Cloud
Tips and Insights from 11 Nordic Field Experts to Make You ‘Cloud Confident’
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Dear Reader,

When I see how the cloud is portrayed and understood across different information channels, I can’t help thinking about the Greek philosopher Plato and his theory of realism. Plato suggests that reality consists of an ideal world with forms more perfect than things in the material world. There is also the apparent world, or that which can be experienced through the senses and aspires to copy the ideal form.

I’m constantly fed with information about an ideal world cloud, a perfect cloud that solves all business problems and presents no barriers to hinder the start of consumption.

As it’s impossible for us to experience or sense the cloud in this ideal world, this magazine will explore the cloud of the apparent world. I’ve asked 11 individuals in the Oracle Nordic team — each with extensive hands-on experience with moving to and living in the cloud — to think about the challenges they’ve faced and overcome. It’s from these challenges that they have derived and formulated their best words of advice for customers to consider on a cloud journey.

My sincere hope is that this magazine will lead to some convergence between apparent and ideal cloud realities.

Niklas Hammarström
Senior Director, Oracle Nordic
In my experience, to take full advantage of best practices and modern capabilities built in to our cloud applications, we definitely need to take approaches that are solution-driven.

The traditional approach to application implementation is requirements-driven, possibly extended to a process-based approach. These approaches start with collecting information on end-to-end processes — ‘as is’ and ‘to be’ and so forth — and end up with a huge number of requirements for the new solution. More likely than not, these approaches do not reference the cloud solution, which, in many cases, lead to more interfaces and customizations than optimal, and the end result can be a rather complex solution, especially from a maintenance perspective.

The solution-driven approach that I mandate for all my projects aligns the company’s business drivers and processes with the modern best practice processes provided by Oracle. In an early stage of the implementation project, we provide a demonstration/playback to show how standard modern best practices can be used to address the customer’s business drivers.

Most of my customers are striving for simplicity and standardization, and this is exactly what a solution-driven approach will give you. The approach will also support you to reach other goals, such as a rapid implementation project, while also lowering maintenance costs. Last but not least, you can easily gain access to new functionality and innovation on a regular basis.

REQUIREMENTS-DRIVEN is dead!

Malin Nilsson Wass
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Location: Sweden
Expertise: ERP
No. of Cloud Projects: 3
My advice is to not make the mistake of thinking that obtaining cloud capability comes without demands. Cloud is a high-paced environment. In my role of assisting the customer after go-live, I see that customers come to realize that the cloud removes the need for many skills within an organization, but it also puts greater demands on the few that are left.

For example, going from convenience-based upgrades to a fixed schedule of updates provides a solution with constantly growing capabilities, which puts pressure on an organization to streamline its operations and take advantage of these new capabilities, especially in the areas of testing and user support.

It really pleases me that through Oracle Enablement Service I can assist our customers as they gradually grow their own capabilities. This includes being able to provide hyper-care services, such as update support, and to proactively help them make use of the growing capability that the cloud offers.
You know your business better than any cloud provider, and you know what works. But what you don’t know is how to get things done in the best and fastest way possible. Do you know if what you want is even possible? This is where co-innovation comes in. My advice is to work with people who know what their cloud services can do and which services can work well with your current systems to build what you want.

Imagine if you didn’t have to spend months and months going through vendor research, RFIs and RFPs just to obtain an unproven tool for your workplace. Co-innovate and test your ideas within a strict process. Today it’s possible to execute your ideas in weeks, rather than years. You just need to get over the fear and start working smart!

Don’t be afraid TO WORK SMART

One of my favourite old sayings is: ‘Don’t work harder. Work smarter.’ Some people work so hard and get nowhere, while others who regularly think outside of the box have time on their hands. The latter are often the people working smarter!

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James Fain
Digital Transformation Architect
Location: Sweden
Expertise: Digital Transformation and Customer Experiences
No. of Cloud Projects: 50
A solution-led approach provides the time necessary to focus on the changes that will create the true value of your transformation.

Regardless of the latest technology, market change or disruption, every transformation ultimately has one standard of measurement: Has the transformation created actual value?

From my experience, the answer is too often ‘no’. This is sometimes because the transformation doesn’t address the actual underlying issues, but it’s more often the case that a project fails because the business isn’t ready to take on or accommodate new solutions.

