



Hyperscale your cloud journey

Get more value from cloud
by partnering with public
cloud hyperscalers



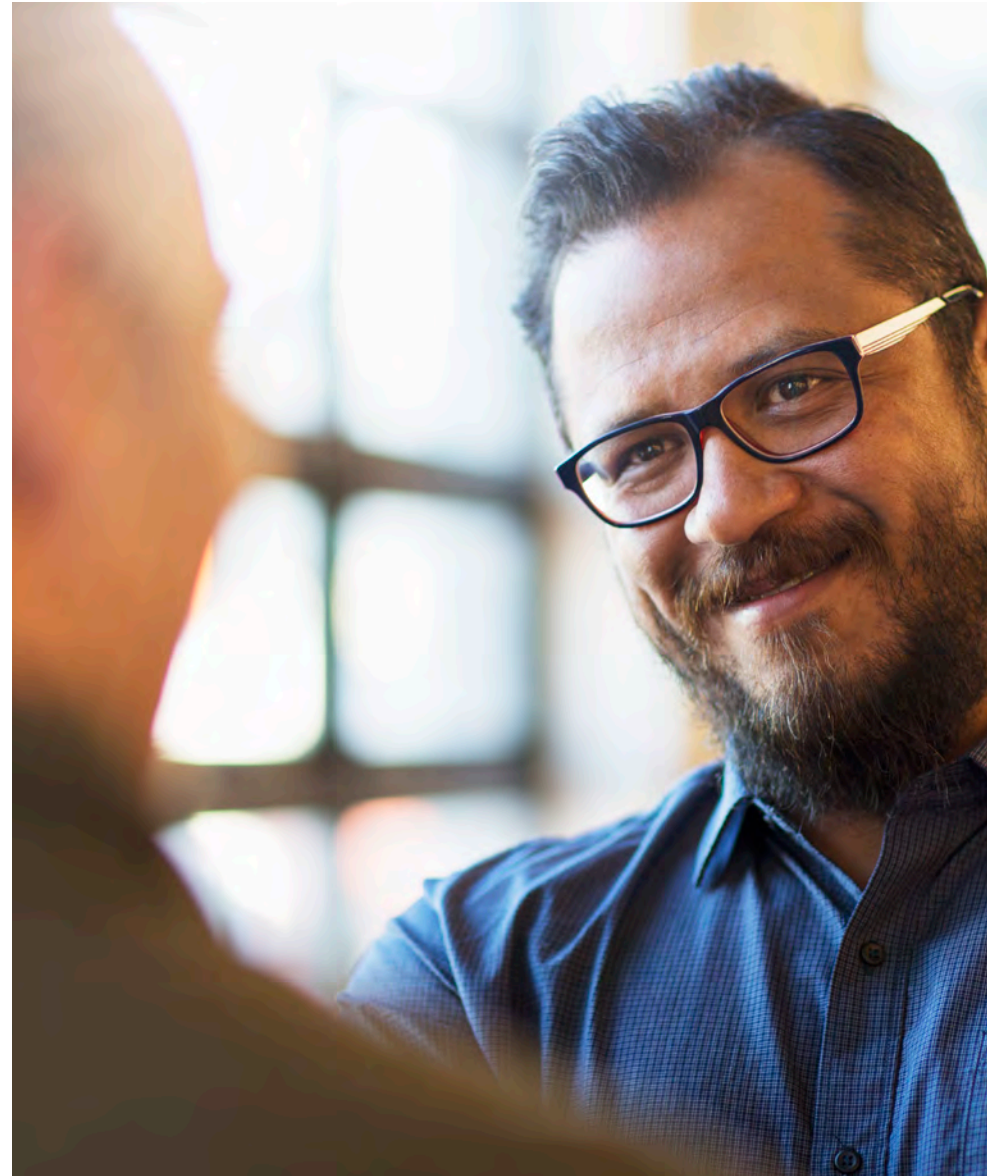
Cloud is not your typical procurement exercise

It's a long-term partnership that goes to the very top of your organization

Working with one or more hyperscaler cloud providers is now a fundamental component of most enterprise cloud journeys. In fact, recent Accenture research shows 67% of enterprises use two or more public cloud providers.¹ That's because these providers—Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Alibaba, Google Cloud, and others—have the global scale, the deep expertise, the cutting-edge innovation, and the broad range of cloud services needed to take cloud value to the next level.

