Five Steps for Agencies Migrating off milCloud 2.0

Introduction

With the Defense Information Systems Agency set to sunset its cloud services contract by May, agencies must plan to migrate all workloads to a new cloud environment. While this task may seem daunting, it is in fact an opportunity for agencies to rethink their cloud configurations to introduce more agility and better security.

This move will certainly be significant. Over the next few months, agencies leveraging the legacy solution stack will need to move all applications residing in the milCloud platform of technologies, including heavily-relied-on systems such as Amazon Web Services and Red Hat.

So, what do agencies need to consider as they move off milCloud 2.0 and rethink their cloud strategies?

In Department of Defense speak, here's the BLUF – or the bottom-line up front: It's time to inject intuitive, low code/no code solutions into the digital transformation roadmap, according to Tahera Zamanzada, principal digital strategist at Salesforce.

"As overwhelming or daunting as the task seems given the closeness of the date, this is a paramount time to revisit modernization plans and consider platform-as-a-service or software-as-a-service solutions like Salesforce, for example," she says.

A modern cloud solution will help meet changing requirements like those brought on by the migration agencies have to make in May – and do so more cost-effectively.

As agencies look to make the most of their cloud services by migrating from on-premises systems to software-as-a-service offerings that can help them to inject greater flexibility and agility into their operations, there is much they should consider. First, they need to ensure they're leveraging best practices to ensure longevity and reliability. Moreover, agencies should undertake strategic planning that maps individual business capabilities to the most appropriate cloud-service model and platform.

Here are five steps to help agencies move smoothly, securely and strategically from on-premises to software-as-a-service.

1. Discover

"Each agency's journey for transitioning from legacy, on-premises systems to cloud-based PaaS/SaaS services is unique," Zamanzada says. "And to be successful, it requires ongoing strategic planning, but you have to be agile not in theory but in practice."

Salesforce's five-step plan is a business-driven strategy to help agencies explore cloud environment options, develop a migration strategy and safely and effectively execute on that move.

For instance, experts will help agencies explore why cloud services are key to the agency, which business objectives are important to prioritize and what needs to change from an IT service perspective to effectively meet those goals.

Salesforce also facilitates application rationalization exercises with public sector teams so agencies can create a strategic pathway designed to accelerate time to value, minimize risk and facilitate long-term success. And every agency's roadmap will be different.

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> **Principal Digital Strategist, Salesforce**

2. Evaluate

Choosing an approach that best fits an agency's mission requires finding the right cloud service, a tall order considering all of the options on the market. Agencies are also often stalled by limited resources for innovation, a fear of change or the unknown, which type of cloud service to use and exactly how to migrate.

Zamanzada says true digital transformation is facilitated by evaluating and adopting a mix of cloud service types based on agency business needs, including:

Infrastructure-as-a-service: infrastructure such as physical or virtual servers or storage arrays a third-party service provider hosts for the agency.

Platform-as-a-service: A ready-to-go platform that provides an application platform that facilitates rapid development of cloud-native solutions. This includes a ready-to-go application platform such as Salesforce, along with additional point-and-click development tools and capabilities for using declarative programming tools to create automated workflows.

Software-as-a-service: An application accessible from a web browser

Regardless of which type of service an agency chooses, the third-party cloud provider procures, hosts and manages all underlying hardware and software, and protects the data.

3. Prioritize

Choosing the right combination of cloud services means pairing those services with prioritized business needs.

"We can help you create that strategic roadmap and then it'll ensure that the IT platforms and the services you choose to implement, it's going to facilitate your broader business and workplace transformation initiatives," Zamanzada says.

After evaluating which cloud services are vital to the agency and pinpointing organizational current and future business objectives, the Salesforce team works with agency IT leaders to discern which blend of cloud services fits best.

4. Migrate

Considering how many organizations are unsure about which type of cloud service to use, they often make the mistake of lifting and shifting all their IT to an infrastructure cloud service. This approach limits innovation and can end up costing more.

Along with helping agencies map applications to the most appropriate cloud service, Salesforce also helps them get there by outlining when agencies should move business processes to the cloud and how to take advantage of available cloud services.

Salesforce provides the expertise and guidance to help safely and securely migrate to cloud platforms and methodically transition to cloud services in a way that slashes risk and facilitates long-term outcomes.

5. Operate

Considering the tight deadline to transition off milCloud 2.0, operating efficiently in a new cloud platform will be critical for agencies once they migrate. Salesforce is there every step of the way, from helping develop a roadmap to ensuring third-party cloud providers are managing hardware and software, and protecting agency data.

To properly prepare for operating in a new environment, Zamanzada recommends agencies begin to upskill and reskill workers so they are ready by the time the solutions go into production. In-house personnel will be needed to support new platforms, and they must understand the fundamentals of new low code/no code platforms, agile software development and minimum viable products.

Ultimately, in the end, this forced migration is an opportunity for agencies to rethink and revamp their cloud strategies to ensure they focus on agility, evolving to meet customer needs and improving data security.

"Whether you're responsible for a few applications or thousands of enterprise systems, we can help you migrate to the cloud – safely and effectively – regardless of where you are on your journey," Zamanzada says.

Learn more about how your agency can make the most of the cloud with Salesforce.