Out of the fog, onto the cloud:

A Softway self-assessment and guide

How to strengthen your cloud applications to win in a virtual workforce environment.

Softway

We're all a bit foggy these days.

As a leader, you've seen global uncertainty affect not just your business but **workforces across the world.** Cloud applications were surging in importance even before the pandemic—today, their connectivity and flexibility makes them more critical than ever. You need a cloud partner that can help you adapt and thrive.

But cloud apps don't have to be complicated.

This guide has three parts:
- A **primer** on cloud, and why this crisis is the time to embrace it.
- A **breakdown** of the three stages of the cloud journey and how a strong cloud partner can help grow your competitive advantage.
- A **self-assessment** featuring the questions you need to ask your organization so you can know where you stand. You may be further along than you think!

Hello!
We're Softway—an international team of Tech, UX, and Culture experts who excel at humanizing tech and building fit-for-purpose, modern applications that make sense for your business.

Softway services
Want to chat with someone from Softway about our technology, internal communications, or culture consulting services?
We'd love to hear from you.

Where to start

Which statement best describes you? Read through the statements and jump to that section.

"I've heard that cloud apps can help me, but I'm not sure if this is the right time."

Page 4 - Learn why cloud's competitive advantage is more important than ever.

"We work with some cloud apps, but we're struggling to see the full advantages for the business. Our legacy tech and cloud apps don't always work well together."

Page 6 - Discover your place in the Cloud Journey, and learn how a partner can help modernize your legacy applications.

"I know just where my company is, and I'm ready to start the next step."

Page 10 - Jump straight to our Cloud Self-Assessment, and answer the questions to prepare you to move forward.

"I perfectly understand our needs, requirements, and desired outcomes when it comes to cloud apps."

Fantastic! Email us, let's get started.

What does cloud do for you?

Being "cloud-ready" lets your business leverage the computing power of tech giants like Amazon, Microsoft, and Google. That means instant scaling for your services, unlimited access for your workforce, powerful security tools to calm even the most nervous nellie, and even more. But what does it mean for your business?

Enable Virtual Workforces

No one expected the new reality we're all living and working in—but it's taught us we have to be prepared for anything. Companies are struggling to function properly in a virtual environment. You need systems and applications designed for the cloud to win their business.

Future-proofing

A bold claim to make in the least predictable year this century, but it's true. In a world that's increasingly virtual, stability and access are more important than ever. Murder hornets might end your life, but killer software bugs can cripple your business.

Business Continuity

Disruption is inevitable—what's controllable is how fast you can adapt. The flexibility and speed that come with modern cloud applications can give you tools that work even in a crisis.

Why is today the time for cloud?

Because you need to stick together

The ability to collaborate and access your data from virtually anywhere has far-reaching implications. Decision-makers, stakeholders, your entire organization can collaborate and consult real-time data from anywhere—a necessity in today's remote, asynchronous environment.

Because you need your best minds focused forward

The central motivation for cloud is gaining competitive advantage in cost, speed, and operational flexibility. Modernized cloud apps let you shift your IT resources and minds away from maintenance and towards innovation and business objectives. That means your organization spends more time building systems to grow your business, and less time supporting systems that simply run it.

Because you need to lead, not lag

Before the pandemic, cloud-based modern applications were surging in popularity. Now, demand is even higher. Companies that fail to embrace cloud applications can become a bottleneck as customers and B2B partners increasingly expect real-time access and seamless integration.

Plotting your course in the cloud journey

Cloud *doesn't* mean "change everything." Although some providers encourage companies to leap into a digital transformation, the truth is that small steps can have big impacts.

Whether you're re-evaluating your existing cloud solutions, or transitioning for the very first time, getting the most value from the cloud requires careful thought and planning. At Softway, we think in three stages: **Planning**, **Preparing**, and **Adopting**.

Read on to see why each stage is important, and how a strong cloud partner can help you achieve the highest value.

Or, jump right to our self-assessment, and identify what the next step should be for your company.

Planning Stage—picking your primary obstacle

What you're doing:

This is where you begin to understand the environment requirements for your next step into being cloud-native. You're identifying the most immediate business problem that's holding you back, or the most disruptive condition you need to adapt to. If you're already using some cloud applications, you're evaluating how they help and how they could improve.

How we can help:

A valuable cloud partner helps you identify the best opportunities for growth, and clears potential roadblocks before they can slow you down. Softway understands the intersection of business needs and tech solutions, and guides you down the path of best value for your unique business challenges.

