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Accenture Federal Services

# A faster cloud migration

# Call for change

**Migrating core enterprise systems to the cloud is one of the biggest tests an IT organization will ever face. In many cases, it's critical to improve system agility, enhance enterprise security, and deliver a more sustainable and flexible cost structure. Yet, at the same time, it is fraught with risk, given the many unknowns often buried in the legacy environment.**

Accenture Federal Services (Accenture) geared up for its internal cloud migration, but—sure enough—along the journey, an unforeseen twist occurred that raised the stakes dramatically. The company—whose clients include all US federal cabinet-level agencies—had charged its IT team with migrating its entire financial management suite to the cloud. By rearchitecting the system in a cloud environment, the company would improve manageability and streamline integration with the many third-party applications reliant on this system of record. While at the same time, moving systems and data responsible for continuous billing, payments, payroll, and reporting presented business continuity risks.

As Accenture was about to embark on this 18-month cloud-migration journey, it learned that the company was given six months' notice to vacate its existing data center. Because the migration was a carefully orchestrated process—developed in partnership with finance, human resources, and security colleagues—accelerating the move was not a certainty.

The team quickly called up its contingency plan and immediately updated its requirements, weighing the different degrees of risk and levels of support required for planning. What was on Accenture's updated "must-have list" for this environment? Increased flexibility, greater resource availability, enhanced security, and reduced costs, to name a few needs. After careful assessment, the company set out on the migration path on a highly expedited timeline.





# When tech meets human ingenuity

**It is tempting to consider cloud migration as an IT project, but fundamentally cloud migration is about serving the priority needs of the business, and often IT must work in lockstep with other functions to ensure 24/7 continuity of service to its customers. A project of this scale and at this speed requires a shared sense of purpose, and a shared commitment to practical matters, such as what to move first.**

Application rationalization and inventory management is a critical first step to mitigating risk. Architects can develop an effective migration that eliminates redundancies, simplifies integration, and ensures that the new environment is provisioned appropriately by carefully assessing where functionality and data reside, how they are integrated, and how they are secured.

## When tech meets human ingenuity

With a detailed reskilling and change management program in place, employees were able to quickly transition to new roles.

**The Accenture team confirmed backup implementations were effectively in place should they be required to roll back the proposed migration, as part of contingency planning and due diligence.**

Having this type of recovery in place was critical given the stakes—the company’s financial integrity. Like many organizations around the world, the team also had to grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged during the migration. Issues such as new travel restrictions, safety protocols, and supply chain disruptions required more adaptive planning. For example, hardware limitations created the need to repurpose existing components.

In addition to redeploying systems and data, Accenture needed a plan for reassigning the highly experienced workforce. While these workers were eager to embrace new roles and skillsets, the company needed to invest in new career paths, training, and operating models to enable this shift.

That foresight paid off: With a detailed reskilling and change management program in place, employees were able to quickly transition to new roles, in many cases shifting their focus from simply managing workloads to optimizing performance.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at a laptop in an office setting. The man is wearing glasses and a green shirt, and the woman is wearing a grey blazer over a striped shirt. They are both looking down at the laptop screen. The background is a blurred office environment with other people working at desks.

# A valuable difference

**Following a detailed migration plan and with continued vigilance to potential disruptions, the Accenture team was able to complete the migration on time and on budget—a staggering pace for a migration of this scale. What this success reinforces is the need to carefully plan each phase of the journey (including the workforce), collaborate with all associated functions, and have an operating model in place for the new environment. And, do not omit a carefully-crafted contingency plan.**

System users are already reaping the rewards of Accenture's new cloud-based systems in terms of flexibility, resource availability, enhanced security, cost savings and beyond. Migrating the entire financial suite en masse—that included enterprise resource planning (ERP), enterprise data warehouse (EDW), reporting, and analytics—enabled faster, more responsive processes, which reduced system processing times. This allowed more time for the business to complete complex analyses during monthly and quarterly close processes.

## A valuable difference

**From an enterprise perspective, the key benefits of the end-to-end transformation are wide-ranging:**

### **Security:**

Cloud-native security components and automated refreshes allow Accenture to operate at a new security posture level, managing cyber activities (upgrading versions and patches) in days or weeks versus months.

### **Continuity:**

Data recovery and time to recover improved by 50% immediately by using cloud infrastructure, allowing for same-day business continuity of systems.

### **Resiliency:**

The cloud environment allows for rapid response to incidents and 5x faster recovery, given the reduced infrastructure and integrated use of cloud automation.

### **Opportunity:**

The project put people at the center, with continuous training and skills development. This allowed them to take on new roles, where they can have an even bigger impact on enterprise performance.

### **Efficiency:**

The cloud-based system can be provisioned in accordance with business requirements, such as time of day or month, to reduce support costs. Moving to the cloud also cut Accenture's on-premise footprint in half and extended its hardware refresh timelines.

Accenture is using this cloud migration experience to develop its suite of FedRAMP-authorized cloud platforms, its role as an accredited FedRAMP Third Party Assessment Organization (3PAO), and in helping federal clients plan and execute their own cloud journeys.

“A move to the cloud is inevitable for most enterprises, but a successful implementation isn't a given, migration isn't just a technology issue. Rather, people, processes and technology must work together to ensure a successful move.”

### **CHRIS BJORNSON**

Accenture Federal Services'  
CIO during the migration.

## About Accenture Federal Services

Accenture Federal Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Accenture LLP, is a U.S. company with offices in Arlington, Virginia, and across the United States. Accenture's federal business has served every cabinet-level department and 30 of the largest federal organizations. Accenture Federal Services transforms bold ideas into breakthrough outcomes for clients at defense, intelligence, public safety, civilian and military health organizations. Learn more at [www.accenturefederal.com](http://www.accenturefederal.com).

## About Accenture

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services — all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 674,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).