

# Cloud delivers “wake-up call” to IT organizations



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## Industry leaders weigh in on the disruptive nature of the cloud, and the opportunity for IT organizations to become higher-value service brokers.

It wasn't long ago that IT organizations had full control over their company's technology systems and services. They were the gatekeepers and caretakers of a carefully constructed and managed environment; the sole facilitators of changes and requests.

Cloud technologies have effectively obliterated such monopolies.

"Five years ago, 'shadow IT' efforts were the dirty little secret of organizations," Jill Dyche wrote in a recent *Harvard Business Review* blog<sup>1</sup>. "An impatient marketing or finance manager would, on the sly, secure some extra budget money and hire a contractor to build a little database that tracked mailing addresses or top-line financials. Then came the cloud, which only heightened frustration with IT's lack of velocity in delivery. Now shadow IT has burst out of the closet and is waltzing around the corporation, leaving IT departments rushing to do damage control."

"This is a wake-up call for IT organizations," says Fabio Gori, director of cloud marketing at Cisco. "Many are losing visibility and control."

"Cloud has changed the game," adds Shannon Poulin, vice president of the Data Center Marketing Group at Intel®. "Business groups now expect immediate response to their requests, and if the internal IT department can't do it, they will procure it themselves."

Whether a company should adopt cloud technologies is no longer in question. The question is to what extent, and whether the applications and services will be built or purchased. This is where IT organizations can reestablish their relevance and value to the business.

"IT teams can transform themselves from systems administrators to orchestration engineers," says Phil Brotherton, vice president of the Cloud Solutions Group at NetApp. "In doing so, they become stewards of data, brokers of services, and vital consultants to their business counterparts."

- Adopting a service brokerage model can help achieve this transformation.
- It requires a shift in mindset and focus, from systems to processes and from administration to orchestration.
- Once the shift is made, IT organizations can support both internal and external cloud resources, and help facilitate "make-versus-buy" decisions at a higher, more strategic level.

# Unleashing IT

## No silver bullet

"There is no right or wrong answer," says Poulin. "Organizations must make decisions on a case-by-case, workload-by-workload basis. IT teams can be a trusted advisor to business groups, providing the foundation and criterion that help determine the best path or solution."

Gori recommends a hybrid cloud model that provides maximum choice for these decisions.

"It's a fundamentally different model," says Gori. "Instead of a static, internally controlled offering, IT departments can offer a catalog of compliant services, featuring both internal and external cloud solutions. Decisions can then be based on business priorities and needs, not just technology considerations."

"IT can transform itself from 'we build everything' to 'here's how to build it,' and thus be viewed as a competency center focused not on technology, but on process creation and refinement," Dyche wrote. "IT delivering straightforward development methodologies to business departments [and] coaching them on how to build their own systems streamlines deployment, ensures domain expertise, eases organizational tensions, and drives economies of scale."

## Advice for others

None of this is easy, of course, but industry leaders say there are proven pathways to success.

"Embrace the challenge," says Poulin. "It's a tremendous opportunity to gain more prominence as leaders and drivers of the business."

"Focus on consolidation, virtualization, and automation," Brotherton recommends. "Centralize security and administration. Build a solid, flexible foundation, and then operate and orchestrate at the application layer."

"Avoid vendor lock-in and be prepared for ongoing change and innovation," Gori adds. "Focus on planning, governance, and visibility of cloud services, both internal and external. Maintain a flexible infrastructure that features integrated, consistent management and security."

And because changing human behavior is often harder than technology transformation, Gori, Poulin, and Brotherton all suggest a distinct focus on people and processes.

"This is the biggest change for IT organizations since the advent of client/server computing," says Brotherton. "Have an overarching vision and strategic roadmap, bring everyone to the table and get buy-in, and choose partners that share and can help achieve the vision."

## Cisco cloud consumption professional services

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/09/shadow-it-is-out-of-the-closet/>