



eBook

Create confidence in the cloud

How MSPs can shape the success of
their customers' cloud transformation



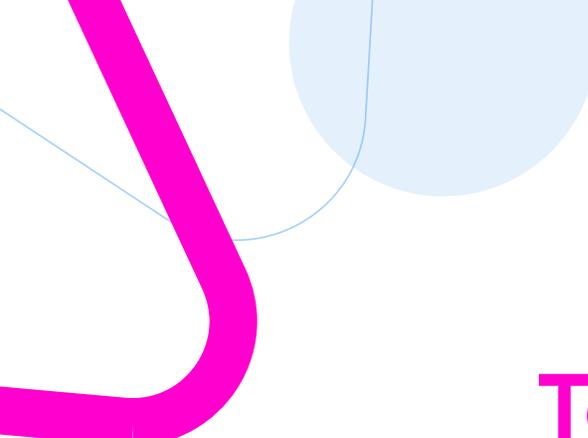
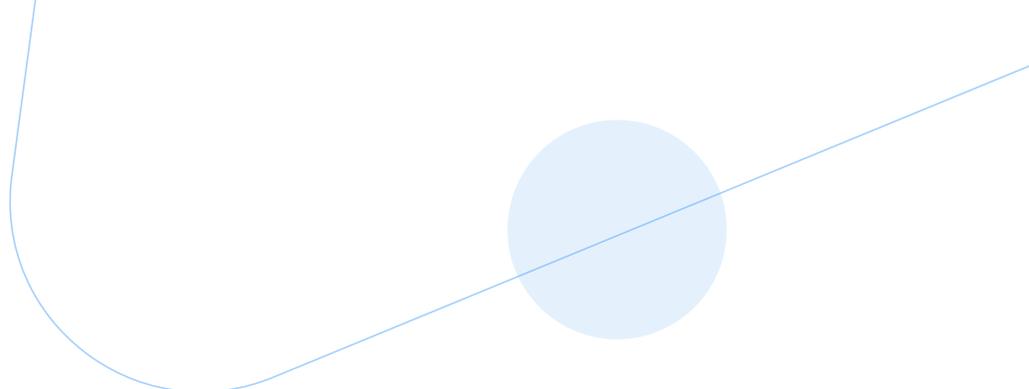


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Introduction

An organization's journey in the cloud takes many twists and turns. New business needs, technology decisions, and unexpected challenges mean that the cloud can quickly go from a strategic competitive advantage to a program under scrutiny.

These moments, which can create slowdowns in transformation — or worse yet, a questioning of the value of the cloud altogether — are often caused by a lack of stakeholder understanding of how to move forward and misalignment on how to mitigate perceived risks.

That's why organizations need to do more than have proficient cloud users and teams today. They need to ensure all stakeholders are *confident* in the cloud and its strategies for the present and future.

But there's a lot standing in their way. Reduced staffing, budget constraints, and lack of subject-matter expertise are all common culprits that prevent organizations from gaining and maintaining cloud confidence across spending, governance, security, and utilization.

