

GRIDWISE TECHNOLOGY

INDUSTRY RESEARCH REPORT

The Cloud Migration Readiness Report

What actually determines whether a cloud migration goes smoothly — and where most businesses discover they weren't as ready as they thought.

Prepared by Gridwise Technology | A guide for IT leaders and business owners planning a move to the cloud

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1. Why "Moving to the Cloud" Isn't One Decision

Cloud adoption has accelerated across nearly every industry, and the reasons are well understood — scalability, reduced hardware overhead, and easier remote access chief among them. But "we're moving to the cloud" tends to get treated as a single decision, when in practice it's a bundle of many smaller ones: which workloads move first, whether to lift-and-shift existing applications as-is or redesign them for the cloud, how data migrates without disrupting operations, and how the team's day-to-day workflows change once the move is complete.

Businesses that treat migration as one big decision tend to move fast at the start and then hit friction mid-project once the smaller decisions start surfacing unplanned. Businesses that break it into its component parts up front tend to have a smoother — if sometimes slower — path.

2. The Readiness Factors That Actually Predict Success

A few factors show up consistently across successful migrations, more reliably than the choice of cloud provider itself.

An accurate current-state inventory

Knowing exactly what applications, integrations, and dependencies exist today — including the informal ones nobody documented — is foundational. Migrations that start without this tend to discover dependencies mid-move, at the worst possible time.

A clear prioritization order

Not every system needs to move at once, and not every system benefits equally from moving. Businesses that identify low-risk, high-value systems to migrate first tend to build organizational confidence before tackling more complex, higher-risk workloads.

Realistic bandwidth planning

Migrations compete with day-to-day operations for the same internal team's time. Underestimating this is one of the most common reasons timelines slip.

A rollback plan for each phase

Knowing how to revert a specific migration step if something goes wrong — rather than being committed forward no matter what — significantly reduces the risk of a stalled or painful transition.

3. The Mid-Migration Surprises Worth Anticipating

A common pattern across businesses migrating to the cloud: the surprises rarely come from the cloud platform itself. They come from what the on-premises environment was quietly doing that nobody had fully documented.

- **Hidden integrations.** A legacy system feeding data to three other tools nobody remembered were connected.
- **Licensing complications.** Software licensed for on-premises use that requires a different agreement or cost structure in a cloud environment.
- **Bandwidth and latency assumptions.** Workflows that worked fine on a local network but behave differently once data has to travel to and from the

cloud.

- **Data cleanup debt.** Migration often surfaces years of accumulated data quality issues that were easy to ignore on-premises but become a blocker during a move.

None of these surprises are unusual — they're common enough that a thorough discovery phase before migration begins is one of the highest-leverage steps in the entire project.

4. Lift-and-Shift vs. Re-Architecting: A Cost Framework

One of the biggest early decisions is whether to move applications largely as-is (lift-and-shift) or redesign them to take fuller advantage of cloud-native capabilities. Neither approach is universally right.

Approach	Best When	Trade-off
Lift-and-shift	Speed matters, application is stable, near-term budget is limited	Doesn't capture full cloud efficiency or cost savings; may need re-architecting later anyway
Re-architect	Application is central to the business long-term, current version has known limitations	Longer timeline, higher upfront cost, more disruption during the transition
Hybrid / phased	Mixed portfolio of applications with different priorities	Requires more careful sequencing and ongoing coordination across phases

5. The Human Side of Migration

Technical readiness gets most of the attention in migration planning, but the human side often determines how smoothly the transition actually feels to the people using the systems daily. Workflow changes, new login processes, and different application behavior all create a learning curve, and teams that aren't prepared for that curve tend to experience the migration as disruptive even when the technical execution went well.

Businesses that communicate the "why" behind a migration clearly, and build in time for training and adjustment, tend to see faster adoption and fewer workarounds that quietly undermine the new environment's benefits.

6. A Readiness Self-Check

- ☐ You have an accurate, current inventory of applications, integrations, and data dependencies.
- ☐ You've identified which systems should migrate first, and why.
- ☐ You've realistically budgeted internal team time for the migration, not just external vendor cost.
- ☐ You have a rollback plan for at least the highest-risk phase of the migration.
- ☐ You've communicated the migration's purpose and timeline to the team who will use the new environment daily.
- ☐ You've checked software licensing terms for cloud compatibility, not assumed they carry over.

7. What This Means for You

Cloud migration readiness is less about the technology and more about how thoroughly you understand your current environment before you start moving it. The businesses that have the smoothest migrations aren't necessarily the most technically sophisticated — they're the ones that did the discovery work honestly before committing to a timeline.

If your self-check above left a few boxes unchecked, that's a normal starting point. It simply points to where a closer look before migration begins will save real time and cost once the project is underway.

Where to Go From Here

Gridwise Technology helps growing businesses plan and execute cloud migrations without the mid-project surprises. If this report raised questions about your own readiness, we're glad to talk it through.

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