**INCREASE YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH LINE OF BUSINESS APPS IN THE CLOUD**

If you’re considering moving your LOB applications to the cloud, congratulations! You’ve grasped the power of the cloud as a path to achieving a greater competitive edge for your IT department and your business.

LOB applications and the way in which they’re deployed, managed, and used represent the core of your IT competitive advantage. Cloud-savvy CIOs realize that the new paradigm of cloud computing represents a golden opportunity for your IT department and your business to advance and maintain a competitive edge. No matter what form your LOB applications take, the cloud can help:

* **Increase your ability to react quickly to new business needs while decreasing costs.** The virtualized nature of the cloud means your LOB portfolio can quickly adjust performance up or down based on immediate workload requirements – lowering your TCO. Your workloads can immediately react to sudden “bursts” of demand, and you’ll only pay for the resources those bursts require as you need them. And the cloud’s global nature means easier and more reliable access to your LOB assets for mobile, remote, and even temporary workers. This gives your front-line managers much-needed flexibility in meeting new business needs and exploiting new opportunities.
* **Ease your management burden.** If a new market opportunity became available in another country, for example, opening a presence there with a standard IT architecture would require purchasing a data center or at least rack space in a data center located in that country. That capital expenditure would immediately be followed by operational expenditures when your LOB portfolio has to be manually migrated there and maintained by your IT staff – a significant management task, often representing weeks or even months of man-hours. But if your enterprise exploits a public or hosted private cloud architecture in addition to your on-premises private cloud, you can simply spin up virtual servers in the new location, complete with your LOB portfolio already configured to communicate with your servers back home. This is not only cheaper and faster than traditional deployment, but also much simpler for your IT staff to plan and execute.
* **Speed and standardize custom application development.** And if your LOB portfolio is partially or even wholly based on custom applications created in-house, the cloud represents a great opportunity to standardize your applications on a powerful cloud-enabled app stack. Building applications on a standardized framework is part of the cloud’s definition, and moving your applications onto such a framework is beneficial for all cloud infrastructure models. Once your custom apps have become cloud-enabled, they’ll be able to take advantage of the cloud’s inherent deployment and TCO advantages while also giving your application developers a clear road for future development and customization.

Moving your LOB portfolio into a cloud architecture is certainly forward thinking, but don’t forget about the rest of your application and data management requirements. The cloud enables a fundamental shift in the way data centers and IT infrastructure is managed. Forward-thinking CIOs are using the cloud to run physical infrastructure (*Infrastructure as a Service*), server platforms and management (*Platform as a Service*), and entire software workloads (*Software as a Service*). Collectively, these models can be viewed as *IT as a Service* (ITaaS). With ITaaS, your organization can see huge decreases in data center TCO while simultaneously empowering your end users and IT staff with new capabilities through more reliable and responsive services. 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.** Planning an LOB cloud migration requires diligence. You’ll need to meet not only with your IT staff and your cloud provider, but also with your front-line business managers and your workers. Planning involves communicating the framework of the migration, understanding the processes that exist around these applications, and then mapping the future directions these applications need to take.