What appears to be one obvious answer to this challenge is to step up efforts related to traditional change management. In my experience, however, this isn’t enough. Traditionally-driven system projects often underestimate the business impact of new solution — and, even more often, the impact is only fully identified too late into the project.

I strongly advise to start with business readiness, and also to involve the business process owners from the very beginning. Agree on the case for change, and then assess the business impact of the transformation. You can’t manage the impact if you can’t identify the impact — so don’t postpone this activity!

Using a solution-led approach will support you. It provides an early assessment of business impacts, which in turn provides the time necessary to focus on the changes that will create the true value of your transformation.

Always start with BUSINESS READINESS
To reap the full benefits of automation, you have to be willing to surrender some control over your database.

When I talk to people who are unfamiliar with what the Oracle Autonomous Database does, my normal explanation is that it’s a robust, self-driving, self-securing and self-repairing database — something like a self-driving car. In addition, autonomous databases help improve the lives of database administrators by freeing them from having to perform boring, day-to-day maintenance and management tasks, while also giving them more time to innovate and perform value-adding activities.

However, to reap the full benefits of automation you have to be willing to surrender some control over your database and simply trust the Autonomous Database to do its job.

We know without doubt that our future involves automation and cloud technologies, so why fight against the inevitable? Especially when it makes things easier and allows you to make better use of your time?

Surrender some CONTROL

These days, most database administrators spend lots of time monitoring alert logs, checking for errors and reviewing alerts. There are also lots of maintenance-related activities like fragmentation, reclaiming space, adding more space, and maintaining tablespace and file groups. Added to all of this is a substantial amount of time spent on optimizing and tuning the database and query performance. But I’m happy to say that, with the Oracle Autonomous Database, all of this has completely changed.

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We know without doubt that our future involves automation and cloud technologies, so why fight against the inevitable? Especially when it makes things easier and allows you to make better use of your time?
For situations like this you need to be able to build something that extends the current cloud functionality. Something that is more tailored but can still work seamlessly with the cloud services that the customer already has in place. In the age of the cloud, this type of tailoring is implemented in what we call PaaS (platform as a service), and this is exactly what we used to help our customer in my example.

The end solution (standard cloud extended with PaaS) had exactly the same look and feel. Standard cloud and PaaS extension were seamlessly integrated, which resulted in a very smooth adoption for their business users. My team also made sure that our extension would never cause problems during the regular updates. When in doubt of how to solve similar issues, my advice is to discuss the challenges you are facing with Oracle. This will help you make optimal choices when standard ones aren’t good enough.

When ‘Standard’ is not enough

Not so long ago, one of our cloud customers was facing an urgent situation related to unique business requirements in their industry. They explained the problem and asked me for help. I gathered the team and discussed the different options we could use to address their urgent need, but the question came to mind: What if our standard cloud services simply do not cover this specific need?

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On the other hand, moving to the cloud eliminates the need to upgrade… forever! Cloud software vendors provide updates and new features on a continuous basis, which allows customers to focus on innovation and minimize disruption to their business by reducing the time and effort to keep systems up to date. In other words, in taking the first step towards moving to the cloud, the customer is also making their last-ever upgrade.

I’m very busy right now with delivering within Oracle’s Soar programme. This new upgrade programme from Oracle is focused on moving our ERP on-premises customers to the Oracle Cloud and getting them started with us on a journey of innovation. To my knowledge, this is the world’s first automated enterprise cloud application upgrade tool. My own experience leads me to suggest that automation will enable our customers to reduce their time and cost of cloud migration by up to 30 percent!

AUTOMATE your last upgrade ever!

The pace of technological change today is incredible. Many organizations I know are trying to keep up by ensuring that their old systems are up to date, but upgrading outdated systems is time-consuming and can be quite challenging.

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Kevin Lewis Hall
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Cloud Solution Architect
Location: Denmark
Expertise: True Cloud Method
No. of Cloud Projects: 9

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When I joined Oracle, one of the deciding factors was that Oracle’s implementation approach and consultant profile are tailored to do exactly this – to not only implement software solutions, but to truly support you through the entire transformation journey.

