



The elements of a strong cloud portfolio

Agencies need to build a targeted mix of as-a-service offerings and move away from custom code

IN 2021, CLOUD COMPUTING has become synonymous with IT modernization and is now the de facto service model across government. Different agencies, ranging from small to large and with various missions, have embraced commercial cloud offerings because of their scalability and security advantages.

Given the depth of multi-cloud environments, agencies must adopt a strategic approach to selecting and managing their cloud platforms. To prevent the analysis paralysis that occurs when conducting a portfolio assessment across thousands of applications, agencies should leverage contract renewals as an opportunity

to evaluate their legacy systems and assess cloud products or services. As agencies will have a mixture of clouds and legacy systems for the foreseeable future, it's important they use APIs to connect clouds to one another and to legacy data sources and applications. One example is [MuleSoft](#), which identifies, integrates and aggregates data.

Agencies evaluating a multi-cloud strategy should also prioritize improving mission services for internal and external stakeholders. This is especially relevant because the Technology Modernization Fund has linked IT modernization and cloud adoption to improved customer experience. In addition, the "[Trust Imperative](#)" report by



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BCG and Salesforce links digital customer experience to trust in government.

To ensure that their portfolios are complete, agencies should perform market research on various customer engagement software categories and make investments in customer engagement centers, digital experience portals, and [business intelligence and analytics](#).

Customization: The root cause of IT failures

Custom code is arguably the root cause of most IT challenges in government. For example, the [Alliance for Digital Innovation](#), of which Salesforce is a member, released

a study that found the federal government could have saved \$345 billion over 25 years if it had embraced commercial technology rather than building systems from scratch.

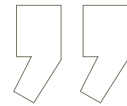
In order to improve customer service and reduce their dependency on custom solutions, agencies should implement a multi-cloud strategy that is not solely based on rehosting and refactoring applications on infrastructure solutions.

Agencies need to make sure they adopt a mix of software as a service





To further strengthen their multi-cloud environments, agencies should begin to reshape their strategies from cloud-first to SaaS-first.



(SaaS), platform as a service (PaaS) and infrastructure as a service (IaaS). And they should consider low-code options within the SaaS and PaaS categories to limit their reliance on custom solutions.

Moving from 'cloud first' to 'SaaS first'

Fortunately, IT leaders are becoming wary of the long-tail effects custom code has on technology delivery and are moving away from such high-code or high-control

solutions. Rather, they are expressing an interest in adopting enterprise platforms for low- or no-code application development. To highlight the importance of this approach, the federal [Cloud Smart policy](#) has made low- and no-code development a key pillar in agencies' cloud strategies.

To further strengthen their multi-cloud environments, agencies should begin to reshape their strategies from cloud-first to SaaS-first. They should consider their options in this order: 1) SaaS to replace

applications, 2) low-code PaaS to rebuild via configuration, 3) high-control PaaS to rebuild via code and 4) IaaS, or rehosting, only if the other approaches aren't sufficient.

Agencies get more value and less risk by choosing SaaS first, and they take on more risk and customization as they move down that decision tree. ■

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