



WHITE PAPER

7 Mistakes Healthcare Practices Make When Moving To the Cloud

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7 Mistakes Practices Make When Moving To the Cloud

Dear Colleague,

Today we all rely heavily on technology to accomplish our business goals. From daily communication and applications to analytics and data storage, we need IT solutions that are reliable and cost-effective.

One option gaining steam in today's market that could help your company reduce costs is cloud computing (for more on Cloud Computing basics, see our white paper [Executive Guide to Cloud Computing](#)).

With changes in technology such as the widespread move toward cloud computing, there are always potential hazards to look out for. Oftentimes, such changes can be uncomfortable, producing anxiety and hesitation.

Business owners who lack the knowledge to make confident decisions in changing times are subject to fall behind, while the competition gets a leg up, cutting costs and streamlining their workflow more efficiently.

As a trusted resource for executives, business owners, and IT professionals for over a decade, we want to keep you informed of mistakes to avoid, in case you're considering making the transition from a traditional on-site IT setup to cloud computing.

Navigating the treacherous waters of business can be nerve-racking. True North takes pride in providing you with the tools you need to achieve your business goals successfully. We've learned first-hand that a huge part of that achievement lies in navigating change. With that in mind, we'd like to point out some pitfalls to avoid, helping your company stay strong in today's competitive environment.

Dedicated to serving you,

True North ITG.



About True North ITG

True North was founded to help businesses of all kinds get the most out of their technology and to allow their networks to stay up and running smoothly. Over the years we've helped many businesses relieve their technology and networking worries, so that they can concentrate on growing their business and realizing their goals.

We've been servicing clients of all sizes for over 10 years and ALL of our specialists are qualified and tested experts who hold up-to-date certifications and expertise in both networking and cloud computing. When you hire us for ANY project, not only can you expect it to be done right, but you can expect it to be done on time and on budget.

7 Mistakes Businesses Make When Migrating to the Cloud (and How to Avoid Them)

In this report, we will point out 7 common mistakes businesses make that can cost time, money, and make for a difficult transition into cloud computing:

1. Insufficient Research of Your Cloud Service Provider
(And What You Need to Look For)
2. Lack of Attention to Data Security
3. Inadequate Disaster Recovery Plans
4. Agreeing to an Infrastructure that Doesn't Fit Your Needs.
5. Inefficient Bandwidth Use
6. Not Paying Attention to Cloud Management
7. Lack of Information About Your Data Storage Location
8. Paying Hidden Fees



1. Insufficient Research of Your Cloud Service Provider (And What You Need to Look For)

Cloud computing can be a huge step forward for small businesses, allowing them to cut costs on hardware, storage, and maintenance. As these benefits become increasingly apparent, however, new vendors with limited experience are popping up. Although on the surface, it may seem like they are offering the same service as more experienced cloud hosting providers, the reality can look a lot different. Choosing a provider without doing due diligence can lead to big problems down the road.

One element to take a close look at is a cloud hosting provider's track record with service level agreements. The beauty of cloud computing is the savings and flexibility it provides, but this means you need a process in place to make sure you are using cloud technology as efficiently and smoothly as possible. Set up a protocol for periodically checking how much service you're using and how you could be working more efficiently in the cloud. This translates into reduced costs and paying for what you really need and use.

Customers usually rely on the vendors to deliver and measure the uptime, for example, but this is not always the case. Companies need to take control and make sure their cloud needs are being met by enabling a management tool that will measure service uptime. Services like Pingdom (www.pingdom.com) can help you measure service uptime to make sure your provider isn't overcharging.

Another element to research is provider availability. Make sure your provider has experts you can reach at all times to walk you through any issues that might come up. The provider should offer full consulting services from design to implementation and support. Also, make sure you know who is ultimately responsible for any glitches. Are you dealing with one vendor or several? In the event you need your data back quickly, you should also look for a provider who can ship your data overnight on a physical storage medium, just in case. Make sure your service provider can address these concerns before trusting them with your company's vital data!

2. Lack of Attention to Data Security

Data security is a natural concern when moving to the cloud. When choosing your cloud hosting provider, ask whether or not they can verify the security of their network and infrastructure. Without proper oversight, a company's data can become compromised due to improper security measures.

How can you prevent this from happening to you? By definition, cloud hosting involves several users sharing virtual space. To ensure that no other user can access your information without permission, it has to be properly encrypted. Make sure your data is in capable hands by looking for SAS-70 Type II certification, which ensures that the controls put in place by your provider are accurate, suitable, and effective.



3. Inadequate Disaster Recovery Plans

This is one of the biggest concerns for businesses unfamiliar with cloud computing and with good reason. Make sure the cloud service provider can communicate to you their disaster recovery plan without jargon so you can rest easy.

One element providers need to ensure is that both your data and your applications are adequately protected. Protecting your data in the cloud is a must, but even that won't be much help if your apps and servers crash. Having a solid Disaster Recovery Plan will allow you to use applications on an outside infrastructure tailored precisely to your needs.

It is also important for you to know how your provider is protecting your data against a disaster. Are they replicating between sites? Do they have a multi-layered disaster recovery solutions? Do their back-up plans have back-up plans? Make sure you have these answers as you go about choosing your provider.

4. Agreeing to an Infrastructure that Doesn't Fit Your Needs

When it comes to cloud computing infrastructure, one size does definitely not fit all. A cloud hosting provider worth their salt will be able to analyze your needs and advise you on which infrastructure will be the best fit for you.

