

SA enterprises turning to cloud adoption to ease security and growth

 By [Niral Patel](#)

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The concept of cloud has fundamentally shifted from a buzzword to an essential business tool. In South Africa, the cloud is no longer just a possibility, it is a fundamental tool igniting innovation and disruption across industry, sector and enterprise.



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The adoption of cloud services is driving every organisation to consider speed and extent. Forward-thinking C-suite leaders are looking to the financial and long-term benefits of cloud and understand its value. They've already adopted solutions and examined their potential and are now considering richer cloud engagement, driven by economy, investment and market demand. More for less is the mantra that drives C-suite decision making into the cloud.

Alongside innovation and speed to market, cloud has also become more commoditised. Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) has become an incredibly competitive space thanks to uptake across South Africa.

Organisations want technology that allows for a higher return on investment to minimise the pressure of economics, disruption and competition that press in on all sides. Cloud is dominating thanks to the impressive, commoditised rise of IaaS and will continue to do so as this trend remains in effect.

According to Mark Walker, associate vice president: sub-Saharan Africa at IDC Middle East, Africa and Turkey, the latest IDC South African CIO Survey (not publically published) shows that 65% of CIOs intend investing in public and private cloud in 2019. The survey found that cloud adoption helps CIOs address security, accessibility and performance challenges.

Meeting market demands

Over the next six to twelve months, IaaS, Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) will see adoption at an equal rate. This is being driven by the need for the business to remain relevant in a fast-changing economic

environment.

These market forces are pushing businesses towards the cloud as they battle the difficulties of budgeting within this economy.

According to the IDC CIO Survey, 42% of CIOs highlighted that obtaining budget was a key challenge while at the same time they are expected to innovate new products and services for the organisation. The enterprise wants solutions that can not only leverage existing infrastructure and investment but improve productivity and capability.

Cloud's potential is obvious. Regardless of size - from the small to medium enterprise to the large enterprise – cloud minimises investment spend while maximising business potential. With the cloud, the business can spool out infrastructure and an array of services in hours, not months or years. This levels the playing field, allowing for companies of any size to compete on any level, gaining access to technologies and tools that previously were too expensive or weighty.

Changes in legislation and capability also assure of richer compliance and due diligence, minimising risk and enhancing security. The large enterprise is particularly focused on the latter – they want to know how the cloud can protect against cyber attacks. Fortunately, the cloud is well placed to answer this question.

The industry imperative

Some sectors, such as financial services and mining, have been slow to move into the space as they are impacted by budgets, governance, risk and compliance. The financial sector is constrained by its essential adherence to ensure absolute security while all organisations that process and store personal European Union citizen data must ensure they meet the stringent requirements as laid out by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the European Union, and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POIA) in South Africa.

In the past, the cloud was a concern when it came to the financial sector, and many others, as it was felt that it left doors open to cyber-attack. Today this conversation has changed as cloud now embodies best-of-breed security solutions and services – updated on demand, resolved on time and managed to exceptional levels of excellence.

Take for example Aspen, it adopted the Oracle Tax reporting Cloud solution to report tax timely and accurately in order to be compliant with the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) country by country reporting. In line with BEPS reporting requirements, the cloud solution allows Aspen to complete all data reporting and collection within a few weeks as against more than eight months with a manual process.

Cloud is also transforming those industries that have previously not been heavy consumers of technology, such as mining. This sector has already seen impressive shifts in productivity, capability and safety thanks to the ubiquity and connectivity of cloud.

Emerging into the future

Of course, no conversation about cloud is complete without a look at emerging technologies that are currently igniting even deeper conversations. Internet of Things, blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning are all very relevant in the South African context. According to the IDC, 62% of CIOs are aware of blockchain technology while 25% are actively researching ways to implement it in their organisations.

A rise in self-service terminals and chatbots is being driven by very specific industries, but there is sector-wide interest in how these technologies can potentially impact an organisation's ability to do better business.

This is also the realm in which the self-driving, self-healing autonomous cloud operates, introducing solutions that take a significant weight off the enterprise's shoulder. Autonomous technology is set to lead the way when it comes to security – capable of assessing and addressing a breach independent of human intervention or delay – and affordability. Autonomous will be driving cloud to the next level, of that there is little doubt.

The next six months to a year will likely see cloud embed itself even more into both the public and private sectors. Organisations are looking to cloud to provide them with the innovation and technology they need to catalyse business and meet the challenges of a mercurial economy. Already the benefits are being felt by those who adopted at the outset and further research, statistically proven results and richly structured cloud feature-sets and solutions are seeing all industries invest in its potential.

ABOUT NIRAL PATEL

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