



HOW-TO GUIDE

Move clinical integration to the cloud

Define the best plan for your organization

Determining your cloud migration strategy for clinical integration

Healthcare organizations need resilience and agility built into their infrastructures for integration continuity and to stay up to date with technology in today's healthcare environment. Cloud-based clinical integration solutions provide healthcare organizations with a secure and reliable platform that enables quick responses to opportunities, regulations, and innovation.

However, many healthcare leaders are hesitant about moving clinical integration to the cloud, thinking, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." The trouble is, what worked yesterday, may not work today and tomorrow. The good news is that healthcare organizations that have waited to make the move to the cloud now have more opportunities than ever before to choose a path that best serves their strategic needs.

This guide details why healthcare organizations should strongly consider moving to the cloud now, explores various cloud migration options and strategies, and provides advice on what to look for from cloud service providers.

Why moving to the cloud makes organizations stronger

Moving clinical integration to the cloud can provide healthcare organizations with significant business benefits, such as the ability to innovate faster, grow more quickly, and even reduce risk by ensuring that security and compliance are maintained. Cloud solutions can also add functionality beyond just healthcare integration, such as API management, access to a data lake to feed analytics and more, and artificial intelligence. Moving to the cloud helps organizations avoid scenarios that can cause damage, such as:

- Critical system failure of aging on-premises hardware and infrastructure
- The loss of technical expertise for complex integration needs
- Complexity in integrating and growing your healthcare organization through mergers and acquisitions
- Legacy bottlenecks that prevent the adoption of innovative technologies
- Inadequate resources to defend against increasingly sophisticated security breaches and malicious attacks
- Expanding IT costs caused by customizations, upgrades, and maintenance

To learn more about the ramifications of these potential business-damaging scenarios, read our [best practice guide to integration continuity in the cloud](#).

Go for the best cloud migration options

Cloud integration offers new opportunities for how you manage your integration environments, from the expected integration team you may already have to outsourcing your entire integration strategy to experts at your cloud provider. When creating your cloud migration strategy, a crucial first step is to consider the strategic priorities of your business. Determine which path to the cloud will drive the most value by focusing on one of the following options.

Self-service cloud integration

If you already have an experienced and established integration team, look to reduce the total cost of ownership and the burden of managing infrastructure with a self-service cloud deployment. In this deployment option, the cloud provider performs the administrative responsibilities associated with infrastructure and application management. Simultaneously, the integration developers can develop, test, and deploy interfaces on a stable, secure, and highly reliable platform.

- Delegate infrastructure management, including disaster recoverability and OS management, to your cloud provider
- Rely on the security teams of your cloud provider to provide intrusion monitoring, security monitoring, and log management
- Spend more time on interface development, testing, and deployment on the latest version of the application as managed and updated by your cloud provider
- Work with implementation services of your cloud provider to migrate existing interfaces developed by your team to a cloud environment

Managed cloud integration

If you do not have a dedicated integration team, consider the more robust experience of a cloud provider who can develop, manage, and monitor your entire integration environment in the cloud, thereby reducing the burden on developers who are not dedicated to integration. In this deployment option, the cloud provider manages the infrastructure, application, and interface development, testing, and deployment, giving your development teams more time to focus on the business that matters to your organization.

- Delegate your integration strategy and operations to an experienced cloud provider with in-depth knowledge in integration and cloud operations
- Rely on the experienced security teams of your cloud provider to implement best practices for healthcare data integration security and cloud security
- Give your developers more time to spend on the projects that will bring greater value to your business and mission
- Work with implementation services of your cloud provider for interface goals, configuration requirements, and required integrations to improve your business

Cloud migration strategy

While migrating to the cloud may appear daunting, there's tremendous value in modernizing technology ecosystems with cloud technology, including the ability to more easily keep your capabilities current and reducing the load on internal resources. According to McKinsey, "By viewing cloud computing as a starting point for IT automation, companies may be able to have it all: scalability, agility, flexibility, efficiency, and cost savings. But that's only possible by building up both automation and cloud capabilities."¹

Assembling a team to drive change

Teams that execute successful transformations bring together business and technical stakeholders to develop a complete set of requirements for both the near- and long-term.

The goal should be to consider a comprehensive set of requirements that specify how your current integrations work with each other, how your integration platform needs to interact with external entities (such as clinics and physician partners), and how business strategies and the scope of the healthcare market may affect requirements. The team should include an architecture focus that identifies critical needs for integration, scalability, performance, and technology maintenance. Engage network resources early in the migration process to ensure that you can configure and validate your secure connection to your cloud integration domain.

Building the business case

After determining the requirements for moving your integration engine to the cloud, your team should develop a robust ROI model for your migration. Look for a cloud provider that can provide an experienced value engineering team to identify key areas of benefit for your healthcare organization, specific to migrating your integration platform to the cloud, to help build this use case. Additionally, a cloud provider with an experienced implementation and services team can help identify initial projects with interfaces that can provide a tangible contribution to your healthcare organization once implemented.

By focusing on the value of integration and building a strong business case, the early stages of the migration effort can free up resources to support future projects necessary for meeting more strategic goals that have longer-term benefits.

Preparing for migration

Ensure you have a clear and robust approach to your integration solution, including networking resources, a clear understanding of the interfaces to be migrated, and additional services needed for a clear path to success for migration.

As you work with your cloud provider, make sure you understand exactly the resources they will provide, the service agreements with planned updates and patches, and how you can receive support after successfully migrating to the cloud.

Selecting your cloud provider

Choosing the right partners to help you design and implement your cloud strategy is essential. Many organizations don't have the capacity or expertise to do it themselves. Your partners should recognize that time to value will dictate a phased approach with clear milestones for tangible business value. Your partners should focus on business key performance indicators (KPIs) during the implementation and post-deployment phases of the project to align with the business case.

The cloud providers you evaluate should meet the following requirements:

- Architected for resilience and availability
- Educated in and follows best practice design
- Continuous patching and upgrades with automated testing
- Deep support bench with experience in integration and healthcare needs
- Globally experienced cloud operations with economies of scale to lower your total cost of ownership
- Globally experienced security office with resources explicitly focused on the security of data and systems and the more rigorous needs of healthcare data security
- Ongoing investment and innovation in cloud and integration in the cloud

Embrace the cloud

Healthcare organizations need agility built into their infrastructure to stay ahead in the ever-changing landscape of healthcare. Cloud-based integration solutions provide an agile platform that enables quick responses to opportunities, challenges, and customer needs.

Now in healthcare, organizations of all sizes and across all markets have reached the tipping point where they're now recognizing the value of cloud deployment and acknowledging that migrating on-premises solutions to the cloud brings many benefits. Now cloud technology providers have proven the reliability of cloud platforms and experience with healthcare integration to successfully provide world-class security, robust capabilities, and ease of deployment for clinical interoperability solutions. With Infor's deep industry functionality built into our integration suite, you can implement most of the solution "out of the box" to meet your healthcare needs.

Migrating to the cloud can help you reimagine your integration strategy. Whether an organization's integration solutions are entirely in the cloud or exist in a hybrid environment, the cloud's security, innovation, and reliability can evolve more quickly than virtually any on-premises-only implementation.

¹ Nagendra Bommadevara, Andrea Del Miglio, and Steve Jansen, "Cloud adoption to accelerate IT modernization," McKinsey & Company, April 12, 2018.

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