[1. Sky High Hopes: Navigating the Barriers to Maximizing Cloud Value](#)

Hyperscale your cloud journey



But to make the most of what the hyperscalers can offer, you need to approach the relationship in the right way. Critically, it should not be treated like a traditional procurement exercise. If you aim to do more than simply use cloud as commodity infrastructure—which you absolutely should—then viewing a hyperscaler as just another vendor simply won't work. A desire to negotiate the lowest upfront costs above all else is not what drives value from the cloud in the long term.

You have to think of your chosen public cloud provider not as a supplier, but as a business partner. Both you and the hyperscaler will be making significant bets on the future growth of each other's business. So you have to take the cloud conversation right to the very top. That means making it a C-level relationship in which two organizations come together in a mutually beneficial collaboration, focused on partnering for value.

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The five essential steps to cloud value

Maximizing the value of cloud matters more than ever. Most enterprises know the cloud is the place to be. But without a clear-sighted view of the long-term value of an enterprise-wide shift to cloud, many cloud initiatives have slowed or stalled. Restarting—and into high gear—is now a key enterprise imperative. The global disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has made the cloud central to future enterprise success.

The relationship with a hyperscaler is one of several important ways to get more from the cloud. Accenture's [Cloud Ascent](#) point of view explains the five key elements to maximizing cloud value. These are: migrating quickly and securely; partnering with hyperscalers; modernizing architectures, applications and data; rethinking operations; and using cloud as a catalyst for digital transformation, innovation and growth.

Together, these elements help enterprises ensure their cloud programs deliver a resilient, flexible, and sustainable cloud architecture and future competitive advantage needed to emerge stronger in a post-COVID world.



Choosing the right hyperscaler

Be clear on your cloud objectives and target your approach before considering which hyperscalers will work best for you

Choosing one or more hyperscalers to partner with is not a simple decision. You're making a commitment that will likely last years into the future, and you need to be clear on your strategy from the outset.

There's no simple checklist here. Each organization must approach the question by considering its unique business and industry context, plus its immediate and future business needs—and then looking at how the various hyperscaler services align with that.



There are some key questions to think about:

What industry-specific or niche needs exist within our business?

While many hyperscaler services are comparable, each platform does have unique capabilities that may be particularly suited to some business units (such as data analytics, machine learning, or industrial IoT capabilities). Some hyperscalers are also well established in particular industries and able to provide tailored services ready to use out of the box.

One hyperscaler or many?

With a highly targeted approach, it's possible to leverage best-in-class services from a range of different cloud providers. But working with more than one hyperscaler brings challenges as well as benefits. The decision needs careful thought (**see page 9**). For most organizations, the optimal way forward will be to select a primary hyperscaler for the majority of mission-critical workloads, then working with one or more secondary providers in cases where the specific needs of the business and specialized capabilities of the hyperscaler are better aligned. That might be, for example, because a secondary hyperscaler can meet particular regulatory, commercial, or industry- or workload-specific needs. This enables the organization to build core skills and experience on one platform.





| Do we go all in on the platform?

You need to consider how much you plan to leverage hyperscaler platform services (i.e. PaaS, which offers a pre-defined cloud environment on which to build) versus building your own applications on its infrastructure (IaaS) and having to maintain that environment. This needs to be decided upfront because it can influence which hyperscaler you choose. There are no hard and fast rules here, but you need to carefully consider your organization's skills, capabilities and bandwidth if your decision is to build on infrastructure alone.

| Should we look to co-innovate?

You may feel you have specific needs that aren't well served by a particular hyperscaler. But don't forget these providers are all on their own journeys of innovation and are frequently willing to partner with customers and companies like Accenture to build new services in emerging or niche fields—possibly even more so where another hyperscaler is dominant in that area. Systems integrators like Accenture can play a key role in fostering innovation, introducing new tools, and helping to put new ideas into action.

Does our existing technology environment inform our choice?

Nobody starts on this journey from square one. Past decisions about architectures, technologies, and operating systems should never dictate a cloud journey. But in practice they will guide it. If your organization is already heavily committed to, say, containers/ Kubernetes or Microsoft solutions, certain hyperscalers may stand out as the natural choice.

What incentives are being offered?

Finally, investigate what financial incentives each hyperscaler is offering. There can be significant additional costs during a migration before legacy data centers or private clouds are fully exited. Nearly all hyperscalers will consider financial or other assistance to smooth these bubble costs and accelerate the transition.

Are there geographic or commercial constraints in play?

There may be data sovereignty or other regulatory or geographic factors that shape your choice of hyperscaler(s). You also need to consider the commercial context. There's inherent risk in partnering with a hyperscaler who may become a competitor of your business. But, at the same time, there may be significant go-to-market opportunities in working with that same hyperscaler. For example, one [NA? European?] Telco uses multiple hyperscalers in a very targeted fashion across a number of areas – development, shared systems, customization solutions – leveraging each to drive joint GTM objectives.

