



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Why move to the cloud

A business needs agility built into its infrastructure to stay ahead in today's competitive environment. Cloud-based enterprise software provides businesses with the kind of agile platform that enables quicker responses to opportunities and customer needs.

Take a moment to consider what these opportunities might look like across operations and how cloud-based enterprise software can help. Once you've seen these benefits, the real question may be: Why isn't your business already operating within the cloud?

Transform IT into a revenue generating powerhouse

The CIOs of 2025 and beyond will need to shoulder more strategic responsibilities across a broader span of the business by finding ways to generate profits for their company with new products and services.

Even now, companies are asking more of their IT departments. In addition to providing day-to-day support of applications and business processes, IT teams are usually the system architects of the executive team's empire-building visions, whether that includes expanding into new countries, providing new products or services requiring new business processes, or squeezing even more efficiency from current workflows.

“ Infor provides us the software we need to power our digital transformation. The cloud-based platform makes it easier to accommodate our growth plans and gives us the industry functionality we need.”

CHRIS SMITH
CIO, Liberty Steel UK¹

However, the IT team's scope is expanding beyond a role that helps keep the lights on to one that finds a way to monetize the data from the lights and turn it into a product for customers. In fact, 89% of **CIOs expect to have revenue-generating responsibilities in 2020.**²

With cloud-based software, the CIO can turn over the duties of day-to-day software management to a cloud-based software provider and focus his or her team's time on value-added initiatives for the organization, including uncovering and monetizing new products and services.

Innovate faster

When IT resources are solely focused on maintaining existing infrastructure and on-premises solutions, they become unavoidably stuck in a defensive operational mode—keeping things up and running becomes an overwhelming effort. As a result, the team struggles to get ahead of the basics to support more strategic initiatives that can facilitate organizational change.

Cloud-based business solutions empower an organization to take risks—allowing companies to pursue new business opportunities without adding expensive infrastructure. It becomes possible to take advantage of new, innovative functionality more quickly and cost-effectively than was historically possible. If an initiative succeeds, it can be scaled seamlessly to a wider audience. If it fails, the project can be shut down quickly.

This unprecedented level of flexibility enables companies to foster a culture that's more conducive to implementing new, innovative ideas—not just within IT, but throughout the entire organization.

Fuel global growth

For many organizations, emerging markets and remote locations comprise the next great business frontier. However, capitalizing on those opportunities can be complex and expensive, as getting the technical skills and equipment in place to establish operations is not a trivial undertaking. Combine that with the fact that there are so many variables: What skills will be available to support enterprise systems? What types of new regulations and reporting requirements will have to be met?

“ Infor CloudSuite gives us the agility and transparency we need as our value chain becomes more global and more complex. We now have complete confidence that Infor CloudSuite is the right platform for our global business.”

LACHLAN FARRAN
Chief Operating Officer, Rip Curl³

Cloud-based solutions allow businesses to establish a new presence rapidly or expand existing operations in virtually any region without having to physically be there, which substantially minimizes both capital investments and risk. They also offer better business outcomes by allowing remote offices to operate seamlessly alongside other business units and headquarters, and make it easier to share information regardless of partner or supplier location. Assuming that an organization is working with a robust cloud solution, it will likely have support for multiple languages and currencies, which makes localization much easier to achieve.

Simplify compliance

Keeping aligned with continuous changes in software, security, and regulations is complex, manual, and expensive. It's a daunting effort, and yet, businesses have no option but to do their best to comply.

Compliance is an area where cloud-based solutions offer extraordinary benefits to businesses eager to increase productivity and reduce risk. In a cloud-based SaaS world, security and compliance updates can be pushed out automatically to the entire organization as soon as they're available. Not only does this simplify the process of keeping systems up to date, it also ensures that everyone in the company has access to the latest information and tools to do their jobs effectively.

Capitalizing on this opportunity to rein in the complexity, cost, and risk of compliance is relevant to nearly every business, yet it's particularly compelling to highly regulated industries such as pharmaceuticals and healthcare. The approach also offers huge value for firms operating in multiple countries, which can make regulatory and compliance challenges even more complex and costly.

Achieve global 24x7 service

In today's economy, downtime means lost revenue. Companies can't afford to have critical applications offline. If a customer can't do business with a company, the competition will be more than happy to take over. And in a world that's always "switched on," keeping the proverbial lights burning around the clock is fast becoming a business imperative.

The right cloud computing solution is available every day, 24 hours a day, no matter where employees are located or what devices they're using. Because cloud computing providers deploy equipment that is typically far more reliable than anything most companies would use for their own on-premise solutions, they can achieve system up-time levels that are difficult to match.

Convert your software from a capital to an operational expense

Cloud-based software can help free up capital, while giving a company the flexibility to meet evolving operational needs. With this switch in revenue reporting, companies will have access to funds for expansion and new business initiatives, and the ability to respond to growth market opportunities more quickly.

Decrease risk, increase collaboration and productivity

To do their jobs better, faster, and more flexibly, workers have turned increasingly to "shadow systems" outside of officially sanctioned core IT applications. Personal mobile devices are used to tap into the company network. Teams use personal file-sharing accounts and project management tools to work

“ We now have an outstanding disaster recovery approach, and are HIPAA compliant. We are confident our data is more secure in the Infor Cloud.”

BILL HOFRICHTER

Chief Operating Officer, Concordia Plan Services⁴

on projects together. In short, workers are implementing their own cloud-based solutions to achieve the ease of use and functionality they need but aren't getting from their own IT departments.

These applications aren't necessarily "bad," yet if used in the wrong way or not surrounded by the proper security infrastructure and protocols, they can expose businesses to unnecessary risk—theft of intellectual property, lost data, even damage to a company's reputation. With the right cloud-based applications, organizations can help employees to do their jobs better, faster, smarter, and more collaboratively. The result: decreased company risk, as employees no longer have to enlist outside sources to optimize job performance.

Outpace

When an organization gains enterprise-wide flexibility and the capacity to collaborate all across the business, it's able to swiftly respond to a changing market and grow and expand the business to take advantage of the most impactful new opportunities—ideally, way before the competition.

¹ Liberty Steel, case study

² GlobeNewswire "2020 State of the CIO Research Details the Expanding Role of the CIO into the Customer Experience," (www.finance.yahoo.com/news/2020-state-cio-research-details-144238832.html), January 23, 2020.

³ Rip Curl, case study

⁴ Concordia Plan Services, case study