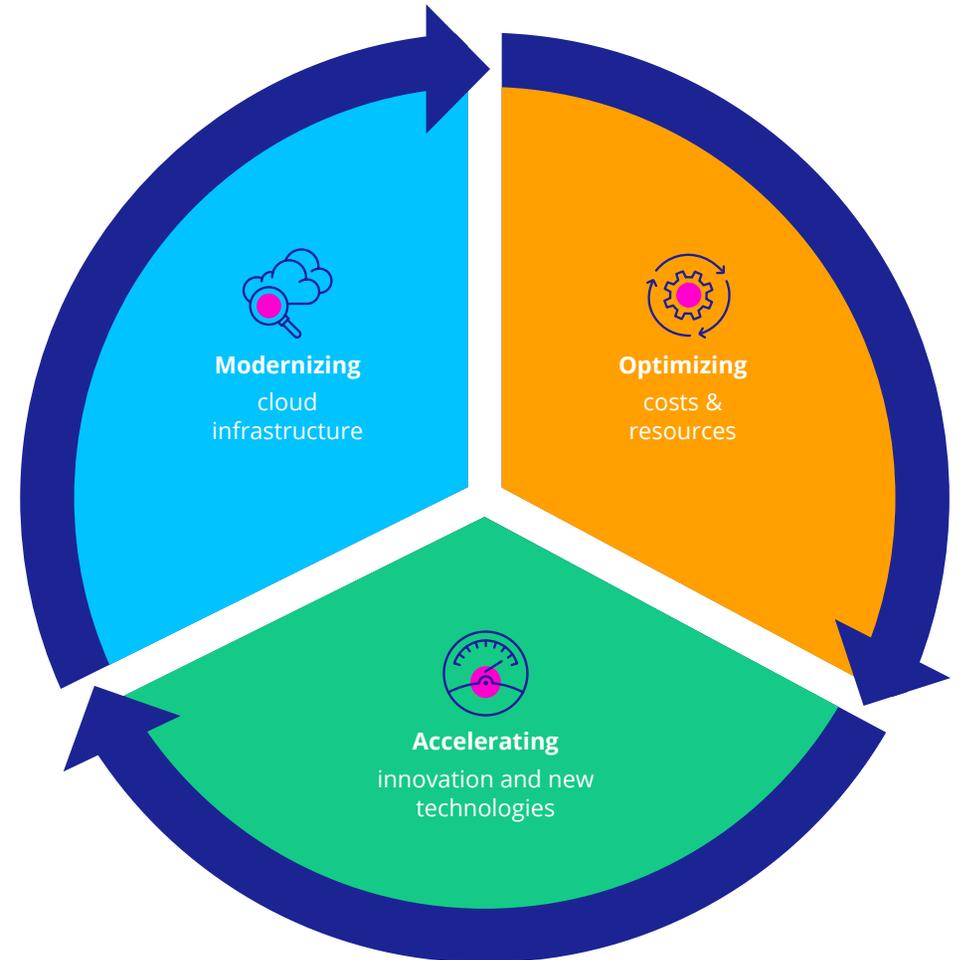
And it's not just the cloud uninitiated who struggle. Cloud-native and cloud-proficient businesses struggle with the ever-growing complexity of the cloud, and the technologies required to innovate in the cloud can be overwhelming to understand and implement.

These collective challenges provide a tremendous opportunity for MSPs to help their customers succeed in the cloud and, in turn, drive increased customer satisfaction in their own business.

Understanding the 3 phases of customer cloud transformation

MSPs can play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the customer's cloud investment. But ensuring success in the cloud is not a one-size-fits-all approach. **MSPs must tailor their offerings to customers depending on where they are in their cloud journey.** A customer in the process of modernizing their infrastructure from on-premises to cloud will have radically different needs from a cloud-native customer with a mature DevOps practice.

According to the [2022 Cloud Infrastructure Report](#) from Spot by NetApp, just **21% of respondents said that they were “very confident”** in their visibility into their public cloud costs — a decrease of 10% from the previous year.



There are 3 phases in the cloud transformation journey that a typical MSP customer might fall into



Phase 1: Modernizing

Customers in the modernization phase of cloud transformation are either migrating to the cloud or are in the early stages of cloud adoption. They need help understanding the basics of cloud infrastructure and how it differs from legacy IT systems.

MSPs can help these early-stage cloud adopters gain initial confidence in the cost, security, and resource efficiency advantages the cloud has to offer. The MSP provides knowledge for customers who may not have all the resources in-house to help them make the smooth transition to the cloud. And customers may have to deal with stakeholders, in and outside of IT, that have wrong or pre-conceived notions about the cloud. The MSP provides validation that the cloud transformation project is being approached from the right perspective to set the organization up for success.



of enterprises that work with an MSP say that they benefit from that relationship.

