

Enabling Business Agility in Government

MARKET TRENDS REPORT



Introduction

When you hear the words business agility, what comes to mind? Maybe you think about your agency's ability to quickly adapt to changes and meet critical needs. Or maybe you think about your team navigating hurdles, such as staffing challenges, demands for new services or tight budgets.

Business agility is deeply personal to each agency and to the individuals tasked with supporting specific operations. This has been especially true in the current environment, as agencies have had to harness the power of technology like never before to respond to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus.

“As our response to the national emergency for the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) continues to evolve, the Administration directs that agencies utilize technology to the greatest extent practicable to support mission continuity,” Margaret Weichert, the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Deputy Director for Management, said in a [March 22 memo](#) to agency leaders.

Weichert acknowledged that “over the past several years, agencies have been making significant investments in technology infrastructure, scalable technology platforms and digital delivery of mission support and mission delivery functions.”

Cloud computing, in particular, has long served as the backbone for government agility, but as agencies adapt processes and work differently, their cloud investments must keep pace. Employees need agile, cloud-engineered enterprise systems that can support their work.

For this report, GovLoop partnered with enterprise cloud provider Oracle to provide best practices for ensuring that agencies can maximize their cloud investments.

BY THE NUMBERS

Cloud Computing Adoption in Government

13 of 16

large federal agencies surveyed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have saved \$291 million to date from their cloud services.

Source: [GAO](#)

14 of 22

action items in the Cloud Smart Strategy have been completed as of June 2020.

Source: [CIO.gov](#)

The Cloud Smart Strategy provides practical implementation guidance for maximizing cloud technologies. It's based on three pillars:

- **Security.** Modernize security policies to focus on risk-based decision-making, automation and moving protections closer to data.
- **Procurement.** Improve the ability of agencies to purchase cloud solutions through repeatable practices and sharing knowledge.
- **Workforce.** Up-skill, retrain and recruit key talent for cybersecurity, acquisition and cloud engineering.

Source: [Congressional Research Service](#)

45

separate Energy Department email systems will be moving from on premises to the cloud within a three-year timeframe.

Source: [GAO](#)

5

of the Housing and Urban Development Department's most critical business systems are moving from an on-premise mainframe database to the cloud within a two-year timeframe.

Source: [GAO](#)

"By aggressively embracing technology to support business processes, the Federal Government is better positioned to maintain the safety and well-being of the Federal workforce and the American public while supporting the continued delivery of vital mission services."

- Margaret Weichert, Deputy Director for Management, OMB

Source: [whitehouse.gov](#)

THE CHALLENGE

Security and Performance of Enterprise Systems

In the past, running enterprise systems on premises was the default option for many agencies — and it still is for some today. It gives them a sense of comfort knowing they can see and physically touch their assets whenever they please. But there's more to the story.

“Security and compliance have always been key considerations for keeping applications and systems of record on premises,” said Pat Bangalore, a Master Principal Cloud Architect at Oracle.

Agencies often weigh their ability to meet compliance requirements and the need to adhere to strict security standards. These include requirements set by FedRAMP, which outlines the government's cloud security requirements, and the [Federal Information Processing Standard \(FIPS\) 140-2](#), which defines a standard approach for implementing encryption into the design of computing systems and services used in the federal government, including the cloud.

It's daunting enough to remain compliant while also adapting to changing user needs and new security threats. So how could agencies trust their departmentwide systems with an outside vendor? At least, that's what conventional wisdom argued.

From a security perspective, agencies also wrestle with serious concerns about data loss and leaks, the ability to rapidly detect and automatically remediate security issues, as well as the need for a strong migration strategy for any system moving to the cloud, Bangalore said.

“The existence of shadow IT, such as IT projects managed outside of and without the knowledge of the agency's IT department, can mean that many public sector entities don't have a clear picture of the extent or components of their IT estate,” he said.

Agencies that have been slow to move enterprise systems to the cloud but are open to the idea of gaining greater business agility have also faced hurdles.

“The other few considerations have been to re-architect an application and the integrations between upstream and downstream systems into agencies' core Oracle E-Business suite or PeopleSoft applications,” Bangalore said.

Agencies felt their hands were tied because there were so many interconnections between various components of a system, whether that was modules for HR software or integrations from external subsystems that were connecting core systems. **The question became: How could they possibly move enterprise systems to the cloud?**

As agencies contend with automation of new processes, adoption of new functionality and a growing customer base, they need agile systems.

THE SOLUTION:

A Fresh Look at Hybrid and Public Clouds

To acquire agility, now is the time to take a fresh look at what public and hybrid clouds have to offer. Doing so can put agencies on a trajectory for business and technology transformation while protecting and leveraging their current investments.

The reality is that agencies leave a lot of benefits on the table when they immediately lock themselves into a single option for cloud deployments, which tends to be private clouds.

Instead, agencies should critically examine the benefits of each option and consider what makes the most sense from a mission-delivery, cost and security perspective.

Consistent and predictable performance should rank high on the list when making that determination. Consider which option gives you peace of mind about uptime, predictable network bandwidth, security compliance, and management and monitoring capabilities that IT teams need to optimize cloud resources.

These are some of the non-negotiable benefits that agencies should be getting from their enterprise systems. If your on-premise solutions aren't meeting this benchmark, it's time to re-evaluate and consider alternatives such as hybrid cloud. That way, you can fine-tune how efficiency, agility and innovation meet choice and control.

