



THE ESSENTIAL CLOUD PARTNER FOR CLIENT MIGRATION

Why your firm should consider partnering
with a Cloud consultant to ease the pain of
client migration

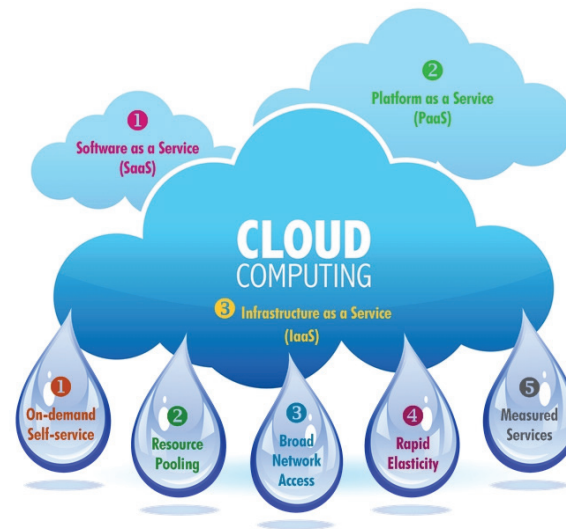
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CLOUD COMPUTING

Cloud has become a primary component in the evolution of information technology, especially when considering online accounting. Quantifiable benefits like resource utilization, agility, and lower costs have encouraged initial adoption. SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) and IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service) are the most popular and widely adopted modes; then you have PaaS (Platform-as-a-Service) which continues to evolve.

New Zealand has over 35% of all businesses on cloud accounting, while the US is at a staggering 4%! To remain competitive and keep costs down, your clients will need to move to cloud accounting solutions. It is your job as their CPA to guide them and be a trusted advisor. But how do you keep up with the accounting, tax, and audit work if you are turning into a technology advisor?

In this white paper, we will offer insights, tips, guidance and strategies that help firms to plan client conversions. We will look at the different models and management strategies that will ensure a successful transition.



LOOKING AT THE CLOUD

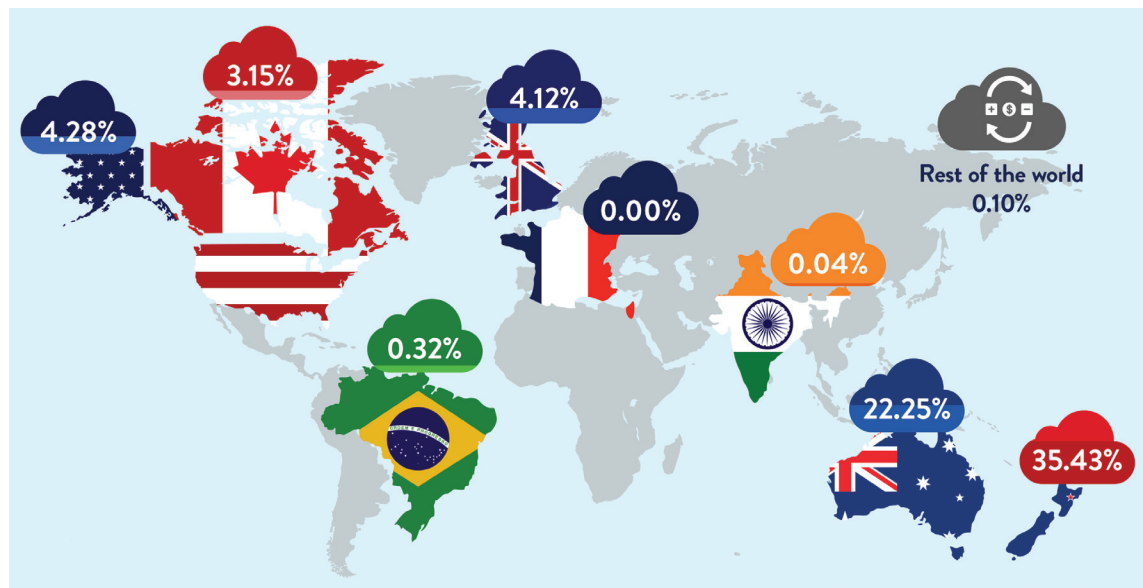
Nowadays, it appears like every tech vendor, magazine, and IT group is persistently focused on cloud computing. The reason for all the enthusiasm is the freedom you have with cloud computing, using a network of servers to support a virtualized infrastructure, applications, or platforms gives an enterprise the flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities, install new applications, or scale up quickly without any interruptions to meet increasing customer demand.