Self-assessment example questions:

What operational tasks does your virtual workforce struggle with right now?

How many applications do you run on the cloud today?

Preparing Stage—getting specific with your solutions

What you're doing:

You've identified your obstacles. Now, how can you catalog and prioritize the apps in your portfolio that you plan to move to the cloud? Your more recently-built apps may already be ready; others may require more significant work to update them with more modern APIs or frameworks. Finally, some legacy apps may need to be completely rebuilt.

How we can help:

A strong cloud partner understands "cloud-native" isn't an all-or-nothing game. We don't push you towards expensive, "latest and greatest" tech you may not need. Instead, Softway works closely with your tech team and stakeholders to deliver the right next-step solution that fits your budget and provides the maximum utility to your end-users.

Self-assessment example questions:

What legacy applications are causing the most user-friction in your virtual workforce?

How many remote workers will you have in 3 months? What hardware will they be using?

Adopting Stage—going from novice to native

What you're doing:

The third phase is designed to enable your end-users to use the apps in the cloud. Training and change management efforts are typically required to ensure successful end-user adoption in the new cloud environment. Also, it's a good idea to explore investing in agile techniques. All together, this is the part of your journey where you move from using the cloud to fully owning it. By the time your virtual workforce is adept at using cloud apps, the business advantages will have proven themselves.

How we can help:

A valuable cloud partner helps you identify the best opportunities for growth, and clears potential roadblocks before they slow you down. We understand the intersection of business need and tech solution.

Self-assessment example questions:

Has your organization established a DevOps practice, or does it plan to deliver and manage cloud based services?

Does your organization have a strong understanding of operating securely in the cloud?

Cloud Apps Self-Assessment

Scoring: Add up the total number of points for your answers.

1. **What size is your organization?**
   a. Enterprise +1
   b. Mid-size +1
   c. Small-to medium +1

2. **How many applications do you run on the cloud today?**
   a. None +1
   b. A few +3
   c. All of our applications +5

3. **How many applications do you think need to be made cloud-ready?**
   a. 1-3 +1
   b. 4-8 +3
   c. 5-9 or more +5

4. **What is the comfort-level of your IT and Dev teams with cloud?**
   a. Unfamiliar +1
   b. Familiar +3
   c. Cloud evangelists/experts +5

5. **Does your company have a specific business reason for moving applications to the cloud?**
    a. We have not identified a business reason, to date +1
    b. We have minimal data sources, but there is limited consensus among our team +2
    c. We have a few data sources, but there is limited consensus among our team +3
    d. We have a few data sources, and some consensus among our team +4
    e. We have comprehensive and diverse data sources, and full team consensus +5

6. **Has your company developed a business case for moving to the cloud? If yes, is the business case based on multiple, credible, and quality sources?**
    a. Minimal data sources and no consensus +1
    b. Minimal data sources, but limited consensus among our team +2
    c. A few data sources, but limited consensus among our team +3
    d. A few data sources, and some consensus among our team +4
    e. Comprehensive and diverse data sources, and full team consensus +5

7. **Have you implemented an organizational change management and training plan for cloud adoption? By this, we mean a plan that will help you manage the impact of business, structural, and cultural changes caused by cloud adoption.**
    a. No +1
    b. Yes +3

8. **Do you have a system or mechanism to track inventory and manage your portfolio of applications and infrastructures (e.g., a configuration management database)?**
   a.   No +1
   b.   Yes +3

9. **Has your organization established a DevOps practice, or does it plan to deliver and manage cloud-based services?**
   a.   No DevOps practice or plan has been considered to date +1
   b.   We have just started building a DevOps plan to deliver managed cloud services +2
   c.   A draft DevOps practice and plan has been created +3
   d.   A formal DevOps plan has been approved but not implemented +4
   e.   A formal DevOps practice and plan for managed cloud services is in place +5

10. **Has your company developed a business case for moving to the cloud? If yes, is the business case based on multiple, credible, and quality sources?**
    a.   GCP +2
    b.   AWS +2
    c.   Azure +2
    d.   Other +2
    e.   Not sure +1

11. **Has your organization decided who will own operations of cloud based applications and systems (e.g. operational models for deployments and updates)?**
    a. No operational ownership has been formally established to date +1
    b. We have started building a responsibility matrix to define operations and owners +2
    c. We have created a draft responsibilities matrix with assigned owners +3
    d. We have presented a formal responsibilities matrix to leadership, which was approved +4
    e. A formal responsibilities matrix has been approved and presented to all assigned stakeholders +5

