Deloitte's 2016-2017 global CIO survey, the top expectations that the business has of CIOs are improving processes, reducing costs and driving efficiencies. This is consistent with a 2016 report from Technology Business Research, which found that efficiency metrics are the primary drivers behind the adoption of cloud professional services.

The problem, of course, is that making the business more efficient is easier said than done. It often requires a major transformation of existing IT systems. But even so, CIOs understand it's their job to get it done one way or the other: when asked by Deloitte which capabilities were most important for their success, an overwhelming majority of CIOs (nearly 75 percent) said, "aligning IT activities to business strategy and performance goals."

So, how can IT meaningfully improve efficiencies? If your organization is pursuing wholesale IT transformation, here are some of the many complex questions you should be striving to answer — leaning on guidance from both internal subject matter experts and key strategic partners:

Which areas of your business would benefit most from cloud computing?

A successful IT transformation project always starts with identifying the areas where investment in new technologies and managed services will have the biggest impact.

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Are your development teams or business units clamoring for self-service infrastructure capabilities? Will you need to support [emerging use cases](#) such as Internet of Things, machine learning and big data initiatives? Will you soon need to support massive growth due to a product launch or acquisition? Would a cloud-based email service like Office 365 be cheaper and easier to administer relative to your current solution? Are there certain applications that *wouldn't* benefit from cloud computing?

What are the unique needs of your vertical?

Do you run an e-commerce website that sees large traffic spikes due to seasonality or marketing promotions? Are you a healthcare or financial services company with compliance requirements necessitating on-premises infrastructure? Or are you a traditional manufacturing business with complex legacy technology challenges? To what extent should your managed service partners be able to demonstrate expertise and experience specific to your industry?

What business process and cultural changes will make you more efficient?

According to [a recent Gartner study](#), many CIOs identified "culture/structure of organization" as a top barrier to their success – behind only expertise and budget limitations. Is your IT org suffering from “siloed” teams or outmoded deployment processes? Could you benefit from [modern DevOps practices](#) such as continuous integration and deployment (CI/CD), infrastructure automation or improved communication between development and IT teams? Should your IT org become more of a broker of cloud-based services for the business? If so, how can you best access the service management expertise required to advise across the deploy-and-run lifecycle?

Which platforms and technologies will you invest in?

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How will you be using AWS, Microsoft Azure and/or Google Cloud Platform? Will you continue to invest in running your own data center? Will you build private cloud solutions using VMWare, Microsoft or OpenStack? How will you navigate **the increasingly complex world of multi-cloud**? Will you leverage cutting-edge technologies such as Docker for containerization or AWS Lambda for “serverless architecture”? Which Managed Service Providers will you engage to help make the best technology and service delivery decisions for your business?

What are the biggest obstacles to success?

According to the same Gartner report, “talent has now been recognized globally as the single biggest issue standing in the way of CIOs achieving their objectives,” with the biggest gaps around big data and analytics. Similarly, RightScale’s 2016 State of the Cloud revealed that, for the first time, lack of expertise has surpassed the perennial bugbears of security and compliance concerns as the #1 cloud computing concern.

Is this the case for your organization? What about concerns around budget limitations, legacy technology realities and cultural issues?

Where are your biggest expertise gaps?

Do you have access to the people you need to best support your aforementioned technology decisions? For example, are you ready to plan and execute the requisite migrations? What about architecting solutions on cloud platforms like AWS, Azure or OpenStack? Do you have the DevOps experience needed to implement CI/CD best practices? How about the specialized application-level expertise needed to your web content management or ecommerce platforms? Do you have the skilled manpower required to handle ongoing operational challenges such as maintenance, security and database tuning?

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Based on these needs, where does it make sense to hire or train additional internal resources? Where might it be more cost-effective to engage a partner that benefits from economies of scale around specific technology skills and operational experience?

Conclusion

These are just a few of the complex technology and service delivery questions you need to answer if you want to truly transform IT and drive major new efficiencies. But you don't have to answer them on your own.