



CIO Field Guide: Cloud Assessment Services



Moving to the cloud is like building a new headquarters in another state. Your new HQ must be configured to match your business requirements. People and property must be moved. Executives travel on planes; staffers go in cars. Equipment goes on trains or trucks, depending on which ones make the most sense. You write off obsolete assets and buy new ones locally.

Just as you'd never relocate your HQ without a sound game plan, you need structure and strategy to successfully move to the cloud. Otherwise, your early-stage oversights can plant the seeds of late-stage calamities.

Migrating to the cloud is never easy because you face a blizzard of choices. If you're not feeling overwhelmed, you're tempted to try to move everything at once. You need guidance on getting started, sticking to timelines, and minimizing disruptions. Moreover, your cloud transition must be tailored to your organization's unique application requirements and infrastructure topology.

These challenges underscore the value of a cloud assessment that helps you understand your current IT environment and choose the most prudent options for a cloud migration. Ultimately, a cloud assessment lays the foundation for a robust cloud strategy and will help you match existing workloads with optimal cloud platforms.

This eBook from CBTS, a leader in cloud strategy, design, implementation, and management, outlines why Cloud Assessment Services are so crucial. It also explains how we conduct cloud assessments, and what to look for in a cloud assessment provider.

Cloud assessments: The vital first step

Moving IT workloads to the cloud is a business decision. Sure, you have hundreds of technical wrinkles to iron out, but all that must happen after you've determined how the cloud advances your business goals and strategic objectives. Cloud success isn't just about where your organization is today. It's about where you want to be next year, in five years, and in 10 years.

Leading cloud assessment providers have extensive experience analyzing clients' IT operations in the context of distinct business objectives. Every market is different, and every company has unique hurdles to overcome. A top-notch cloud assessment provider takes all these variables into account every step of the way.

Of course, you can't plan your future without a clear view of the present. A cloud assessment identifies your current workloads—virtual servers, containers, applications, etc.—and recommends ways to integrate them into your cloud strategy. Once you have a handle on your workloads, you can start creating priorities for cloud implementations. After that, you can start mapping out workload-specific requirements.



It's easy to be overwhelmed by all the options in a cloud journey—especially if you've never done a significant cloud migration. The questions can seem countless:

- Which workloads work best in a public cloud?
- Do you also need a private cloud or a hybrid structure?
- Do you want to manage your cloud environment or hand those duties off to an expert managed services provider?
- Is your private data safe in the cloud?
- Are your on-premises apps compatible with cloud service platforms?
- Do you want to migrate IT services to a cloud-based software provider?

Experienced cloud assessment providers have answered these and other questions for clients in every industry. They can get right to the core of your challenges in a fraction of the time it could take to do it on your own. And they help you avoid mistakes if this is your first cloud project.

How a cloud assessment works

Moving to the cloud requires a handful of mission-critical decisions, dozens of important choices, and hundreds of supporting activities advancing your business goals. You have to establish priorities to determine the optimum cloud-based architecture and map out specific workload requirements.

A thorough cloud assessment from CBTS will help you make smart choices on public cloud options from providers like Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform. We'll also outline the advantages of a private cloud and hybrid cloud configurations.

In addition, the assessment helps you understand the ramifications for your IT department during and after implementation in the cloud. The cloud can shake up your IT service delivery, so you need to know how the changes can ripple through your organization.

Our assessment provides a framework for successfully implementing cloud technologies and services. We also make sure you understand the financial impact of shifting from a CapEx model to an OpEx model.



CBTS Cloud Assessment Services have three stages:

- **Review.** First, we convene a one-day meeting between our cloud experts and your IT leadership. This high-level meeting helps us develop a cloud-adoption framework customized to your unique goals. We also outline the best practices we follow. During the workshop, we start by reviewing your current state. That includes a whiteboarding session to help us align our insights and experience with your strategic business goals. We also establish migration priorities and identify system dependencies.
- **Analysis.** After we've gathered the critical facts in the review phase, we conduct an analysis that helps us communicate an understanding of our findings. At this point, we determine the best options from the review and develop a list of recommendations for action. We also develop documentation to help you understand each phase of the cloud migration.
- **Report:** We wrap up with a two-hour session reviewing our findings and recommendations. At this point, we'll suggest a cloud adoption framework based on our in-depth analysis. We'll also discuss next steps for a successful cloud migration and deployment based on your priorities, budget, and timeline.

The assessment can be customized to suit wherever you are in your cloud journey. Our deliverables include:

- A current-state inventory of infrastructure, workloads, utilization, and scalability.
- A current-state analysis of security, compliance, disaster recovery and backup, and governance.
- Future-state recommendations on target environments for infrastructure, networking, and applications.

With a cloud assessment in hand, you'll have a clear vision of the challenges that lie ahead. That will help you steer clear of common landmines and adopt the latest cloud capabilities with a minimum of disruption.



What to look for in a cloud assessment provider

A well-executed cloud assessment gives structure to your cloud transition. Getting it right ensures you make timelines and start tapping the flexibility and cost savings in the cloud as soon as possible. Getting it wrong triggers delays and disruptions.

Thus, you need to choose your cloud assessment provider with care. Here's what to look for.

Experience in your industry

A cloud assessment provider must place your IT challenges in the context of your customers, competitors, and specific marketplace dynamics. A stranger to your industry needs time to get up to speed. An industry veteran, by contrast, can use that time to better understand your business, compliance issues, IT systems, and cloud opportunities.

CBTS has in-depth IT experience in every industry sector across North America. We can deploy cloud experts from your industry to ensure our background dovetails with your needs.

Cloud Agnostic

All organizations' IT systems have peculiarities that make them an ideal fit for a specific public cloud platform. Workloads that perform like a dream on Azure could falter on AWS, for example. Thus, it's a major red flag if your cloud assessment partner works with only one public cloud service. If your provider cannot recommend the ideal cloud platform for your IT ecosystem, you could make compromises that hobble IT service delivery for years to come.

CBTS has strong partnerships with Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform. We also provide a private cloud solution. These partnerships, along with our deep bench of certified cloud experts, can guide you to an optimum public, private, or hybrid cloud environment.

A suite of managed cloud solutions

You can access most cloud services on any Internet-connected device. That mobility and flexibility create a wealth of opportunity for companies like CBTS to provide managed cloud services, including:

- Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
- Unified Communication as a Service (UCaaS)
- Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS)
- Software-Defined Wide Area Networking (SD-WAN)



As a veteran managed cloud provider, CBTS handles all aspects of these services: system design, configuration, deployment, management, monitoring, documentation, training, and support. We staff these services around the clock and can escalate rapidly to help prevent downtime from damaging your business.

Tapping the full value of the cloud

When you partner with CBTS for cloud assessments, we tell you everything you need to know about migrating your workloads. We'll show you where to go first, what to avoid, and how to make the most of the shift from CapEx to OpEx.

Our assessment already aligns our best practices with your business needs, so it makes sense to apply our knowledge to a managed cloud solution. When our experts design, configure, manage, and monitor your cloud environment, your people have more time to devote their IT skills to elevating your business.

Contact CBTS today to learn more on clearing a path to the cloud.

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.



**Contact CBTS today to learn more
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