

# 5 practical tips to accelerate your cloud journey in South Africa

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*The benefits of cloud technology are generally well-understood: trading a capital expense for an operational one, increasing speed and agility, enabling focus on core business activities rather than on maintaining data centres, and the ability to deploy globally in minutes. In light of these, we have seen a significant push to the cloud in South Africa in recent years.*

Yet, the journey to the cloud is fraught with practical challenges. Regardless of the benefits, cloud implementations are rarely as simple as just paying for a SaaS solution, or installing your software on a cloud computing server.

To counter this complexity, we've put together five practical tips, based on our experience with cloud implementations, to help you on your digital transformation journey.

*The journey to cloud is fraught with practical challenges, but they are not insurmountable*

## 1. Understand your data

Implementing a single application is easy, but getting the required data to your other key platforms is hard. Cloud services need to send data to other applications, such as a sales commission calculator for a CRM application or a payroll service for an HR application. In every implementation we've supported, an integration solution had to be built – this shouldn't be the case.

*Tip: Before selecting a solution, understand your systems landscape, the respective data flows, the data security required and any limitations (e.g. integration only via copybook, only through firewalls, etc).*

## 2. Plan ahead

There are options when you purchase cloud computing services:

- Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS)
- Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)
- Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS)

These can additionally be broken down as follows:

1. Those hosted on the same cloud platform that hosts your other applications
2. Those hosted on a separate external cloud platform
3. Those hosted on a cloud platform to which you have a direct connection (AWS Direct Connect, Azure ExpressRoute, etc)

While you will only be implementing one of these options at any given time, it is important to consider that you will most likely implement one of the others at a future point in time.

It is key to design patterns for each of these scenarios, understanding the different security and integration requirements between them. If you don't, you will end up creating disparate solutions to the same problems over and over.

*Tip: Use scenario-based planning to visualise all the available options to inform your decision – there are many options, and your choice will be unique to your enterprise.*

### 3. Include all domains in the discussion

Cloud is quickly becoming the platform for core applications powering South African businesses, but some business units are further along on their cloud journey than others.

**Cloud maturity is not uniform across South African organisations**

It is extremely important to involve all technical domains from the outset, each stakeholder – from Operations, Security, Data, Networking, Cloud, and Integration – will have their own requirements and each design will need negotiation (and arbitration). This is to be expected because each stakeholder is interpreting the impact on their domain within the organisation.

*Tip: Include impacted domains upfront and anticipate the significant communication effort required to gain buy-in from key domain stakeholders.*

### 4. Know your limitations

Cloud is beneficial, but not easy. The advantage of agility brings with it additional complexity. Don't be oversold on how easy it is to move to cloud. It may be a cliché, but it truly is a journey. The number of options can be overwhelming, and there's no such thing as a 'best practice' that fits every organisation in every industry.

*Tip: Expect a journey (and mistakes), learn along the way and course-correct where necessary.*

### 5. Experiment

One of the primary benefits of cloud is that it is cheap to experiment with. Without significant investment in hardware or software for test environments, services can be procured on a pay-per-use basis to prove designs and uncover flaws by connecting and configuring services.

*Tip: Make the most of the low cost of procuring services for experimentation to prove your designs.*

Cloud has key advantages in today's world but the range of choices and the rapid rate of change make it more complex than owning your own infrastructure. Many organisations are implementing a cloud platform and building applications on top of that, further broadening the scale of change. To reap the benefits requires engaging stakeholders more than before, considering the options to set the right direction for the journey, and experimenting and learning along the way. By partnering with an organisation that has a proven track-record in successful cloud implementations, you can remove a lot of the guess-work. To find out more about how BSG can partner with you to enable your cloud journey, get in touch.

### About BSG

As a homegrown South African Consulting and Technology company, BSG is uniquely positioned to deliver solutions tailored to the South African context.

We have more than 20 years' experience across the banking, specialised financial services, insurance, healthcare, telecommunications, and oil and gas sectors. By employing a multi-skilled approach, BSG effectively leverages our clients' data to create solutions that improve the experiences of their customers and solve enterprise-scale challenges.

We understand the dynamics of Business and Technology, which allows us to create flow between supply and demand, bridging the gap between business and IT. We work with our clients to drive out success, transforming their operational platforms and creating the customer experiences they need.

Visit us at [www.bsg.co.za](http://www.bsg.co.za)

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