Case study
Vodafone Practical Guide

Building a better cloud business case

Demonstrating the value of cloud by solving stakeholder problems

The future is exciting. Ready?

vodafone business
Introduction

Digital transformation is not solely an IT or technology-centred project. Indeed, it’s as much about your stakeholders as any new solution, tool or software. And if there’s one thing that every successful cloud project has in common, it’s that they put the two hand in hand from day one.

In practice, it’s about aligning new technologies with business objectives: involving, identifying and engaging stakeholders, gaining buy-in for change and agreeing what the outcomes, scope and timings should be. Balancing transformation and digital change with the realities of technology constraints is also paramount, as is identifying legacy equipment unfit for cloud migration, and the impact on existing vendor relationships.

The business case for cloud technology is, therefore, a crucially important first step. And the expert support of an experienced and trusted cloud partner cannot be underestimated when putting it together.

This Guide describes the process of developing a business case for cloud adoption, or the extension of cloud services, and offers practical steps for describing the benefits, risks, costs and savings associated with moving IT services to the cloud.
1. Business case buy-in

In order to build an effective business case, there are a number of areas that must be considered.

**Effective stakeholder buy-in**
The first task is to list all your stakeholders and establish how the implementation will affect them, positively and negatively. Quantify how it will benefit them and, conversely, say what might be asked of them. Think of any likely objections from each group. Include interested parties from all levels and all departments: C-Suite, senior executives, line of business managers, department leaders or procurement managers will all have different vested interests in cloud and your business case needs to address them directly.

**Concise and clear context**
A cloud business case is not the place to talk about cloud computing; it’s the place to talk about business problems and opportunities that can be solved with cloud technology. Most key stakeholders in cloud migration projects are specialists in business not technology. So a business case that focuses on outcomes rather than technology will achieve better engagement and buy-in. These outcomes can be anything from faster time to market for new services and easier data sharing, to better app deployment and the ability to cope with emerging devices and systems. Whichever is behind the business case, by defining specific problems the cloud can address, you are selling the general advantages of cloud technology.

**Language everyone can understand**
In the IT world, we tend to presume people understand what we mean when we talk about cloud, but in the rest of your business you should assume that’s not the case. For some it’s a hazy buzzword even for those who do understand it, it still has many different interpretations. Your business case needs to establish a clear definition of cloud in non-technical language. Use cloud terminology consistently throughout all your communications.

**Facts that fix problems**
To show how you will fix business problems you need to describe the current state in detail, using specific internal information that shows the cost and consequences of those problems. This will quantify the advantages of reaching the target state. It’s worth remembering, however, that at the start of the process you will never have all the facts you need.

**Proof of concept**
When introducing new technology it helps to justify investment by proving the model works. Therefore, the ultimate way to gain buy-in for cloud is to run an isolated, small-scale, ‘sprint’ migration to validate cloud capabilities while containing the level of risk. If you can show these sprints work, backing for the bigger roll out will naturally rise. The added benefit? You’ll be able to use smaller deployments to begin projects which, ultimately, may grow far larger.

**Top tip**
A business case must be a living, constantly updated and validated document, rather than a sealed one.
2. Planning and pitfalls

A business case for enterprise-wide projects like digital transformation is only useful if considered as a continually evolving brief. Driving strategic step changes like cloud migration while coping with the ongoing change is essential. Plans that stay rigid become obsolete as businesses move on. The ability to update or amend all aspects of an iterative business case is paramount.

**Your business is changing, your business plan must too**

Elements that frequently change include:

- **User requirements** – those gathered at any particular point in time are not likely to remain the same for long.
- **New technologies and channels**, which become viable and available over a period of several months.
- **Competitors and customers**, who are always presenting new threats and demands.
- **Vendors** who can change the price of their services.

The impossibility of predicting the future is partly what makes cloud migration so attractive. It offers IT teams the flexibility and scalability to cater for emerging needs. Spikes in consumption can easily be catered for in a cloud environment. But still, a shift in tech mindset is needed for many. The cloud is a dynamic technology and things can change very quickly.

Understand from the outset that you will never have all the information and data you need for a comprehensive or complete business case. So it’s best practice to adopt an agile mindset that allows you to challenge, learn and adapt.
3. Business case best practice

There is no one way to build a business case for cloud. However, there are some general rules to follow that will ensure yours engages, informs and involves.

Outcomes and needs
A good business case for technology adoption should always be driven by clear objectives that detail what the technology will actually do for a business, and how it will fulfil a strategic need. For example, in global banking, it might be necessary to be able to move data quickly and securely around the world. Therefore the business case should focus on the benefits of a global network and regional data sovereignty. This way of working also allows the business to measure actual outcomes against initial objectives.

Ask the right questions
A good provider does not just sell solutions. It offers advice and guidance at every stage of the journey. Vodafone works closely with CIOs and IT leaders to ensure that the right cloud solution is used for the right reason. And is always on hand to answer questions that will inform a business case. This approach is to help customers think through the benefits of the cloud in a vendor-neutral way, experiment to understand the capabilities they need and go from there.

Don’t overdo the detail
It’s always worth remembering that a business case should be able to convince everyone that the cloud is essential to strategy. Often this includes the IT department itself, particularly as it may necessitate balancing new services with existing commitments, learning skills and thinking in what may be a new holistic way. All of which have the potential to be barriers. With that in mind, ensure that the business case can be understood by everyone who might have to engage with it. Information is one thing, jargon is another.

Don’t set anything in stone
Technological implementation and digital transformation projects change as they progress. Therefore, while well conceived initially, a business case should always be a living document. The best approach is to accept a level of agile iteration and plan for change from the outset.
4. What does a good business case for cloud look like?

Use this checklist to ensure that your case for cloud is right for your business.

- All stakeholders informed and on-board
- Jargon free and easily understandable
- Outcomes based and measurable
- Iterative, live and ready to be updated
- Expert advice from cloud partners
There's a cloud that can

Building a business case for the cloud is the first step on the journey to a new way of working. That's because the cloud is not just a way to store and move data around a business. It's about the future of corporate IT and how a business takes advantage of connectivity, Internet of Things, networks and mobility. As such, CIOs building a business case need to be thinking beyond the walls of their own departments, understanding how they will engage their colleagues, how their document should set out a plan for transformation, and how all of this will be measured during and after cloud implementation.

With its expertise in enterprise IT and communications, Vodafone is ideally placed to help CIOs and IT leaders build their business case and arrive at the right cloud for the right purpose.

Is it time for your business to find a cloud that can? Talk to Vodafone Cloud and Hosting.