

NAVISITE QUICK TIPS: Avoiding the Downsides of Going Multi-Cloud

Using multiple public cloud platforms/services is a common strategy today. But if it's not managed correctly, the costs of being multi-cloud can easily outweigh the benefits. Take advantage of these quick tips based on Navisite's experience helping scores of organizations get the full value from their multi-cloud strategies.

Multi-Cloud and Workload Mobility—The Promise and the Reality

With the ever-expanding array of cloud platforms and services available today, many organizations are going multi-cloud to keep their options open, get the latest capabilities and avoid being locked into just one provider. IDC has declared multi-cloud “the new normal.”¹

However, while going multi-cloud may seem like a strategy, it's really more of a tactic in support of the much larger strategy of true workload mobility—moving workloads between cloud services—based on both the performance needs of the workload and the overall requirements of the organization.

While this vision of workload mobility is what's driving today's multi-cloud phenomenon, it's also what makes multi-cloud truly problematic. Put very simply, the skids have not been fully greased within the cloud industry to allow that level of seamless workload mobility—making true agility years away from likely fruition.

Different cloud platforms and providers use an array of tools and processes to manage their workloads.

That makes moving from one platform to another a challenge. Investing in the resources needed to master all of those cloud service peculiarities can easily absorb resources better expended elsewhere. Also, the pursuit of multi-cloud workload mobility can easily turn into multi-cloud sprawl, leading to even more management challenges and overspend.

Want to move ahead with multi-cloud while avoiding the downsides? Here are some suggestions based on our experience at Navisite:

A CLOUD FOR EVERY WORKLOAD?

In a well-equipped kitchen, there may be a lid for every pot, but don't be fooled into thinking that there's a cloud service for every workload. Some applications are simply not suited for the cloud because of the way they operate, or for compliance or security reasons. Moving to a multi-cloud won't change that.

If moving an application to the cloud requires significant work or results in the application behaving differently when running in the cloud, then you're losing many of the efficiency gains, whether you're using one cloud or many. Identify the apps in your organization that are best suited for cloud-native implementation. With multi-cloud in mind, avoid instances that involve reconfiguration or cloud-specific adaptation, as well as feature disparities, as much as possible. Over time, as more apps move to the cloud, it'll become easier to move them between clouds—another reason multi-cloud is here to stay.

IT'S A RELATIONSHIP, NOT A PARTY

Getting a handle on multi-cloud management ultimately involves finding commonalities between the different cloud services you use, unifying management and governance, simplifying security and identifying ways to automate processes. That's where you want to end up—but don't start there.

Instead of looking to manage different cloud options as a group—a party of applications—it's better to initially focus on building a relationship with each one individually, managing each provider/platform for performance and building up the expertise necessary for the next phases. Over time, you'll be managing them as a group, but not at the start.

FIND OUT WHAT'S REALLY WORKING

Your whole goal in going multi-cloud is get the best environment for any workload at any moment. To start figuring that out, keep close tabs on the performance of your cloud providers and the experience of your users. What services are consistently delivering excellent performance? Which ones are consistently sub-par? Which apps are really benefitting your users and your organization? Gathering this kind of facts-in-the-cloud intelligence, tracking cloud resources against business objectives, is essential to making multi-cloud effective.

¹Multicloud Is the New Normal: An IDC InfoBrief, sponsored by Cisco, March 2018



SIMPLIFY THE SMALL STUFF

Two primary reasons for adopting cloud services are to achieve cost savings and to ensure more efficient operations. Don't let multi-cloud get in the way of that. A focus on automation is key, particularly for basic monitoring and maintenance tasks. Be on the lookout for opportunities to reduce the need for manual interventions to keep things running smoothly, such as by automating these low-level tasks.

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BOTTOM LINE

This may seem obvious (after all, who doesn't worry about costs?) but it goes without saying that one of the biggest risks in any multi-cloud strategy is overpaying. There might well be a reason to pay more to get services from multiple providers, but why do that when you can get the same solution less expensively from just one provider? But if that's the case, you still should know what it's costing you.

Running apples-to-apples comparisons is a start, but it turns out that the best ways to control multi-cloud spend are the same as for controlling single-cloud spend—right-sizing resources and eliminating waste.

The cloud makes it easy to order and deploy virtual infrastructure on demand. It also makes it easy to buy more than you need, with the slack getting buried inside very complex billing statements. Don't let that happen to you:

- Accurately size compute, storage, memory and bandwidth resources.
- Eliminate waste by deduplicating data, automating shutdown of idle or underutilized workloads, and shutting down low-priority workloads during peak hours.

THE ROLE OF A MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

Being multi-cloud is exciting. It's a way to fully embrace all that the cloud has to offer today and position your organization with the experience and expertise it needs to maintain a pace of consistent innovation.

Yes, there are real challenges to mastering the ins and outs of multiple platforms and services. However, that's also where an experienced managed cloud service provider such as Navisite can help optimize and simplify your deployment:

- Take advantage of our experience working with a wide array of cloud services and platforms on behalf of numerous clients.
- Identify the right services for the right workloads and also when it's better to keep cloud workloads on-premises.
- Use our expertise to automate the movement of workloads and data.
- Keep multi-cloud costs in check by identifying the best rates and opportunities for savings.
- Adjust on an application-by-application basis to achieve even more precise multi-cloud efficiencies.

As an experienced managed multi-cloud provider, Navisite offers an array of managed, cloud-based, Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) solutions. As an Azure Expert MSP and Microsoft Gold Partner (and a VMware Showcase Partner) for more than 17 years, we have the knowledge and expertise to help your organization maximize the benefits of a flexible, elastic multi-cloud or hybrid environment without compromising on security, visibility, reliability or functionality.

To learn more about the services Navisite offers, visit our Multi-Cloud Management Services page, contact us or call us at (888) 298-8222 in the US or 0800 6122933 in the UK.