BEST PRACTICES

Developing an Enterprise Cloud Strategy



1. Evaluation: **Develop a Cloud Strategy Based on Business Drivers**

Before considering what type of cloud services to use, enterprises should evaluate what technology services would provide the most immediate benefit when moved to the cloud. Some applications will be better maintained in the cloud, particularly if the agency does not have the resources to maintain or secure that application. That's why it's critical to develop a cloud strategy based on business drivers and essential needs.



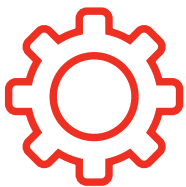
2. Planning and Assessment: **Application Portfolio Discovery**

This is also known as IT assets discovery. Before agencies can fully embrace what is available, they must understand what they currently have. Portfolio discovery provides that way forward for agencies. This includes assessing the need for and usage of applications and discarding obsolete, redundant or overly resource-intensive applications, according to the Cloud Smart Strategy. "Decreased application management responsibilities will free agencies to focus on improving service delivery by optimizing their remaining applications," the [strategy noted](#).



3. Implementation: **Migration and Validation**

During the implementation phase, data migration and validation are critical. When considering how to move systems and their contents to the cloud, you'll need to decide to what extent this transition will be manual versus automated. Will you take a phased or big-bang approach? The implementation should take a solution-driven, management approach versus the traditional requirements-driven approach.



4. Operations: **Running in the Cloud**

Moving to the cloud is about lowering the risk associated with operational issues. If your system is managed by people whose expertise is running Oracle E-Business Suite, for example, then the likelihood of error is much lower than if your own staff had to go through the learning curve whenever there were changes, updates or a migration to cloud. Instead, your staff could be focused on your core business competencies while letting the cloud vendor deliver the technical expertise.



5. Optimization and Evolution: **Create a Feedback Loop**

To optimize your cloud solution, you'll want to hear from your customers early and often. Ideally, having a fully integrated, multichannel enterprise feedback solution that enables you to capture, measure and act on critical customer insight is key. This enables you to continuously improve the customer experience. The result: satisfied and consistent users.



CASE STUDY

Treasury Department Migrates HR System to FedRAMP-High Cloud

Creating a 21st century workforce and modernizing outdated technology are major tenets of the President's Management Agenda.

At the agency level, the Treasury Department is putting those priorities into practice. The department embarked on a massive migration of its PeopleSoft application from on premises to the cloud, with the goal of improving scalability, security, management support and performance.

The Treasury Department partnered with Oracle, and moved its human resources (HR) system to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure's Government Cloud. Oracle's cloud achieved the highest level of FedRAMP authorization and is ideal for mission-critical workloads, such as financial systems and other back-office applications. It's also well suited for newer workloads, including simulations, machine learning and cloud-native applications.

Using the HRConnect suite running in the Oracle Cloud, the agency has access to interoperable, portable and scalable HR and payroll solutions across its allied agencies. In total, the suite supports the HR requirements of 22 agencies as a shared service and is accessed by 220,000 users and 10,000 concurrent users.

The suite also streamlines personnel action processing, enables payroll and benefits administration, and manages the candidate and employee lifecycle — from acquisition and onboarding to talent management. Users benefit from a simplified employee and manager self-service portal and streamlined HR transaction processing.

Near-term, the Treasury Department expects to see cost avoidance totaling \$6 million by adopting cloud and reducing operational expenses with on-premise management and improved performance.

HOW ORACLE HELPS

Freedom of choice, lower costs and greater flexibility to adapt to change are among the benefits that agencies receive from choosing Oracle as their cloud provider. These gains don't come at the expense of security.

Oracle has one of the broadest regulatory compliance portfolios in the industry.

"We provide expert professional services and a large network of partners to help you move and improve your enterprise applications and automate most of the tedious migration aspects with 'lift and shift' toolsets, such as PeopleSoft and E-Business suite cloud manager utilities," Bangalore said.

For many organizations, shifting development, testing and training environments to the cloud is a sensible starting point. After that, the logical next step is to shift the rest of the Oracle E-Business workload — most significantly, production systems — to the cloud. Oracle can help agencies evaluate, assess, build and deploy a migration roadmap that's best suited for the agency.

For more information, visit [oracle.com/govcloud](https://www.oracle.com/govcloud).

Conclusion

Business agility should be at the forefront of any technology decision — and cloud is no different. Agencies must carefully assess their business needs, the urgency of those needs and which cloud solution is optimal for meeting them.

As you evaluate the capabilities of your current enterprise applications, consider the mission and security needs of today and well into the future. And take a fresh look at all options: on premises, public and hybrid clouds. Ultimately, the goal is to find the sweet spot where agility and innovation meet choice and control.



ABOUT ORACLE

Oracle (NASDAQ: ORCL) is the world's most complete, open, and integrated business software and hardware systems company. With more than 370,000 customers—including 100 of the Fortune 100—in more than 145 countries around the globe, Oracle is the only vendor able to offer a complete technology stack in which every layer is engineered to work together as a single system. Oracle's industry-leading public sector solutions give organizations unmatched benefits including unbreakable security, high availability, scalability, energy efficiency, powerful performance, and low total cost of ownership.



ABOUT GOVLOOP

GovLoop's mission is to “connect government to improve government.” We aim to inspire public-sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 300,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

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