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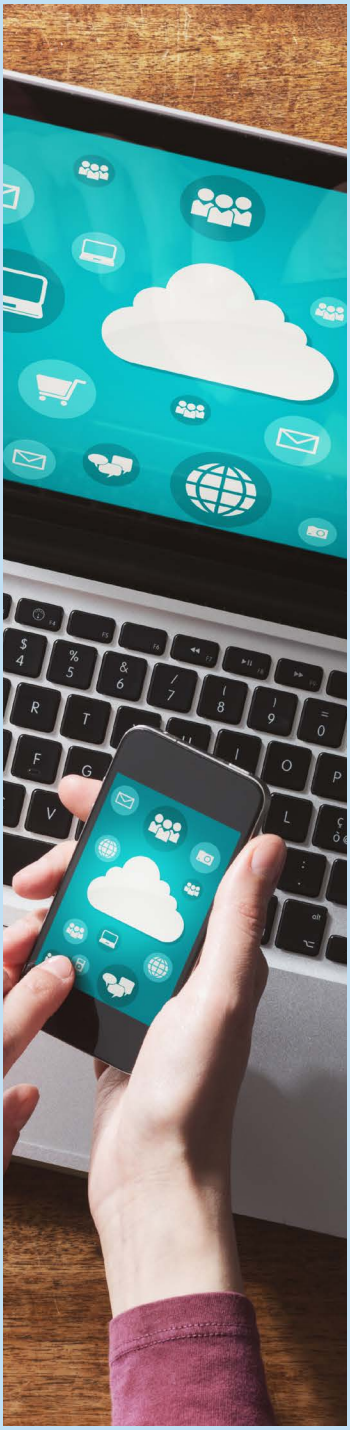

WINNING DIGITAL CUSTOMERS WITH THE RIGHT CLOUD APP STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

We are witnessing how pervasive and purposeful digitization of today's world is transforming entire industries. Such digitization of business is catalyzing a new era of customer experience through machine-generated insights, automated processes, and simplified interactions between producers and consumers.

Business technology leaders are looking for ways to automate and scale operations, while managing cost pressures. Open, intelligent technologies, clubbed with the scale and agility of cloud, have the potential to enable a new wave of human amplification. This point of view details customer-centric strategies and technology paradigms that can enable businesses to offer engaging solutions for digital customers.

Today's business is where the digital customer is! The increasing adoption of smartphones and social media implies that enterprises have to go the extra mile to create fantastic, online user journeys for their customers. Data about every click, like, view, and share is the catalyst for better offerings.

At the same time, cloud-native technologies such as the Internet-of-Things (IoT) and blockchain process massive volumes of data per second. Real-time data about every device is essential to enhance performance. To sum it up — the shift from data centers, to data-at-the-center is inevitable.

Rethinking cloud

The expectations from cloud technologies are getting redefined and expanding beyond workload migration and cost-effectiveness. Transformations are being brought about by the shift in approach to cloud implementations – from infrastructure-centric to application-centric. By creating new, cloud-native applications and integrating these with existing business opportunities, enterprises are able to transform user journeys quickly and accurately. It is exciting to see how cloud is unleashing new business capabilities to drive engaging customer experiences.

In fact, many leading brands have already taken the first step. Capital One, a case in point, uses the Alexa application to allow customers to bank through voice-based queries from their mobile phones.

Customers can easily check credit balances and pay bills by simply speaking to the Alexa application, installed on their mobile phones[1]. Adobe too, has migrated its entire Creative Suite to the Creative Cloud, and how! Through lower prices, faster innovation, and effective features, Adobe is trying to up the customer experience via applications on cloud[2]. Yes, 'enhanced customer experience' is the outcome that Capital One, Adobe, and every other business aims for, while adopting the world of public cloud.