[2022 Cloud Infrastructure Report](#)





Phase 2: Optimizing

Customers who are seeking to optimize their operations already have an established presence in the cloud. Their challenge — and the challenge for their MSP — is to continuously drive more value out of the cloud to improve their business outcomes. As part of that effort, MSPs need to optimize costs and resources as well as maintain a secure cloud posture.

MSPs that have a deep understanding of cloud infrastructure, service options, and pricing models across one or multiple clouds can drive optimization, along with the ability to purchase at scale. Customers reap the benefits of the technical knowledge of their MSP and gain access to cloud management tools and optimization opportunities that they might not otherwise have operating on their own in the cloud.



55% of enterprises that work with an MSP say that they gain expertise that they don't have internally.

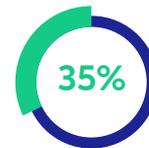
[2022 Cloud Infrastructure Report](#)



Phase 3: Accelerating

Finally, MSP customers with a focus on innovation fall into this last phase of cloud transformation. They may want to develop more advanced DevOps practices or adopt new technologies that can enable strategic business initiatives. However, these organizations may not have the internal knowledge and expertise to develop and execute the right strategy.

MSPs help customers focus on achieving crucial business outcomes beyond handling routine cloud operations. These outcomes may include more rapid application development, vastly improved customer experiences, and the ability to respond to new market requirements.



35% of enterprises that work with an MSP report that their MSP provides support for innovation.

[2022 Cloud Infrastructure Report](#)



5 ways MSPs can build confidence in the cloud

With these customer cloud journey stages in mind, MSPs can identify the right approaches that will help build their customers' confidence in the cloud.

Following are five areas where MSPs can help customers unlock the benefits of cloud transformation in any phase of the cloud journey.

CloudCheckr is the cloud management platform from Spot by NetApp designed for MSPs.

CloudCheckr delivers total visibility and intelligence into the customer's cloud environment, enabling MSPs to take informed actions around cost optimization, security, compliance, and resource utilization for their customers. The advanced reporting and analysis in the CloudCheckr platform give MSPs the ability to help their customers grow, optimize, and innovate in the cloud while allowing the MSP to create differentiation within a crowded cloud services marketplace.

To learn more, visit cloudcheckr.com.



1. Cloud education

By providing expertise and a solid education around all things cloud, MSPs create confidence in customers' ability to understand cloud architecture, use cases, and opportunities to get the most out of their investment.

Educating customers about the cloud

Customers in the process of modernizing their IT infrastructure need to understand how cloud workloads and practices differ from on-premises infrastructure, approaches, and development methodologies. For example, while legacy data centers represent a capital expenditure (CapEx), organizations must get used to handling the cloud as an operating expense (OpEx). They also need to understand the wide variety of pricing models, and oftentimes complex purchasing models, for cloud infrastructure.

Throughout all phases of cloud transformation, MSPs should help their customers understand operational processes and cloud resource types needed for different workloads and use cases.

For example, Spot Instances can save cloud users up to approximately 90% versus on-demand instance costs in Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud. But organizations utilizing Spot Instances — which can become unavailable at a moment's notice — must have the right approach to ensure they have the necessary infrastructure available to meet application uptime needs. MSPs, with the right technology, can help customers balance their costs with their business and utilization requirements and develop the right strategy to put these and other resource types into play.





Filling knowledge and internal resources gaps

Organizations with small teams may lack cloud skills or struggle to hire the right talent. As a result, without dedicated personnel or advanced tooling to manage the cloud, they may be prone to overprovisioning and overspending or missing critical security risks in their infrastructure. With the expertise and technology of an MSP, the organization can fill knowledge gaps, use data and analytics to make better decisions, keep in-house IT and development teams focused on strategic activities, and safeguard against costly mistakes.



