Bridge IT

On premise
Cloud
Connectivity

* Cloud Support

Executive Summary

With the advent of digital age, Cloud SaaS applications have become the next big thing in enterprises. Almost every organization (small or big) is planning move to cloud technology and Saas applications. One of the biggest adopters of cloud technology has been the HR department of these organizations. I has been estimated that "the Cloud-based HCM applications market is expected to grow from $6.1 billion in 2014 to $10 billion by 2019 at a compound annual growth rate of 10%"

Cloud adoption involves a transformation journey which the enterprise needs to be prepared for, in order to reap the benefits in the long run. It not onl involves a technology change but also upheaval of different business process and an improvement in usability.

The journey of a general on-premise ERP application is generally two fold - First, the application is configured and implemented in the organization. Secon the application needs to be supported to carry out day to day processes and functions

If we extend the same logic to cloud transformation journey, it leads us to a few important and unasked questions
a. Does the transformation journey of cloud end after implementation? Is there a second leg to cloud adopti
b. What happens once the cloud technology and SaaS applications have been implemented in an organization
c. Is the prevalent support model irrelevant for the cloud application

These questions have generally not been explored by the industry experts. Most of the discussions are centred on cloud and SaaS implementations but th aspect of support journey for cloud applications is ignored or not discussed.

Through this whitepaper, we have made an attempt to answer the above questions. To believe that cloud transformation journey ends after implementa is to be completely unprepared for the support needed. The cloud transformation journey does not end with implementation. In fact, it starts with th implementation phase

Cloud applications bring with them a sense of simplicity but at the cost of certain constraints. With cloud products, you need to be prepared to re-engineer your business processes as per the functionalities offered by them. This is not easy at an enterprise level and requires support even after implementati Even though the usability of cloud applications has made them easy to use they are very different from on-premise applications and employees need to b trained to adapt/ use it.

In the following sections, we have made an attempt to bust certain myths about cloud support and discuss what the organizations should do to extra maximum benefits out of cloud applications

Is there a need for cloud support?

The nature of on-premise and cloud applications is very different. Consequently, the kind of support required for these two applications is significantl different from each other.
The following table gives a comparative view of support required for on-premise and cloud applications

Parameters	On-premise applications	Cloud applications
Infrastructure	On-premise applications require a substantial volume of infrastructure support	Cloud applications do not require infrastructure support as they are managed by product vendors
Support size	Bigger team required to support and maintain on-premise applications	Smaller team required to support cloud applications
Support team characteristics	Technical team is required to support on-premise applications	Techno-functional team is required to support cloud applications
Support activities provided by system integrator vendors	• Patching for product bugs • Enhancement pack selection and application • Tax Updates • Product functionality support • Roll out of Enhancements in the organization	• Product functionality support • Roll out of Enhancements in the organization
Duration of support	Continuous and dedicated support is required to manage on-premise applicat ons	Sporadic and on-demand support is required to manage cloud applications

Today, many customers spend millions of dollars on support for their on-premise IT applications and infrastructure. This is changing significantly as they shift to cloud applications. As the need for continuous support fades away in cloud applications, the support is assumed to be reduced as well
In the on-premise world, there is a whole list of activities that require technical support from the application experts. This necessitates the presence of dedicated support team consisting mostly of technical personnel. However, this scenario takes a complete U-turn in the case of cloud applications. Th reason for this change is that the product vendors themselves handle most of the activities - especially all the ones related to hardware that were initial supported by SI vendors or the in-house team. Hence, the scope of cloud support reduces but is not eliminated by any means.
In spite of the product vendors taking control of most of the traditional support activities, there are a few functions which can only be performed by a Cl experts & system Integrator's to achieve maximum potential from cloud applications. Thus, cloud support is required for customers to extract a good RO from their investments. However, the nature of this support is non-traditional.

Gone are those days, when customers required dedicated and continuous support for managing their IT applications. With the cloud technology, dedicated team is an over-kill. Since, the cloud applications provide almost no scope for customization; it is the functional aspect which requires to be look into. Therefore, support needs are no more continuous but spike periodically for cloud application

List of cloud support activitie

A cloud product vendor might provide support for product related queries but customers also require help with managing functional aspects of the product and also in extracting maximum value from the cloud SaaS application. Thus, produ functionality support becomes critical for the customers. This can happen only with the help of techno-functional exper who can assist and build an optimized and efficient process flow for the customers

The cloud product vendors keep enhancing their products with new features and functionalities. They release these ne functionalities once in a quarter or once in 6 months or annually in the form of release updates. The frequency depends o the product vendor. Once, the updates are released, they can have a profound effect on the existing features that are running well for an organization. Hence, a supporting hand is required which can assist and guide the customers to enabl smooth functioning of the cloud product. The cloud specialists make sure that the current application is running wel without any hassles, new features are incorporated and used to the maximum potential by the clients.

There is one more scenario where cloud support becomes very important. Organizations are dynamic entities that under changes depending on external and internal conditions. This results in organization restructuring due to mergers acquisitions and change in business needs. The resulting changes affect the current business process flows. Since, the clou application is closely tied with business process flows; there is a need to modify the application configurations. This ag requires a techno-functional cloud expert to assess the changes, map the configurations and ensure smooth running o application

In most of the organizations, cloud applications do not operate in isolation. The cloud applications need to work co-existence with various other applications (in the landscape) which can either be on-premise or cloud SaaS applications This requires custom integration between cloud and different applications. Integration in SaaS applications requi expertise for seamless functioning. It warrants a cloud expert who can integrate the various systems in the custome landscape.

Data Analytics is probably the most sought after feature in any application in the current market scenario. One importa reason for the shift towards cloud products is their analytics functionality which can be harnessed in a very simple and us friendly manner. Certain simple reports and dashboards can be created by the clients themselves by using the cloud product. However, situation for support arises when complex reports that require data from different sources need to be created and delivered to the business teams. It becomes a little difficult for purely functional people to deliver these kind of reports. Hence, support becomes very important in these scenarios also.

Thus, support is very critical for the successful functioning of cloud applications. The belief that cloud applications do not require support is a myth. customers want to run their applications seamlessly the need for expert support is inevitable

New support model for cloud application

Given that a majority of support activities have been taken away by the Product vendors themselves resulting in very different support requirements, t need of the hour for cloud application support is "a flexible, on-demand and pay per use solution". The faster customers understand and adopt this model the more benefits they will reap from their cloud applications. It not only aids them financially but also reduces the overhead complexity of managing a rigid support structure.

The Cloud / SaaS model is slowly transforming the way customers perceive and operate their IT applications. It is making the concept of IT consumerizatio a reality. With cloud applications, managers and employees are empowered to carry out their day to day operations without being dependent excessivel on a support team. The support they require is on-demand with an in-built ability to scale up and not one that is dedicated and fixed.

What the customers require is a consumerized model of support in which they pay only for what they use. In other words, it can be said that cloud support is moving towards Uberization. It is becoming flexible and consumer focused.

Change is an inevitable part of organizations and this support model might exactly be the change that consumers are looking for in this cloud enabled digital world!