**EMPOWER YOUR BUSINESS WITH IT AS A SERVICE**

If you had to sum up the power of the cloud, the term IT as a Service (ITaaS) fits the bill. Today, CIOs are leveraging the cloud for parts or all of their datacenter and IT management needs. Some are moving physical infrastructure into the cloud, called Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). Some are moving server platform and management to the cloud, called Platform as a Service (PaaS), while others are simply consuming entire software workloads running in the cloud using Software as a Service (SaaS). Collectively, these models can be viewed as IT as a Service (ITaaS) and clearly delineate the fundamental paradigm shift that cloud computing will have on IT management. With ITaaS, your business and its IT operation will have the ability to:

•Increase agility. In many instances, front-line business managers and users will be able to initiate and provision IT resources (servers, applications, storage resources, and more) without requiring IT intervention. Via simple, end-user–appropriate interfaces, users can spin up resources with basic configuration options while a smart fabric of IT policies manages the rest in the background.

•Simplify IT utilization for end users. Think of this trend as part of the consumerization of IT. Not only do users want more control, but today’s tough business environment demands it. Users need to be able to consume IT services the same way they consume personal services on the Web – and cloud computing can help them do that. This self-service model can’t come close to covering all the requirements that a dedicated IT staff is hired to fulfill. But it can significantly decrease the burden of many rote day-to-day tasks and allow the staff to devote more of their expertise to expanding the company’s IT capabilities and competitiveness.

•Speed key business processes. Take the example of a company that employs in-house developers. These people can now spin up new development and test servers without IT acting as a bottleneck. New environments can be designed for specific testing scenarios by the very people doing the testing, thus increasing development speed; and your IT department can ensure that virtual server sprawl doesn’t become a problem simply by initiating virtualization policy using the same virtualization management tools they use today.

Your IT staff can also take advantage of ITaaS. For infrastructure like storage, which requires large annual capital expenditure investment as well as heavy day-to-day management, ITaaS can shift much of that burden to a public cloud provider. Even in a public-and-private cloud model, this can still significantly ease the management burden on your IT staff, reduce annual costs, and increase agility and disaster recovery at the same time.

Properly implementing ITaaS, however, is a complex task that will require significant planning and cooperation among IT staff – and with your cloud provider for those using public or hosted private models. While engaged in these planning sessions, make sure to also look at where you might use cloud power for the rest of your software IT infrastructure. Line of business (LOB) applications, for example, are often the last to be considered for cloud migration because many companies think of them as the foundation of their IT competitive edge. But with the new agility the cloud can offer, smart CIOs are looking at LOB cloud migrations much sooner seeking new competitive capabilities and an easier time reaching new markets.

Adding team collaboration and messaging applications to the cloud means taking advantage of a global cloud infrastructure for employee productivity and lowering TCO at the same time. A careful application audit and some in-depth planning sessions between your IT staff and your cloud provider can build the right cloud migration mix for your organization.

**Getting started.** ITaaS requires planning and several pieces of core infrastructure, including a management infrastructure that incorporates a self-service portal and a supporting identity management platform. Once you’ve ensured these pieces are in place, work with your users and IT staff to determine the best functions to be made available via ITaaS.