Understanding the client's niche

Customers with advanced cloud practices need to get more from their data. With the right competencies, certifications, and technology, MSPs can provide subject matter expertise to help design cloud solutions for specific use cases and niche and/or regulated industries. This will help MSPs distinguish their business from competitors through expertise and an array of services that take the customer through their specific journeys.



Cloud education in action

With the CloudCheckr platform from Spot by NetApp, service provider PTP enables Voyager Therapeutics to focus on their research into treatments for neurodegenerative diseases.

“It’s really important that we don’t have to explain some basic types of applications in the lab or the type of volume and diversity of the data. PTP has experience in the cloud and can map the right cloud application to life sciences use cases.”

Yohann Potier, Director of Data Science & Informatics,
[Voyager Therapeutics](#)



2. Cost management

MSPs can build their customers' confidence by helping them understand the pricing options available in the cloud, optimizing their cloud spend, and introducing more advanced cloud practices like Financial Operations (FinOps).

Managing and optimizing cloud costs

Native cloud tools can be opaque for end users when it comes to understanding cloud spend. Combining cloud expertise with technology solutions, MSPs can provide their customers with visibility and clarity into their cloud spend. This can help reduce waste that may occur from basic mistakes, such as leaving unutilized resources running. The MSP provides an extra layer of checks and balances to prevent human error and simplify the complexities of cloud cost management.

Applying the right mix of RIs and Savings Plans to save money

While the cloud offers on-demand pricing for cloud instances, this isn't always the most cost-effective way to purchase resources. MSPs can help their customers choose the right purchasing strategy, from a mix of Reserved Instances (RIs), Spot Instances, Savings Plans, and other cloud purchase options to save money. The most effective MSPs use technology to optimize and automate these purchasing decisions and maximize potential discounts.



Introducing a FinOps practice

MSPs can use technology to help their customers establish more advanced cross-functional practices like FinOps. FinOps, or cloud financial operations, helps organizations more effectively map cloud spending to business value and builds a cost-conscious cloud culture across departments and disciplines. MSPs are an extraordinary resource in helping to establish FinOps through regular financial reporting, continuous cost optimization, collaboration processes, and a forward-thinking view of how cloud costs relate to the business's profitability and performance based on reports built into analytical cloud cost management tools.



Cost management in action

B-Tech supports customers' business goals by optimizing their cloud costs through intelligent RI purchasing using the Spot Eco integration within CloudCheckr.

“[Customers] don't just say ‘You've reduced our bill by 5%’ but ‘We've cut our EC2 instance spend in half because we didn't know there were all these other great, better ways of optimizing costs.’”

Jon Busey, Founder, [B-Tech](#)

3. Visibility

Through a granular level of visibility and streamlined cloud resource utilization data, MSPs build customer confidence by providing in-depth actionable insights for optimization and governance.



Providing visibility into cloud usage

As the adage goes, you can't manage what you can't measure — and to measure it, you must be able to see it first. MSPs play a vital role in providing cloud visibility for their customers so that they understand their cloud usage. With the right reporting, MSPs can show customers how their utilization ties back to individual contributors, departments, and cost centers. This provides a level of transparency for the customers' organizations, so they understand how the cloud is being leveraged for application experience, product development, internal business processes, and the relative unit economics of achieving desired outcomes.



Delivering utilization insights

MSPs can provide reporting around billing, utilization, security, and other aspects of cloud management to help customers fully understand the breakdown of their costs, usage, and vulnerabilities and how these can impact their products and business. With the right tooling, MSPs can generate reports and recommendations that identify mis-provisioned resources, unused resources, and resources that could be rightsized to eliminate waste and reduce unnecessary costs. This, in turn, reassures customers that their cloud spend is as efficient as possible.