12. **Has your organization communicated a plan to address business continuity or disaster recovery in the cloud?**
    a. No +1
    b. Yes +3

13. **Does your organization have a strong understanding of what it means to operate securely in the cloud?**
    a. We have minimal understanding and experience +1
    b. We have some understanding, but limited experience +2
    c. We have some experience and understanding +3
    d. We have a strong understanding and experience +4
    e. We are fully trained and experienced, with a shared responsibility model +5

14. **Is anyone in your organization certified by a cloud provider and/or considered an expert or authority on cloud security?**

    a.   We have no team members who are certified or have comparable experience +1

    b.   We have no team members who have certifications, but some members have experience +2

    c.   We have a small set of certified team members, and some others with comparable experience +3

    d.   We have a meaningful number of certified team members and others with comparable experience +4

    e.   We have critical mass with individuals certified and capable of training others to gain comparable experience +5

What's your score?

10-25:

You know you're still Planning, and you have some ideas. You might be seeing your competitors adapting faster to change, or maybe you're not getting the desired value out of your existing cloud solutions.

Your next step: A cloud consultation. Identify your immediate obstacles and explore the right approach to overcoming them.

26-35:

You've got at least one cloud application, maybe a couple. You still have important legacy applications that are causing headaches internally and with customers, but migrating everything to cloud apps seems like a very expensive undertaking.

Your next step: It's time to modernize the legacy services that are holding you back, and think about customizing existing applications to better integrate with your unique business.

36-45:

You have a number of cloud apps that are doing what they are supposed to do, but to get them to work harder and do more, you need a team that can master them.

Your next step: Ensure your tech team has the right expertise and work process to guarantee your cloud environment always serves your needs.

46-57:

You're pretty much an expert on cloud apps, but that doesn't mean you can rest on your laurels. Every week brings new innovation and opportunities that can deliver new competitive advantages to your business.

Your next step: It's time to audit your cloud apps strategy and playbook and make sure you're prepared to keep up.

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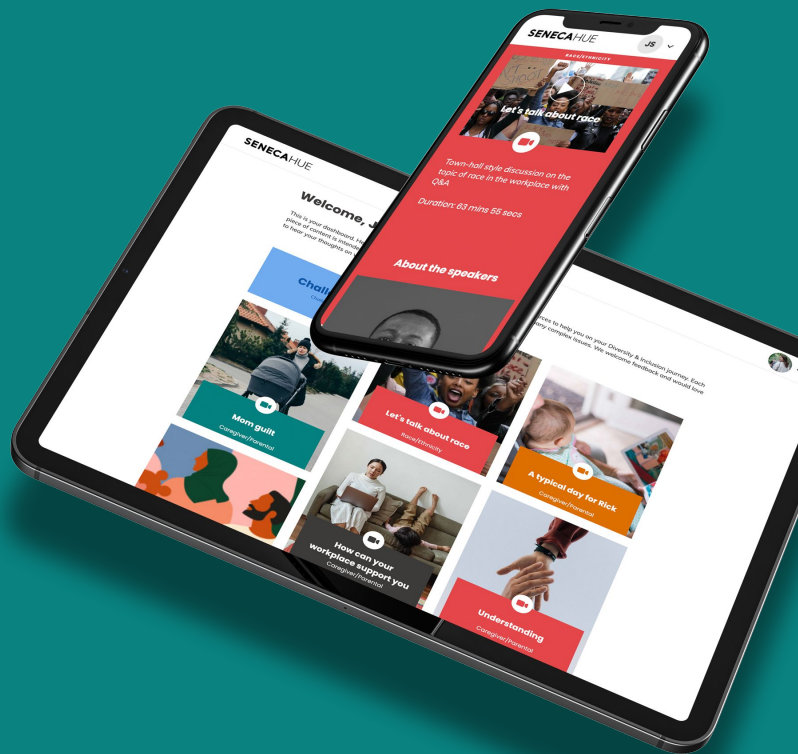**The Diversity & Inclusion learning platform for your bustling, remote workforce.**

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Self-assessed, what's next?

Cloud applications have never been more critical to business health than right now. Our human-first approach to tech and development will help you follow the path that's right for your business.

[Drop us a line.](#)

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