CUSTOMER-EXPERIENCE-FIRST STRATEGY

Customer experience gains priority over applications and IT infrastructure for enterprises aiming to become digital natives. Applications need to undergo change continuously to address new functionalities and enhance customer experience. DevOps brings in technology innovation with zero-touch automation across the IT value stream, offers process transformation using lean and agile practices, and enables people transformation through an integrated team model. To improve customer experience significantly, the focus of every enterprise has to be at the intersection of applications and infrastructure. Here are three outcomes that will define futuristic customer experience:

New applications in days, not weeks

This is the new normal to keep digital customers engaged online. By deploying applications on cloud, enterprises can reduce the time required to set up infrastructure, experiment functionalities, and go live.

The right decisions, in seconds

Cloud-native applications can function automatically and optimize features to ensure continuous business operations. GE, for instance, uses the Digital Twin to execute 'what if' scenarios and analyze data to create outcomes. This ensures that enterprises can minimize risks of unplanned downtimes and optimize human resources for more valuable work.

Top performance, always

Behind every engaging digital user interface, the integration of numerous products, multiple marketing offers, complicated pricing structures, several business rules, and much more, have to happen in real time. Through multi-cloud environments, businesses can rely on more than one cloud service provider to simplify large-scale operations, avoid vendor lock-ins, manage varied workloads, gain agility to address new requirements, and isolate system failures. This implies minimal downtime, greater reliability, and faster operations for customers.

In a survey conducted by 451 Research, it is estimated that 49 percent of enterprises will make investments in business applications across enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, and more; in the next two years[3].

Therefore, for organizations that want to fast-track digitalization, adopting 'application-centric models' across functions is the next big step.

NEW-AGE APPLICATIONS, POWERED BY CLOUD

A robust cloud platform is the prerequisite for every successful application-centric infrastructure. By introducing artificial intelligence to this setup, organizations can not only ensure successful migration of workloads, but also benefit from simplified processes and continuous learning.

So, what is the ideal approach for application migration to the cloud?

Should all applications be re-engineered? For many businesses, a convincing proof-of-concept can combine the following three cloud migration models to drive effectiveness:

QUICK RESULTS MODEL

In this approach, applications are recreated on cloud as-is, or without any change in architecture or functionality. This helps to reduce costs on infrastructure in the short term, and organizations can focus on improving security and functionality of their applications to drive better customer experience.

RAPID SCALE MODEL

Here, as the applications are recreated on the cloud, they are also tweaked to increase scalability and efficiency. In most scenarios, the application is migrated to open platforms, such as Linux, to ensure applications perform better and are more reliable. That means less application errors and downtime for customers.

INNOVATIVE FEATURES MODEL

In this case, applications are rebuilt from scratch to suit today's digital imperatives. It involves deploying the latest technologies as micro-services, so that customers can enjoy new features seamlessly.

In other words, from choosing service providers to calculating costs, cloud migration can be long and challenging, and enterprises need the right strategies to reap benefits.

EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE, CRUCIAL FOR QUICK RESULTS

With extensive experience in migrating applications to cloud, I believe that 100 percent re-engineering of applications might not always work. In fact, most effective cloud migrations have been structured as follows:

70–80 percent of effort is to re-engineer applications (a new service in the digital world)

20–30 percent of effort is pure-play migration (lift and shift, re-platforming)

At the same time, for organizations to reap the benefits of futuristic technologies, they cannot limit their investments to cloud.

The next big thing for enterprises is to simultaneously invest in platforms of advanced technologies such as blockchain, IoT, analytics, and more; and drive seamless interoperability amongst these. In other words, 'cloud investments that cater to the requirements of the entire enterprise' is the way to go. Over time, we at Infosys have enabled seamless migration of applications to cloud for various businesses. Our expertise across the cloud migration ecosystem — from lift and shift to re-engineering — drives the right strategies and efforts. Our partnerships with Amazon Web Services, Microsoft (Azure) and Oracle enable us to create the right cloud migration solutions, faster. We also have tremendous expertise in creating the right digital foundation for enterprises, bolstered by managed services, DevOps, testing, and micro-services.

CONCLUSION

To deliver simple, yet engaging experiences, applications are the oxygen that businesses need. Managing these applications on-premise is guaranteed to incur huge costs to every enterprise sooner or later. Thus, while the need to migrate applications to the cloud is well established, the right approach is not just about re-hosting or re-engineering.

References

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