One to many:

The pros and cons of working with multiple hyperscalers

Whether to go all in with one hyperscaler or work with a range of providers is a finely balanced question. Organizations typically get a better solution when they commit to a single hyperscaler. And with only one platform to manage, they can also build core skills and experience much faster and more cost-effectively.

It might, however, make perfect sense to use multiple cloud platforms for specific needs of the business (regulatory, industry, concentration risk, specialized workloads, commercial, etc.). In each case, the decision should be based on the unique strengths of each hyperscaler. To make this work, you need to be very clear about your objectives and take a highly targeted approach.

Be aware, however, that increased complexity comes from managing data and applications across multiple platforms. And, if cloud pricing was a driver in the decision, this complexity will almost certainly offset any infrastructure arbitrage gained.

Whichever the choice, be certain it is driven by business need. Further, it's vital to keep one more thing in mind: while multiple providers might make sense at an enterprise level, it will be far less viable within a single business unit.



Making the relationship work

Getting value from your chosen hyperscalers means engaging early and committing to the platform



With a clear hyperscaler strategy defined, the enterprise is ready to engage with its chosen providers. As described above, the selection of a hyperscaler needs to start with a C-suite conversation on the strategic needs of the business and which provider is best suited to meet these needs. Once decided, leadership should look to bring the two organizations together at the highest levels and develop a sustainable transformation plan that works for both sides.

To get the most from a hyperscaler platform, you need to commit to the relationship. Historically, enterprises have been wary of this. Some have feared getting locked into a platform they can't get out of without a great deal of time and expense.

Lock-in is not imaginary. It can happen. But the risk is often overstated. And it's vital not to let it paralyze the organization. Put simply, you need to leverage at least some higher-order hyperscaler services and capabilities if you're to have any hope of unlocking the flexibility, agility, and innovation a modern organization requires. What's more, there are actions an enterprise can take to minimize the risk of lock-in (**see page 12**).

Keep your options open—but only up to a point

One way to avoid lock in is to use open standards and open platforms rather than a hyperscaler's proprietary services.

So, for example, you might use openSQL or PostgreSQL rather than a proprietary database. You might use IBM/Red Hat rather than the hyperscaler's own Linux operating system. And you might ensure you're using Kubernetes within a containerized architecture to more easily switch between providers should the need arise.



Further, a new calculus seems to be emerging among enterprises: one where companies are willing to accept a degree of lock-in as justifiable, since it's outweighed by the cost and speed benefits of building systems on top of proprietary architectures from the hyperscalers. As these architectures begin to abstract, it is much faster and easier to build software on them. As a result, organizations are able to create highly sophisticated applications on these platforms at unprecedented speed.

The key point is that if you've architected your data and applications efficiently, using open standards, the risk of lock-in is greatly reduced. However, bypassing hyperscaler services can mean you miss out on genuine innovations that might transform your business. After all, these companies have the cloud expertise and capabilities to innovate on a scale you and everyone else simply can't match. There may be some degree of risk in either approach. You have to find the balance between getting value from the platform and risking lock-in that works for your individual organization.

Committing to a hyperscaler relationship doesn't, of course, mean handing off all responsibility for managing your IT environment.

Systems integrators and other ecosystem partners also play a key role in maximizing the value from cloud. And, of course, there is your own organization to consider – its skills, capabilities and culture are still vital, whether in managing consumption, optimizing the environment, or in building innovative new services.

In particular you should ensure you have talent that can:

Manage costs

To extract the full efficiency and resilience benefits of cloud, you need a skilled team who really understand the new platform and application landscape, and who can use the hyperscaler's transparency tools to ensure consumption and costs do not escalate.

Optimize for the cloud

To start unlocking next-level value from cloud, you want to be modernizing applications, refactoring them as cloud native or looking for SaaS alternatives – this means having the skills necessary to optimize cloud consumption as well as the hyperscaler services supporting it.

Build the new

You need the technology and data skills and a culture of innovation to build the new products, services and experiences that will fuel the future growth of the business.



Hyperscaler relationship best practices checklist

- **Engage at the C-suite level**
- **Decide level of commitment to platform**
- **Establish governance and compliance capabilities**
- **Build deep platform skills expertise and/or partner with external service providers**
- **Get transparency, preferably across providers and industries**
- **Leverage the hyperscaler for operational services**

The skills needed to do this won't be the same as those needed to manage legacy IT.

