

Cloud Provider Check-List

Many CSP's offer different 'Cloud' services and products, but not always what is fit for purpose, and right for your business. Here are some crucial questions you need to ask regarding their service:

COST IMPLICATIONS

Though cloud-based solutions can be economical, it is important that you're aware of all the costs and there aren't any hidden surprises. Below are questions that will help you to assess some of the potential hidden costs with a cloud provider:

- Are you able to scale and add additional users within your current contract?
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- Is loading, hosting and maintaining your data included or an extra cost? If so, what is the pricing model?
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- Is there a cost for upgrades to newer product versions?
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- Is there a cost for customer support or any form of troubleshooting?
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- Is there a cost for technical advice on integrating bespoke applications with other enterprise systems?
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RELIABILITY AND SECURITY

While cloud service providers try to produce reliable and secure solutions it's important to be sure of their reliability and security. Below are questions that will help you assess the integrity of the solution you are considering.

- Is there a technical overview of the technology and security for your IT department to review?
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- What sort of uptime guarantees does the provider offer? Some providers offer you a 95% uptime guarantee but that could mean over 8hrs per week of downtime!
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- Do they offer an SLA (Service Level Agreement) with financial penalties for non-compliance?
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PERFORMANCE, SCALE AND REACH

A proven track record is essential. Your chosen cloud service provider should be able to show you they can meet the performance, scale and reach criteria you need today and also be able to scale with your anticipated growth.

Are you able to scale your resources up quickly when you need more computing power?

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 Will the provider's infrastructure grow as your company's requirements grow?

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 Are the costs for increasing your plan transparent and fair?
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DEPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION

It's important to understand both your own deployment time-frame and integration requirements as well as the experience of the vendors and support from each of the vendors you are considering.

What is involved with implementing the vendor's solution?

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 How much lead time is required to implement the solution?

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 What assistance is provided for implementation? And is there any charge for any of this assistance?

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 What automation/integration vendors, tools or specifications are supported?

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 When new product versions are released, will you receive lead time to assess how they may impact your business applications?
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The questions above covers areas of service reliability that a potential CSP of any worth should be able to answer immediately. You should be extremely cautious if there is hesitation or avoidance to answer and provide details around these simple questions.

If the potential CSP can answer these questions confidentially and provide the evidence to backup their claims then most likely you could be dealing with a proficient CSP worth further investigation leading into the provision of services.

If you need any assistance or advice don't hesitate to call or email us.

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