Validating performance of new applications

Customers need visibility into their cloud environment to make sure that they have the right resources in place to meet their business objectives. Therefore, they may seek out the MSP to validate new tech stacks. For example, if the customer is working with data analysis and wants to begin using AI and machine learning, they need an MSP that can advise them on the right cloud-native technologies to help them achieve this goal. This might involve examining, recommending, and monitoring new services to ensure that they meet the demands of machine learning applications. MSPs can play a valuable role in validating the client's cloud architecture, performance, and applications so that they can achieve their preferred business outcomes.



Visibility in action

SmileShark lowered one client's monthly cost from over \$300,000 to about \$100,000 all while ensuring a successful product launch.

“The customer noticed a while later that the CPU was overprovisioned, so we checked all the resources in CloudCheckr. It was quite easy to check how many instances they have.”

Moowon Kim, Global Business Development Manager, [SmileShark](#)

4. Security and compliance

MSPs provide their customers with confidence and peace of mind when they can maximize the security of the cloud environment and ensure cloud compliance with even the most complex regulatory standards.



Implementing policy and access management

One of the first things that cloud administrators need to consider after migration is who has access to which resources. MSPs can support these customers by developing and implementing policies around data security and access management. This security-first mindset is critical early on, so that data governance and security are prioritized from the beginning.



Ensuring continuous security and compliance

Organizations in the cloud understand the potential business and regulatory risks that result from security vulnerabilities and non-compliance. MSPs can help customers maintain a secure cloud posture as well as compliance with regulatory standards through continuous monitoring and remediation. To best serve customers, especially those in highly regulated industries, MSPs should be aware of best practices around security and compliance and deploy technology that enables them to meet those standards.



Automating intelligent remediation and threat detection

Alerts regarding potential security gaps and risks are useful. But manually looking through a constant stream of notifications can be time-consuming and tedious. Technology plays a role in helping users cut through the noise of alerts by prioritizing the greatest areas of risk to specific assets and threats that can trigger issues across a cloud environment. By using automation and impact intelligence to detect threats and remediate vulnerabilities, MSPs can build scalable, repeatable processes that ensure consistent delivery without human bias or error.



Security and compliance in action

Service provider HealthTech Solutions manages costs and security for the highly regulated healthcare industry with CloudCheckr, a FedRAMP In-Process solution.

“It’s nice to see the security framework I used for FedRAMP requirements for my clients is built into CloudCheckr. It validates my security framework and makes it much faster to prove to clients that we’re meeting all security requirements.”

Carla Raisler, Information Security and Privacy Officer, [HealthTech Solutions](#)

5. Innovation

MSPs play a vital role in increasing customer confidence by enabling continuous innovation through emerging cloud technologies, automation, and industry best practices.

Preparing customers for the next phase of the cloud journey

Customers in the modernizing phase of the cloud journey may not be ready to innovate, relative to market leaders, just yet. Still, the MSP can give them a view into how they can continue toward optimization and educate them on the benefits of adopting emerging tech, beyond their initial move to the cloud. Even though the customer may not be ready for any big shifts, they get a forward-thinking view into their future with the cloud and an idea of where this investment can take them.

Automating to scale operations

By embracing automation, MSPs can help their customers increase efficiency and avoid spending the time (and extra money) on common cloud management processes. A strong MSP partner with the right technology can help their customers automate more of their work, simplify complex processes, and scale their cloud operations to handle more without putting in unnecessary effort. Effective automation can significantly streamline the deployment of new workloads, management of infrastructure, code release processes, and investigation and remediation of security concerns.





Implementing emerging tech

According to the [2022 Cloud Infrastructure Report](#), 40% of enterprises report that their MSP enables them to quickly ramp up or down resources for special projects, and 35% have received support from the MSP that allows them to innovate. In other words, MSPs have the knowledge and technology to help new projects succeed and provide third-party validation of their customers' tech stacks. The understanding that MSPs have with cloud services and technology vendors can, in turn, enable their clients to be on the cutting edge. Through programs including specific certifications for their expertise, the MSP stays up to date on that cloud provider's offerings and can apply them to specific customer situations. MSPs also have the technical capabilities to help their customers deploy and manage ongoing operations with newer technologies and meet their strategic business outcomes. By doing so, the customer doesn't have to spend time learning a new tool or skill on their own before receiving the benefits from it.



