EXECUTIVE EXCHANGE: PEER-DRIVEN STRATEGIC INSIGHTS FOR THE C-SUITE

Migration was never the point. Transformation is.

Lift-and-shift moved the servers. It rarely moved the business. Here is the shift in mindset and the eight-part operating model behind it.

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Why standing still is the expensive option

"Lift-and-shift" got many organizations to the cloud — but it rarely unlocked the agility, cost discipline, or innovation that leaders expected. In the past year especially, we've watched market shifts (e.g., virtualization licensing changes), data centers increasingly viewed as costly real estate, and AI's demand for cloud-native architectures converge into a simple truth: standing still isn't an option.

Think of it as moving houses and redesigning your living space: carry forward what makes sense, refresh what doesn't, and set yourself up for the future. We partner with AWS to deliver an eight-part operating model we've found to be repeatable in its success:

> "The mindset shift I advocate is cloud transformation, not cloud migration."

Eight-part operating model

01

AI-powered discovery first. Automate workload and dependency mapping so you know what to rehost, replatform, or refactor — reducing guesswork and surprises.

02

Data classified at the start. Sensitive data gets tagged and protected on day one.

03

Automated compatibility checks. Validate workloads before they land in the cloud.

04

FinOps guardrails. Treat cloud economics as an engineering discipline... forecast pre migration, track post migration, optimize continuously.

05

Predictive optimization. Use machine learning to rightsize compute and storage and avoid paying for idle capacity.

06

Code refactoring with assistance. Modernize legacy apps toward cloud native patterns, increasingly with AI supported tooling.

07

DevOps acceleration. Equip teams for secure, reliable, fast delivery — pipelines, automated testing, and ongoing SRE practices, not one-off heroics.

08

Security and compliance that never sleep. Bake in automated checks, such as vulnerability management, configuration tracking, and evidence generation across the lifecycle.



Of organizations have reached the highest level of cloud maturity after nearly two decades of cloud adoption.

Say the need to modernize applications and data platforms is holding back cloud-led innovation.

AI is accelerating the factory, but cloud maturity and security have to catch up.

AI is reshaping how manufacturers and automakers plan production, maintain equipment, navigate supply disruptions, and make split-second decisions on the factory floor. But AI runs on cloud and only 10% of automotive and manufacturing organizations consider themselves "cloud-evolved," compared with 14% across industries. With 55% calling industry cloud solutions extremely important to their cloud strategy, the message is clear: the next generation of manufacturing needs cloud built for the industry, with security designed in from the start. As connected assets, data and AI multiply, secure operations must be embedded across architecture, identity, networking, data governance, and platform operations.

Let NTT DATA and AWS help you find your next best use case.

Source: NTT DATA, "Cloud-led innovation in the era of AI," 2026.

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