It dramatically reduces costs for maintenance, hardware, and IT staff. For most enterprise organizations, some method of cloud computing makes sense. Which is why we see cloud adoption continuing to grow. In a recent survey of worldwide IT decision-makers, 88% said cloud computing will be a precedence over the next year and half; and as more businesses discover the benefits of cloud computing, many of the larger corporations are looking outside of SaaS and investigating IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Services) or PaaS.

Nevertheless, transitioning a current application to a SaaS product, particularly a commonly used one like QuickBooks desktop to QuickBooks Online can add unnecessary stress to both the CPA firm and the client. Accounting software is a mission-critical application and can sometimes require variations in how users interrelate with the app itself.

Conversely, moving primary servers to a cloud model through virtualization or with the platforms that are supporting business applications, cause fewer disruptions to the user experience as it is still the desktop products now with cloud features. IaaS typically improves hardware utilization and efficiency as well as creates cloud functionality. Platform-as-a-Service enhances upon those improvements adding a level of calibration further into the software stack, providing greater benefits to the infrastructure itself. Both options deliver increased flexibility and a decrease in costs that moving to the cloud commonly bring.

GLOBAL CLOUD ADOPTION



So if the cloud is so great, why is cloud accounting technology adopted so slow in major markets? Fears first started with security and then it moved to cost of adoption. What many CPA firms don't realize is that if you are a laggard and wait too long – the transition will be even harder because the creators of your favorite apps like CCH, Thomson Reuters, Intuit, Sage etc – they aren't spending their R&D dollars on desktop products. They are focused solely on online systems. That means your desktop apps are becoming more and more archaic in what they can do. If you don't move, your clients are likely to find a firm that "gets it."

AUTOMATION AND CLOUD MIGRATION CASE STUDY

Below is a prime example of how our cloud consulting services at QBpro Consulting can benefit a CPA and their client.

4MyCash has provided millions in St. Louis, Missouri hard money loans for professional real estate investors locally. Since 2006, they have enjoyed an established track record of excellence in real estate investments. They make the hard money loan process fast and easy. Their mission is providing financial resources and real estate expertise to trained real estate investors, helping to improve the community for everyone.

This project was commissioned to examine how the current processes that the engaged client is utilizing could be automated in a way that it would coincide with their statement, "that it was a quick and easy lending process and could be done within 5 days once they started the process", as well as making the backend processes more streamlined with less paper. The goal was to create more of a complete paperless back office so that the company could focus on more lending with fewer bottlenecks. With a complete online process for their accounting functions we were able to free up more time to focus on growing the business.

The project was initiated due to current business processes not working and being very time consuming. After an assessment the current process of approval which included getting documents back and forth, invoicing to borrows, payments to lenders, an array of documents for each lender and borrower that had to be received and distributed was realized to be cumbersome. The client looked to the CPA for advice at which time the CPA referred the client to QBpro Consulting.

"QBpro Consulting comes in when you're trying to achieve the vision of your business and adding value to your current business model, by looking at all your applications and dynamics you currently have in place and building a roadmap to get you there"-Rick Armstrong, CPA, Founder, QBpro Consulting

We setup QuickBooks Online and customized the accounting software to allow automated invoicing to borrowers via email with an online payment function utilizing Intuit's payments solution. Next we setup Bill.com and customized it for the client to allow automated payment to lenders per loan agreements submitting all payments electronically, and directly to the lenders bank accounts. Because QuickBooks Online and Bill.com integrate this made the processes even more streamlined than the client could have ever hoped for. No double data entry! Additional POS systems were put into place and then the client was trained on all processes and assisted as they implemented them on their own. This ensured that the client had the training needed to successfully run the processes moving forward.

Engagement billing was \$2,500 and the client's relationship with the CPA was greatly enhanced. The client is saving 50% on software costs, and is thrilled because everything streamlined the accounting functions so now they truly can process loans in as little as 5 days as advertised. We maintain support as needed in relationship with the client and CPA, but generally very little post implementation services or support are ever needed.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CLOUD

While a move to the cloud can bring operational and financial rewards, it can be complex and very challenging at times; which requires careful planning and deep thought about your priorities and what they actually are. First you will need to understand the numerous cloud configurations. Today's cloud computing options provide a plethora of choices:

Public Cloud: this is what the majority of people think of when the term "cloud computing" is used. Applications and data are stored on shared servers at third-party providers that supply cloud solutions to many clients. For instance, MSP's that offer desktop application hosting like QuickBooks on a shared drive, where everything is private to specific users but you are sharing resources with other business' on the same servers.