I can see from the projects that I’m involved in how organizations are benefiting from our full range of services. These benefits span from providing support for updating technology strategies and optimizing service delivery models and employee experience, all the way through to practical “tips and tricks” for boosting employee adoption and engagement during implementation.

Current and potential clients should consider Oracle as a true business partner, and not just a solution provider. Invite us to challenge your HR strategy or your cloud operations model. You can also look to other organizations using our solutions to gain inspiration and practical insights.

Tight integration of “cloud readiness” and organizational change-management activities into your transformation project will allow you to fully benefit from Oracle’s experience and to create business value through our technology.

LET ORACLE BE YOUR end-to-end business partner

For an IT solution to be effective, it has to be closely aligned with your company’s business strategy. It’s therefore important to clearly identify your business priorities so they can drive the decisions behind selecting, designing and implementing an IT solution.

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Joakim Jonasson
HCM Solution Specialist
Location: Oslo
Expertise: HCM Cloud Projects
No. of Cloud Projects: 2
My experience in cloud infrastructure tells me that the journey is not always going to be easy. One of the biggest challenges is how to support legacy systems in the cloud. A lot of business applications and critical customizations reside in legacy systems that can’t be ignored during the course of the innovation journey.

I normally advise my customers to begin by connecting in-house legacy systems with cloud-based applications and then to move non-critical workloads to cloud. In the next phase, you can opt for complete digitalization— that is, moving all business operations to cloud. A good recipe to follow is: plan big, start small and improve fast. Or, even shorter: move and improve.

‘Cloud adoption’ is the new norm for most enterprises. It’s no longer a question of whether or not to move to cloud, but “how best to embrace it.” Learning about cloud is a key enabler of digital transformation and innovation, and it’s essential that your companies start on that journey now.

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Ali Mohammed
Cloud Infrastructure and Network Specialist
Expertise: Cloud Infrastructure, Database Platform and Migration
Location: Sweden
No. of Cloud Projects: 10
Developing a solution is a learning process for all customers. Options and possibilities become more real as you grow familiar with the solution. What you thought was extremely important at the beginning might in the end only be nice to have, and the opposite is equally true.

My advice is to make a first go-live in the cloud with a minimal viable solution. Once you’re in the cloud you’ll have regular and frequent updates that will continuously improve your solution. As you live in the cloud, your users will gain more experiences and learn how to take advantages of all the opportunities that the cloud provides. This is how we make it work – make it better – make it great!

Heidi Garm
Senior Project Manager
Expertise: Project Manager for Cloud Implementation
Location: Norway
No. of Cloud Projects: 2

As you live in the cloud, your users will gain more experiences and learn how to take advantages of all the opportunities that the cloud provides.

Make it work, make it better, MAKE IT GREAT!

My most recent project is run using the solution-driven approach and applying modern best practices, which reduces risks and costs. Taking this approach, the customer was up and running quickly with their first version of the new solution. To my mind, if we had taken a requirements-driven approach it would simply have been impossible to define all the project requirements needed for a project and to achieve the same good results that we achieved in only a few weeks.

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My team provides expertise regarding two key dimensions of a transformation: experience with cloud solutions, and customer experience in adopting underlying processes and best practices. In addition, our own implementation method is built purely for Oracle Cloud solutions and is based on knowledge and experience gained from previous projects. Customers may well turn to the Oracle partner ecosystem, wherein one of our excellent partners can take responsibility for a specific aspect of implementation — e.g. integrations, migrating particular sets of data, testing or training. For larger programmes, our global partners can play an important role in subsequent rollouts across regions and geographies. With Oracle leading the core implementation, you not only safeguard the integrity of the solution, but can also sort out more easily implementation issues that often occur within the zone between the standard subscription service and your own configuration and extensions. With Oracle in the lead, we are contractually accountable for your transformation success, including user adoption: this helps to ensure that your objectives and ours are in full alignment.

Oracle should lead the CORE IMPLEMENTATION

A cloud transformation requires an implementation approach that’s different from a traditional on-premises solution. I strongly advise customers just getting started on their cloud journey to have Oracle lead them through the implementation of the core solution.

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Teemu Lepola
Senior Project Manager
Expertise: Project Manager for Cloud Implementation
Location: Finland
No. of Cloud Projects: 4

"With Oracle in the lead, we are contractually accountable for your transformation success."