

Budget Tight? Consider the Cloud When Expanding Your IBM Power Systems Platform

Use this 15-Point Checklist for Choosing Power Systems-Ready Cloud Providers

By John Iffert



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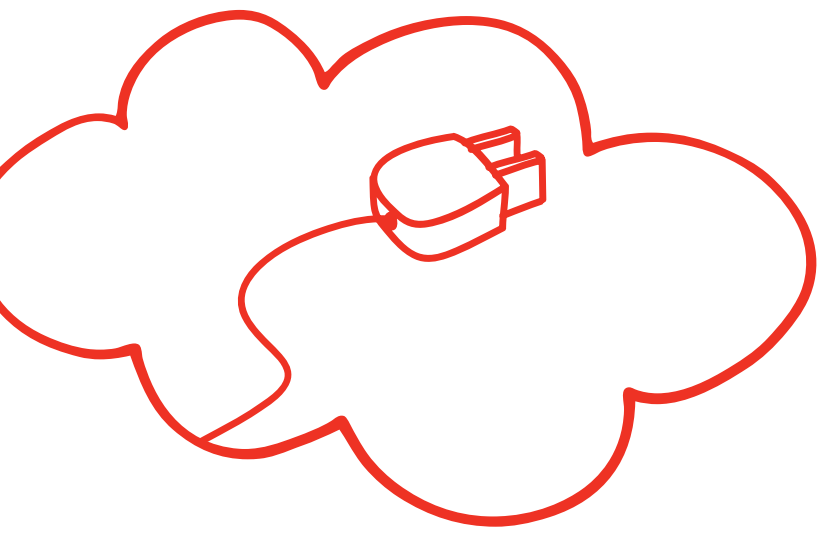
Budgeting for an IT expansion is a grappling issue for CIOs and other IT pros today. The industry dynamics for IT consumption are vastly changing, although fundamental principles and requirements remain a fact. Organizations require a dependable, scalable and cost-effective platform to run mission-critical applications. These principles have guided many organizations to rely on mid-range computing on scalable UNIX platforms.

IBM's Power Systems platform has led the market in this category over the last several years, and IBM's trusted business partners have been key in the deployment of that technology in the industry. This platform continues to be a great investment choice for our mutual customers; however, availability of resources and the costs to keep technology fresh are two of many reasons some data center managers are beginning to look at competing technologies—even when the right application platform is based on Power Systems.

This is when it's critical to remember that refreshing your technology on a budget is not an impossible task. In fact, for some data centers—particularly those that are built upon a Power Systems foundation—there may be another very strong option: A cloud computing solution that is entirely built on the same Power Systems platform may soon become an IBM data center pro's best friend.

When it's time to expand or upgrade your IBM data center, a private cloud can augment what you already have in place, offering improved automation. But if a complete overhaul is in order, an outsourced or hosted cloud solution built on a Power Systems platform can turn a potentially significant—and possibly deal-breaking—up-front commitment of funds into a much more affordable operational expense. To make this work, IT pros who favor a Power Systems environment have to work hard to choose the right kind of cloud partner.

When considering a move to the cloud, Power Systems data center pros have to be particularly careful in their selection of a cloud provider, as not all are created equal when it comes to Power Systems implementations. Just because a cloud provider is well known for its search engine or Internet sales doesn't mean it's ready to handle Power Systems in the cloud. One thing is certain, though: Customers loyal to the POWER processor-based platform require the same security, performance and availability they have come to enjoy with their in-house Power Systems environments, and for them to consider any kind



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of outsourced model, they have to be assured that they will enjoy that same capability in a cloud consumption model.

So how do you find an enterprise-level cloud provider that is ready to serve a Power Systems-loyal data center client? The criteria to examine are very specific; at Logicalis, we have identified a 15-point checklist that you can use to do just that.

This checklist is certainly not all inclusive—but neither is it a list where you can pick and choose; this is an all-or-nothing proposition. If a cloud provider does not meet these 15 very basic criteria, then that provider is unlikely to be able to

meet your enterprise-level Power Systems needs in the cloud. If it does, open an earnest dialogue and consider the cloud as an alternative to an immediate capital expense. You—and your CFO—will be glad you did.

About Logicalis

Logicalis is an international provider of integrated information and communications technology (ICT) solutions and services founded on a superior breadth of knowledge and expertise in communications and collaboration, data center, and cloud computing and managed services.

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15-POINT CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING POWER SYSTEMS-READY CLOUD PROVIDERS

1. A Power Systems-ready cloud should be built on the IBM POWER7 processor architecture.
2. The provider’s cloud must offer support for the AIX, iOS and Linux operating systems.
3. Storage should be powered by IBM XIV Storage Systems or other IBM storage solutions.
4. Capacity-on-demand is non-negotiable when considering an enterprise-level move to the cloud.
5. A flexible computing architecture must right-size capacity to your specific needs on the go.
6. Easy access and management control are important for you to be able to support the cloud as a viable expansion option.
7. Round-the-clock, 24x7 system management will ensure peace of mind for you and your IT staff.
8. Enterprise-class management skills for legacy systems instill confidence in the provider.
9. Access to senior-level system administrators in the cloud provider’s organization, which makes the provider an extension of your own IT team, is a must-have.
10. A dedicated service level (SLA) manager should be in place to guarantee continuity of service.
11. Validated back-ups must be completed and tested on a regular schedule.
12. Dashboard services should extend to you and your staff, offering you a window into the cloud.
13. A commitment to staying current on patches and OS versions cannot be overlooked.
14. Reliable power, cooling and security measures in the provider’s data center are critical steps to success in the cloud.
15. License savings versus on-premise machines should be passed on to you.