Private Cloud: an entire cloud infrastructure functioned solely for an individual business. IT may be maintained by the organization or a third party and may exist on premise or off premise depending on infrastructure setup.

Community Cloud: Several organizations and governments (such as a hospital and local medical practices, child protective services, and courts) share a dedicated cloud which used to be commonly known as the intranet because there is no access from the outside world but data can be exchanged between other organizations and departments.

Hybrid Cloud: a cloud infrastructure self-possessed of more than one cloud type (private, community, or public) that still remain exclusive entities but are tied together by proprietary or standardized technology that enables data and application portability.

FIGURE 1

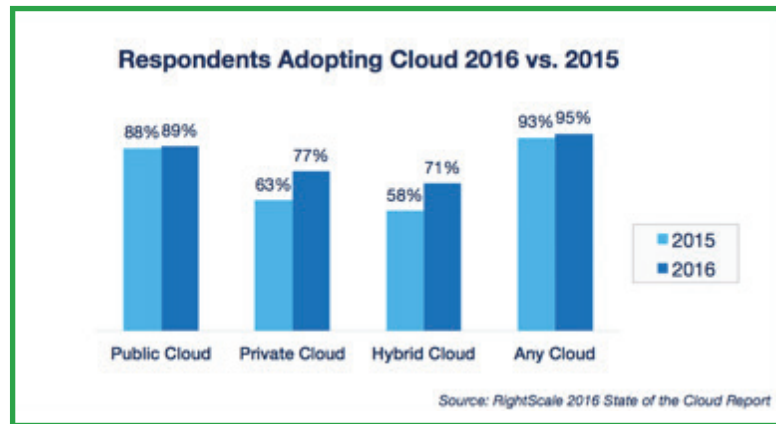
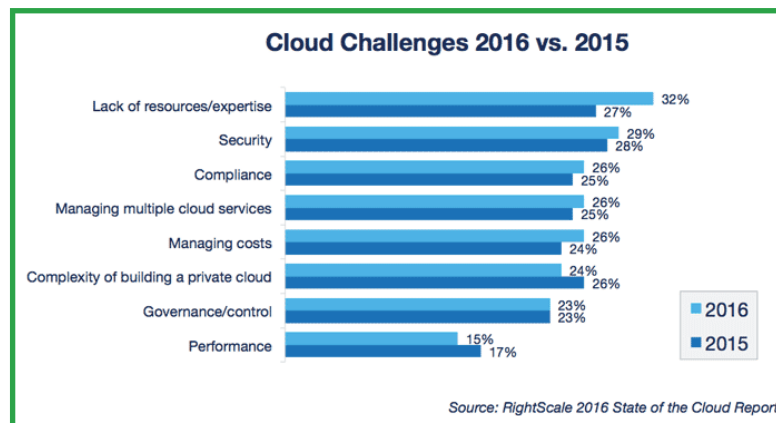


FIGURE 2



SOURCE: Cloud Computing Trends: 2016 State of the Cloud Survey

A FEW RULES TO FOLLOW

Eliminate applications undergoing major upgrades or other changes. Do not attempt to move them until after the transition is completed. Once your environment is stable, map out the move for those remaining applications.

Read your current software contracts, be aware that licenses required may need to be upgraded or a different license altogether may be needed. For example, you may need a multi-user license versus a single user license, be prepared for any costs that may arise so it can be planned and budgeted accordingly.

Get rid of the prehistoric applications you know the ones that sunset years ago but still work and are no longer supported, like QuickBooks 2012 for example. If you're using anything older than 2013 you know it's time to upgrade. Outdated applications can only cause problems in your new environment.

NOW LET'S CLOUD

So where does your firm go from here? A good place to start is contacting a professional that utilizes these applications and infrastructures daily and plan a set strategy of activities that need to take place in order for your transition to be a success. The right strategist will already be familiar with the best applications for streamlining your current business processes; they dive deep into what is already in place and where changes need to be made. Otherwise, you **MUST** have a dedicated point person in your firm that is technically adept at managing this project or you are doing your firm, and your clients, a disservice.

HOW WE PARTNER WITH YOUR FIRM

QBpro Consulting is here to be your partner and make your clients transition to the Cloud a seamless one. As well as your firms' if you aren't already there! I am a CPA but I haven't done taxes in years, my business is focused on being a technology consultant for accounting technology. So **contact me** and let's discuss how we can work together so you can focus on billable hours and client relationships.

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