



CLOUD: TRANSITIONING FROM INFRASTRUCTURE-DIRECTED TO BUSINESS-FOCUSED

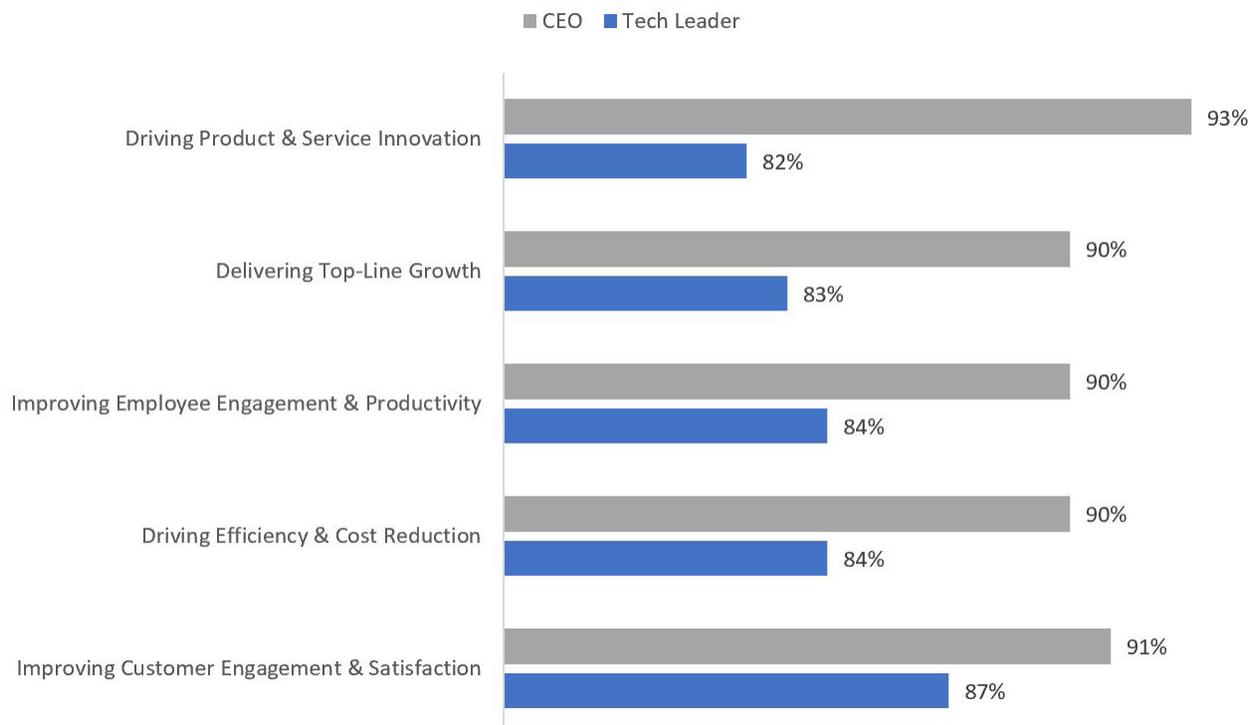
EARLY CLOUDS EMPHASIZED INFRASTRUCTURE. TODAY, SMART ORGANIZATIONS ARE BECOMING MORE WORKLOAD-CENTRIC – TO TRANSFORM HOW CLOUD ALIGNS WITH BUSINESS NEEDS.

CIOs have always known the power of technology. But until recently, business executives didn't always understand how IT could transform their operations and go-to-market strategies.

Yet today, CEOs are actually more likely than CIOs to recognize the central role of technology, according to Deloitte research. [See the Figure.] That development suggests CIOs need to become more business-aware.

One way innovative IT departments are achieving that goal is by shifting their approach to cloud from infrastructure- to business-centric. But doing so requires more than just a change in focus. It also calls for a new cloud strategy.

FIGURE: TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS - CIO vs. CEO¹



IF YOUR CLOUD STRATEGY IS BROKEN, FIX IT

When cloud emerged as a viable approach to managing IT infrastructures, enterprises thought that since they weren't in the datacenter business, they shouldn't be operating a datacenter. "The shift from on-prem to the cloud initially had an infrastructure-first perspective," says Jason Lamb, cloud/software-defined infrastructure technology strategist for Intel, a Computacenter partner.

But cloud is really a business issue. For example, "sometimes it makes sense to operate a private cloud on-premises," Lamb says. "We're moving to a fully software-defined infrastructure that's more automated and flexible, whether it's a private, public, or multicloud strategy." That development shifts the focus to how your lines of business consume cloud applications.

Chris Norris, senior director of the Data Center/Cloud Discipline for Computacenter, offers a useful analogy. "If you were designing a luxury high-rise, you'd have state-of-the-art plumbing," he says. "But no one buys an apartment for the plumbing. They buy because of the luxury features enabled by the plumbing, like designer kitchens and bathrooms."

It's the same for cloud infrastructure. "When clients come to us for help migrating to the cloud, we first ask how the application portfolio supports the business," Norris says. "It's only much later that we think about nuts and bolts like the number of servers."

BUSINESS NEEDS AS A CLOUD DRIVER

Where the cloud will deliver the most advantage depends on your current business needs. For example, the cloud enables you to deploy new applications significantly faster than in the past. But you need to leverage that capability in ways that actually transform your business, Lamb suggests.

"If you're using a cloud architecture simply to streamline operations, while a competitor has disrupted your industry with a new business model, you're not getting the value you need from the cloud," Lamb says.

Norris works with a Texas energy company that's focused on growth through acquisitions. It uses the cloud to quickly integrate new organizations while avoiding business disruptions. And by applying cloud methodologies, it can make newly integrated applications and processes more agile. "That approach is delivering significant monetary value to the company," Norris says.

Norris works with another company that specializes in powerplant "turnarounds," which involves taking an entire electric-generating facility offshore for a major overhaul. The undertaking must be completed as quickly as possible, because the shutdown can cost millions of dollars a day in lost revenue.

"The company has built a cloud-native collaboration and planning application that resides on AWS," Norris explains. "The cloud gives the organization the scalability to allow thousands of its people to access the application simultaneously and move projects along quickly." It's not just a productivity enabler. It's also a competitive differentiator.



BEST PRACTICES FOR BUSINESS-FORWARD CLOUD

Norris recommends two first steps for a business-focused approach to cloud:

1. Understand your workloads. Who's using the application? What capabilities or processes does it enable? And how does it integrate with your other applications and processes?
2. Gain business buy-in. Make sure IT and your lines of business (LoBs) have a mutual understanding of the value the cloud will deliver. IT should understand exactly what LoBs require so that it can leverage the cloud most effectively. LoBs should recognize how the cloud can enable it to be more efficient, productive, agile, and innovative.

"Nothing IT does brings more value to the business than its ability to communicate clearly, so your lines of business can understand what technology can do for them," Norris believes.

Ultimately, you should view the cloud through the lens of pressures placed on the business by innovative competitor strategies, changing customer demands, and disruptive new technologies. That approach will enable you to map out a plan for how the cloud can help you respond.

"Moving workloads to the cloud shouldn't just be about cost savings or easier management of the infrastructure," Lamb concludes. "It should be a transformative moment."

GET IN TOUCH

If you're using a cloud architecture simply to streamline operations, while a competitor has disrupted your industry with a new business model, you're not getting the value you need from the cloud. To learn more about becoming workload-centric, visit us at www.computacenter.com/us.

1 "The New CIO: Business-savvy Technologist," Deloitte, 2020



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