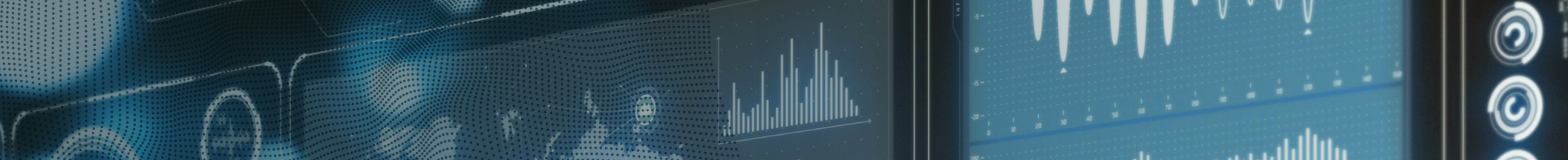


5 signs it's time to move your iSeries to the cloud

A CIO's field guide to getting it right



IBM iSeries cloud strategies for success

IBM's iSeries has been a trusted workhorse of enterprise computing for more than three decades. Day in and day out, iSeries supplies the computing muscle for intensive tasks like ERP, financial operations, and medical recordkeeping.

That's not to say iSeries is an IT utopia. Some organizations are preparing to put their iSeries out to pasture, but they need a compatible infrastructure option. Others feel reluctant to pour millions into new hardware.

In every industry, iSeries developers are hitting retirement age and schools are not training their replacements. Companies in eCommerce and other always-on enterprises can't afford to let downtime ruin their business. And compliance overwhelms many IT leaders.

More and more CIOs are finding a solution in the cloud. Indeed, many organizations hand the bulk of their IT operations over to a managed services provider specializing in iSeries.

This eBook from CBTS, leaders in iSeries managed services, outlines five scenarios where the cloud can solve these common iSeries challenges.

1. Time is running out.

Your iSeries is at end of life. Even though it's generally working fine, you need a secondary backup plan.

When your iSeries platform reaches the end-of-life stage, a complete overhaul can be daunting, and extremely time-consuming. But neglecting the issue can prove costly due to downtime and outages—even the ones you plan.

The solution is to create a secondary recovery environment mirroring your primary production, using MIMIX replication software and leveraging a multi-tenant cloud. A near-real-time recovery solution lets you complete necessary maintenance on your main environment without troubling your end users. After all, the cloud enables you to run your critical applications on the secondary site.

If your building loses power or a massive flood prevents staff from entering the building, the secondary mirrored site will keep you up and running. Historically, it was perceived to be cost-prohibitive to maintain a secondary disaster recovery site, but the advent of cloud computing and modern replication software has changed everything. Today, companies can partner with a disaster-recovery managed services provider who handles all the documentation and testing, and has to prove it will work in a crisis.



2. Replacement hardware is too expensive.

You need to replace your iSeries hardware and infrastructure, but you don't want to spend the capital.

Every day, executives in industries such as retail, manufacturing, automotive, banking, and insurance ask themselves, "Why are we in the data center business again?" After all, it's not a core competency, and it consumes a huge amount of resources.

When it's time to replace your IBM iSeries environment, the cost can easily stretch into the millions. Furthermore, advances in computing power can oblige you to purchase much more capacity than you require. A better idea: Repurpose your precious capital and focus on the strategic initiatives that keep you ahead of your competition and drive your bottom line.

Working with an iSeries cloud provider lets you consume the exact amount of compute, storage, backup, and services that you require, avoiding over-engineering and other factors that drive up your costs over time.

You can then shift the burden of risk and cost to a service provider who manages your iSeries environment in their cloud and provides a service level agreement with specific performance and availability targets that you likely won't get in-house.

3. Where did everyone go?

iSeries applications and hardware have outlasted the people who supported them.

The IBM iSeries, now called Power Systems, has supported successful enterprise organizations for over 30 years—an impressive run in an era when technology evolves at a manic pace. While you can keep upgrading, replacing, and replicating your primary environment, you can't say that about the people with the iSeries (AS400) certifications and experience who manage the platform.

Today's stark reality is that the people who know the inner workings of your IBM environment are approaching retirement age if they haven't retired already. Few if any colleges train students on legacy platforms, shrinking the talent pool and narrowing your options for replacing lost skills.

Your prospects expand considerably when you work with a provider who services multiple iSeries clients. These companies have certified staff available 24x7x365 who can take maintenance and critical alerts (that always seem to happen at 3 a.m.) off the plate of your limited IT staff.

An iSeries managed services provider has clients in a spectrum of industries running a variety of applications. This experience gives the provider a wealth of knowledge you can leverage without having to employ more FTE headcount. The provider essentially becomes an extension of your IT team.



4. Downtime is no longer an option.

iSeries is the core of my business. When it goes down, we feel the pain.

Organizations used to rely on tape backup for recovery after an outage or data loss. But the reality today is that you likely can't recover from tape—or it takes so long that it imperils your business.

Furthermore, if your plan to recover from tape backup has never been tested or proven, there's a strong chance it will fail in an emergency. Hoping for the best is a strategy for disaster, not disaster recovery.

If downtime can cripple your always-on business, then you must build a robust backup and recovery program. That's a complex, nuanced process requiring substantial expertise.

For instance, recovery plans must be drawn up well in advance, then thoroughly documented and tested. Testing means proving that your backup assumptions will work when downtime hits. You have to adjust your recovery procedures and documentation to reflect those learnings.

The second round of tests will be much easier because of everything you've learned in the first round. Because IT production environments change all the time, you should conduct at least two tests a year to ensure you are keeping the secondary recovery site current.

An experienced iSeries managed services provider, with rigorous change management and documentation experience, can help you develop the backup and recovery solutions to minimize your downtime risk.

5. Compliance and regulatory requirements are excruciating.

Carrying the burden of proof on your own can be costly. Even then, there are no guarantees.

Most organizations have to meet high standards for data protection policies and procedures. They also make significant investments in technology to protect sensitive information. Many companies and agencies must prove to regulatory bodies that they have taken the steps required to avoid damage or loss of personal information. At a minimum, they endure annual audits, if not more often.

Carrying the full burden of risk is expensive and time-consuming, and you can't be sure you will get a passing grade. When you work with an iSeries managed services provider, your auditors can talk to the people who supervise your environment and who have likely completed hundreds of individual audits and hold a wide range of certifications.

For example, CBTS has thousands of certifications, maintains hundreds of partnerships with the largest technology companies in the world, and holds key relationships with market leaders. You can tap all of that expertise when addressing your compliance and regulatory requirements.



The right manager for your iSeries services

At CBTS, we have decades of experience with enterprise IT in every industry. We have amassed a strong team of iSeries experts who can close the gaps on your IT team, manage and optimize your iSeries operations, and develop a comprehensive backup and recovery program. If the cloud is the best place for your iSeries technologies, we'll get you there. And if you need a partner to get you out of the data center business, our iSeries managed services team can make it happen.

About CBTS

CBTS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cincinnati Bell (NYSE:CBB) that serves enterprise and midmarket clients in all industries across the United States and Canada. From Unified Communications to Cloud Services and beyond, CBTS combines deep technical expertise with a full suite of flexible technology solutions that drive business outcomes, improve operational efficiency, mitigate risk, and reduce costs for its clients.



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