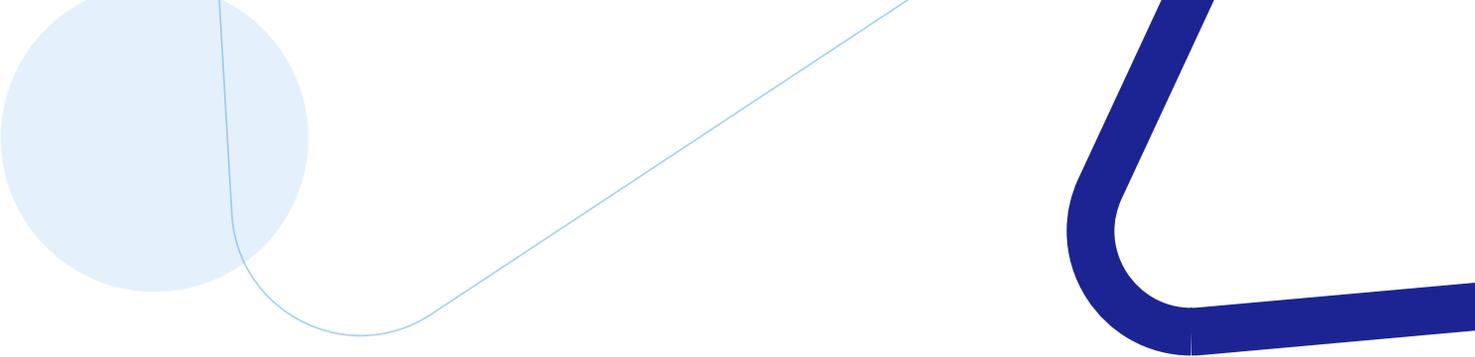
Innovation in action

The DevOps team at Eplexity deploys CloudCheckr within design patterns in their own platform to understand where processes can be automated and streamlined.

“We have baked in a number of automations to deliver CloudCheckr as part of our DevOps services to clients. These include the automated provisioning of customer CloudCheckr accounts, Well-Architected Best Practice scanning, and automated tagging for billing and budgeting at the application, cost center, and account levels.”

Chris Egloff, Resident Architect, [Eplexity](#)





Conclusion

Managing the cloud on a day-to-day basis is one thing, but building a customer's long-term confidence in the cloud is another. MSPs must not only have the technical expertise and technology solutions to do so, but they must map that expertise to customer needs based on whether they are modernizing, optimizing, or accelerating in the cloud. With that foundation, MSPs will successfully fulfill their role as a strategic partner that enables IT organizations to maintain momentum and get the full benefit of the cloud.

How CloudCheckr can help MSPs build customer confidence in the cloud

The right cloud optimization solutions can help MSPs develop their services menu and keep customers happy and confident — whatever the direction their cloud journey takes them. That's why MSPs need to choose their vendors strategically, rather than just selecting another tool in the tech stack. They need technology solutions that can help them grow through differentiation and consistent delivery.

Leading MSP cloud practices rely on the CloudCheckr cloud management platform from Spot by NetApp. CloudCheckr enables MSPs to support their customers at every stage of the cloud journey. CloudCheckr provides MSPs with full visibility into their customers' cloud environments, from costs and utilization to security and compliance, to help their organizations optimize and thrive in the cloud.

Learn how to champion your customers and boost their confidence with [CloudCheckr](#).

About Spot by NetApp

The Spot by NetApp portfolio enables cloud operations teams to deliver scalability, performance and security for cloud infrastructure and applications — at the lowest possible cost — through continuous automation and optimization combined with deep visibility and governance. From cloud-native startups to global enterprises and managed services providers, thousands of customers rely on Spot solutions to unlock the full value of .the cloud