

CIO Innovation: The Changing Role of Technologies in a Period of Infrastructure Transformations





Executive Dialogue Luncheon Series

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The role of the CIO has evolved from one of not just business delivery, but one that is aligned with developing technology partnerships and ecosystems, creating new commercial lines through digital, as well as leading strategic business change from the top.

To explore this, 14 of Perth's leading information and IT executives discussed this evolution and more in an executive luncheon entitled **"CIO Innovation: The Changing Role of Technologies in a Period of Infrastructure Transformations"**.

Hosted in partnership with Nutanix and OmniChannel Media, the luncheon provided attendees an opportunity to explore the challenges surrounding the role of the CIO, as well as network and connect with some of Western Australia's leading IT executives.

The table discussed how different goals rely on different cloud strategies, with Paul Serrano, Chief Evangelist, APJ at Nutanix. David Dans, CIO of the Department of Education Western Australia, shared his insights in a keynote presentation to open the discussion.



Cloud Creates Options

Migrating to cloud is an essential journey that every incumbent organisation must take, ensuring your data is always safe and secure has become increasingly important, not just at an IT level, but at a boardroom level.

Dans noted that cloud technology enables velocity and gives you the freedom to try and fail quickly. Members of the table agreed with this assessment, stating that the technologies they've implemented gave them the opportunity to explore different avenues.

'It gives you a try-fail, deploy-fast model, which is just not possible in a traditional infrastructure model or even a traditional application model.'

Another advantage to implementing cloud was that of the speed that it allows. Dans'

emphasised that, with cloud, the time to value is very quick, which is necessary in this age of 'competitive pressures in government' and 'very rapidly shrinking timeframes'.

The difference between a successful launch of a new product and a slow collapse of the project can come by how the information is stored, and so it's crucial that companies begin to transition sooner, rather than later.

'Cloud also gives you the ability to innovate much more regularly than you can in a more traditional model. You have to look for innovations in the way you do business.'



Adopt a Citizen-Centric Approach: CIO's Need to Communicate the Cloud Strategically

Attitudes and perceptions of cloud have changed as the technology becomes more integrated into businesses. It's not seen as a technical, jargon term anymore, instead, companies just need to realise how they can profit from it.

Dans said when convincing a board to transition to the cloud, you "have to sell the benefits of cloud, not in technology terms, but in the benefits to the business".

When storing data on the cloud technology, the challenge is figuring out which data should be stored where, and how it should be secured.

One executive shared an insightful challenge that he encountered around researchers pushing his team to store data, without having actually classified that data first.

'If it's medical data that's sensitive, for example, it's probably not a good idea to store it on an Amazon server in Singapore. It's those sort of issues that we need to grapple with.'

As with all parts of the business, internal communication is key in the data faculty. If all departments understand the risks that come with each choice, then they can quickly understand how that information should be stored on the cloud.



Cloud Strategy is Not One Size Fits All

The overwhelming takeaway from the discussion was whether CIOs should choose to utilise a public, private or hybrid cloud strategy: the major observation was that there was no one-size-fits-all approach. The choice around cloud was an individual choice that was informed by a range of different factors.

Timing was revealed to have played a large part in choosing what cloud model to use. Serrano reminded his peers that different types of clouds can result in vastly different levels of "control" which may impact application and business delivery, customer support and overall costs.

But irrespective of which cloud model or models are chosen, ultimately the enterprise still owns the responsibility for the business outcomes, including security, availability and data integrity.

"Mult-Cloud hybrid environments offer the best possible mix for both predictable and unpredictable workloads but processing a single orchestrator and management control plane across the clouds is essential for optimum control and delivery.

One story shared was that of the advantage one institution got out of using a private cloud, with the benefits coming in the form of the insights gleaned through the increased visibility.

"We've moved to a virtual private cloud, even though it was more expensive, for the security robustness it provides. We've now got much better visibility of our costs than we've ever had, and that's a double edge sword."

"On the one hand, we're saying 'that's so much more expensive than we thought it was', but the good thing is that we know that now, so we can do something about it."



Conclusion

Overall, it is clear to see that the role of the CIO, and the choices that they are now responsible for, have greatly expanded as their role has merged and diversified.

Accountable for setting a cloud strategy, they must weigh up the benefits of all available options and select the best approach for both their company and their customers.

Dans summarised the potential of the cloud by stating that despite the advantages that it presents, it's not a quick fix or a holy grail.

"Cloud is a solution, it's not the solution – it's part of the armoury of what you need to do."



About Us



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