For example, companies shouldn't necessarily build an entire application infrastructure in the cloud. Each company should decide first if the cloud will be used for primary data or secondary data and identify how well the service provider is able to accommodate their needs.

Sometimes it makes more sense to use cloud storage services to extend your on-site infrastructure, rather than migrating all of your data and applications wholesale. Good cloud hosting providers are good consultants as well and can advise you on what setup will work best for you, keeping an eye on your business needs at all times.



5. Inefficient Bandwidth Use

When it comes to cloud computing, speed matters. Enormous savings can be achieved by combining what's called "data deduplication" and compression. Both techniques help save on your bandwidth. More bandwidth means faster running times for your applications, which can lead to big savings.

Yet another way to save on bandwidth is variously called either "hybrid cloud computing" or "cloud-connected storage." In both cases, a copy (or cache) of the data is kept at your local premises for the fastest possible access. If it should be damaged in a disaster, it can always be rebuilt from the cloud, but under normal circumstances, keeping some amount of local data helps balance cost and maximize speed. These techniques that allow for flexibility and lowering bandwidth will help your bottom line and keep your business on track.

6. Lack of Information About Your Data Storage Location

Cloud computing can lower costs and free up physical space at your business because you no longer have to have to keep servers and other hardware on-site. But your data still has to be kept somewhere. Many cloud providers may not offer specific locations for where a customer's data will reside and will claim that "location-less" clouds are a benefit.

What many business owners don't know is that the physical location of data is very important for compliance. If you are utilizing cloud storage for your disaster recovery plan or attempting to pass strict security audits, then the location of the data and the mechanisms to make that data accessible are critical. Make sure your provider can give you the specific location of your data to cover all your bases.

7. Paying Hidden Fees

As with any business agreement, know where your money is going! A cloud hosting provider should base its pricing on how much storage capacity a business actually needs, how much bandwidth is needed to access its data, and the services it performs in the cloud. Services will include configuration, monitoring, and updates.

Many service providers offer "low prices," but fail to include basic services, so hidden fees add up quickly. Make sure you stay away from common hidden fees, like connection, maintenance, and data access charges.



A Final Word

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding some light on how to avoid problems when moving to the cloud. As stated in the opening of this report, our purpose in providing this information is to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by the many incompetent firms offering these services.

Below you will find information on how to request a FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment. This is, of course, provided for free with no obligations and no expectations on our part. We want to be clear that this is NOT a bait and switch offer or a trick to get you to buy something. Our reputation as an honest and trustworthy business is something we hold very dear. We would never jeopardize that in any way. So why are we offering something like this for free?

Two reasons:

1. This service is a risk-free “get to know us” offer to people we haven’t had the pleasure of doing business with. Again, our goal is to allow you to make an informed and confident decision; offering this service is one way we can help you better evaluate our services.
2. This will allow us to determine if we even CAN help you. Obviously, we can’t help everyone and cloud computing might not be a good fit for your particular circumstances. Conducting this Cloud Readiness Assessment enables us to perform a small service to you and give you a risk-free way of determining whether or not we’re the right company to help you without risking your money.

Looking forward to your call!

True North ITG.
1.800.372.1660
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FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment

As a prospective customer, we would like to offer you a FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment and cost analysis. This Assessment has three parts:

1. **Cost Analysis and Inventory:** Our first step is to look at what your current network consists of, including hardware, licenses, data, and applications. Next, we compile an IT cost assessment to reveal your total amount spent on IT, including Internet connectivity, support, and other fees. Most business owners have never really looked at their entire IT costs this way and often this report alone is an eye-opener. Why do we do this? Because our goal is to find ways we can significantly lower those costs while simplifying and improving your workflow.
2. **Health Check:** We will perform a 27-point audit of your entire network to look for potential security loopholes, spyware, and other hidden problems that you might not know about. Often we find faulty backups, out-of-date anti-virus software, faulty firewalls, and missing security patches that, if left unaddressed, could end up costing you MORE in new hardware, support, business downtime, and data loss.
3. **Cloud Readiness:** After we've looked at the above areas, we then look at how you and your employees work and share information and see what applications or processes we can safely move to the cloud to improve ease of use and, of course, lower costs.

When complete, we'll give you a Cloud Action Plan that shows you how we can save you money and resolve a number of work-arounds and problems you may have been experiencing to date. Even if you decide not to hire us, having a third party conduct this type of assessment will give you some good information on saving money and the security and health of your computer network.

You can request your FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment online, at www.truenorthitg.com, or call us directly at 800.372.1660!



Yes, I Want My FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment!

- "Yes! Please reserve a Free Cloud Readiness Assessment in my name so I can find out what my options are, get answers to my questions, and get a handle on the steps and costs involved. I understand that I'm under NO obligation to do or buy anything by signing up for this assessment."

I recognize that moving to the Cloud will result in Lower IT Costs, accessibility to my data from anywhere and on any device, and I will have automatic disaster recovery and backup, among other benefits.

I understand my assessment will include...

Cost Analysis And Inventory Health Check, Cloud Readiness, Technology Recommendations

- Technical Support Hotline: 800-372-1660 -

Please Complete This Form: _____

Your Name & Title: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Number of PCs: _____

- Contact me immediately! I have a project or a problem I need your help with right away.
- Please contact me in the next few days to discuss my network support needs

Fax To: 425.743.3765