

Navigating the clouds

Effective cloud platform assessment

In the rapidly evolving world of technology, cloud computing is an important part of the success of businesses. However, choosing the right cloud platform can be daunting for business owners who have to navigate their options, each with its own set of features and benefits.

By understanding these options and how they apply to real-world scenarios, SMEs can make informed decisions that align with their business strategies and future plans.

Why cloud assessments are a must

Understanding the importance of cloud assessments is the first step to using the power of cloud computing. An effective assessment helps remove risks related to compatibility and security, making sure that the chosen cloud solution lines up perfectly with your business needs. This process is not just about picking a technology –; it's about creating a strategy that can push your business forward.

Common challenges in cloud adoption

When shifting to the cloud or moving providers, businesses often come across hurdles such as:

- **Compatibility issues** – Existing applications and systems must adapt to new cloud environments, which often differ significantly from traditional on-premises setups.
- **Vendor lock-in** – Switching providers can be difficult, costly or disruptive, making you dependent on your current provider's software. Before committing to a provider, you need to consider how flexible their services are to avoid getting 'locked-in'.
- **Security concerns** – Protecting sensitive data and complying with industry regulations can be challenging, especially when you're moving data.
- **Data governance and control** – It's challenging to keep control over data and ensure it meets both company rules and external laws. Issues may arise with data sovereignty when storing data across various countries or regions. It may be critical to know where your data is stored and you'll definitely want to know how it's protected. This is where the tier of the data centre where your data is stored is so important.

Addressing these challenges head-on is essential for a smooth transition and operational stability, But don't worry, that's what we're here for!

Choosing the right cloud platform for your business

Selecting the right cloud platform involves careful consideration of several key factors:

- **Scalability** – Some platforms scale automatically, which is convenient but can unexpectedly increase costs. Others require you to manually adjust resources based on your needs, giving you more control over your expenses.
- **Cost** – It's vital to understand the pricing structure. Look for transparency in costs and whether your budget can support unexpected rises if auto-scaling is in place.
- **Vendor support** – What level of support do you need? Most cloud platforms offer basic support through a ticketing system. However, you need to consider whether your team has the skills to manage the applications on the platform. If not, a managed service provider (MSP) may be a better option for more comprehensive support.
- **Security** – Assess the provider's security measures, encryption protocols, compliance certifications, data redundancy, access control and audits. Also, crucially, look at your own security practices.
- **Integration capabilities** – The ability to integrate with existing systems and software is vital. A platform that supports seamless integration will minimise disruptions and downtime and reduce the learning curve for your team.

Some examples

Consider a small ecommerce business that needs to scale up during high sales periods, like Black Friday or seasonal holidays. A cloud platform offering auto-scaling pricing may sound ideal, but your budget will be gone before you know it – most platforms that auto-scale keep you at that level. Instead, go with a team of experts that builds a solution to meet your peaks and troughs so your costs are managed.

Alternatively, a healthcare provider handling sensitive patient data would prioritise a cloud solution that offers robust security measures and clear compliance information to meet stringent regulations on patient privacy.

Navigating cloud platforms requires an approach customised to your unique business needs. With a clear understanding of what to look for, you can leverage the cloud to drive efficiency, innovation, and scalability.



ProActive solutions to fit your business needs

With ProActive, we work with you to find a solution to fit everything your business needs. We minimise downtime, support you all the way and really get to know your business.

If this sounds like something you need, get in touch! Give us a call on 0333 111 2000 or book a meeting at a time that suits you.