A program of reskilling and upskilling is essential, together with a new operating model for the cloud. This is where a Cloud Center of Excellence – a small team of cross-functional experts that brings central governance and direction to cloud architecture and design choices – can really make a difference, working with an experienced third party to leverage external expertise initially then increasing in-house capabilities and ownership over time.

Maximizing the value

Cloud is what the hyperscalers do best—so make the most of what they're offering

Once a partnership is established, there are several key areas where you can leverage the hyperscaler to significantly enhance the value your organization gets from cloud...



Several key areas where you can leverage the hyperscaler:

Migration

Whatever might be blocking a cloud journey in your organization, the hyperscaler will likely be willing and able to help. Not only do they offer the experience and tools to help migrate successfully, but this will also often take the form of financial assistance. Nearly all hyperscalers are willing to help flatten the initial costs of getting to cloud, whether as a cash offer, service credits, asset purchases, or by providing professional services to manage the migration. This is money on the table. There will rarely be any good reason for passing it up.



Innovation

Hyperscalers are continuously innovating, releasing thousands of new or enhanced service offerings to the market every year. They'll often also be willing to invest in developing unique capabilities for a particular customer, especially if they've established a strong partnership at the C-suite level or if they're looking to play catchup with another hyperscaler that's dominant in that area. For clients with the appetite for exploring the new, working with the hyperscaler and a third party like Accenture can significantly accelerate the value gained from cloud.

For example, Unilever is using IoT (Internet of Things) and intelligent edge services in the Microsoft Azure IoT platform to enable next-generation digital modeling of a physical environment — in this case, a Unilever factory. The machines and equipment in the factory are connected so that they can send a mass of data — everything from temperatures to production cycle times — into the model. The collected data is mined for insights and patterns using advanced analytics and machine learning algorithms. This enables predictive maintenance and asset

The value of being a lighthouse

- Enterprises can sometimes be wary of co-investing in innovation, particularly when it comes to ownership of the resulting intellectual property. Most hyperscalers are willing to put in place the necessary firewalls if protecting IP is essential for your business.
- But this isn't always the right way to think about it. There can be real benefits from being a lighthouse customer. That means engaging in co-innovation with the hyperscaler to get the services you really need—faster—even if it means the hyperscaler ultimately makes those services available to others.
- The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has brought these questions into sharp focus. In a time of severe operational disruption, for example, keeping the business running by having automated operations underpinned by cloud technology is far more important



| Security

Security has long been one of the perceived barriers to scaling up enterprise use of cloud. But at the infrastructure level this is a problem that has largely been resolved. There's no question the hyperscaler will have stronger security capabilities than your organization could ever hope to create, but this is only part of the picture.

At the application and data level, where your own organization is responsible, it's different. This is where you need to ensure rigorous and continuous focus on ever-evolving cybersecurity risks. The good news is that hyperscalers provide advanced real-time monitoring and detection tools to help. It will also usually pay to bring in external expertise to ensure security protocols evolve with the threat profile.

Whatever the security strengths of your hyperscaler platform, you also need to consider the risks presented by its broader service partner ecosystem. The security of any third parties needs to be considered on its own merits, and these partners need to be certificated and onboarded accordingly.

Sustainability

Migrating to a hyperscaler platform can significantly enhance your organization's sustainability credentials from day one. First, that's because hyperscalers have the global economies of scale and are making the necessary investments to continually drive down the energy consumption of their data centers. Secondly, they are investing heavily into green data centers supported by renewable energy sources that drive substantially lower emissions. Increasingly, they're also able to provide traceability solutions to help you prove not only where your compute is happening, but also how much CO2 it's responsible for emitting.

Data sovereignty

Where data resides is an increasingly important issue for enterprises, especially as regulatory environments and data privacy rules get ever more stringent. Hyperscalers will now routinely provide transparency and reporting tools and are increasingly building data residency functionality into their data storage solutions, as well as establishing new data centers in a growing number of geographies. However, the location of data in the cloud is an issue which is still often poorly understood by enterprise clients. So, engage in detail with the hyperscaler to get the assurance you need to meet your compliance requirements.



Elevate the cloud conversation to new heights

A relationship with a cloud hyperscaler is absolutely central to any successful enterprise cloud architecture, underpinning most of what the organization can achieve in the cloud, as well as supporting every aspect of the journey to get there.

But to get the most out of the relationship, it needs to be just that: a business partnership relationship for the long term, not a procurement exercise. Engaging at the very top of the organization is the best way to align both parties and unlock the efficiency, resilience, innovation, and value the public cloud offers.

When it comes to maximizing cloud value, it pays to aim high and go hyperscale.



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