The essential checklist to choosing the right cloud ERP partner in APAC

Organisations that make the move to the cloud can reap significant benefits, such as enabling greater business agility to react quickly to fluid business needs, reducing risk, and facilitating innovation. These benefits are especially pertinent in times of uncertain and tumultuous economic conditions—such as during the COVID-19 pandemic—where the cloud can provide businesses with a significant advantage over their struggling competitors. Like much of the world, the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region was not immune to the impact of the global pandemic; in fact, **the APAC region was expected to suffer from a 4.2% reduction in overall GDP** as a result of the crisis.[1]

While the cloud has the potential to deliver unprecedented levels of business agility, most organisations lack the necessary internal expertise to design and implement a cloud strategy, much less support a cloud platform while also maintaining existing IT operations. For most organisations, effectively and smoothly transitioning to the cloud requires working with cloud a partner that offers experienced technical and business expertise. Here are some key factors to consider when choosing a cloud ERP partner.

Defining the role of a cloud ERP partner

There is no "one-size-fits-all" strategy when implementing a cloud-based ERP solution. Rather than attempting to cram existing processes into a rigid cloud system, the ideal cloud ERP partner should start by understanding the organisation's existing technology ecosystem and desired business objectives. A cloud ERP partner should recognise that a phased approach with clear milestones is key to ensuring tangible business value. The partner should also focus on key performance indicators (KPIs) during the project's implementation and post-deployment phases that align with the business case.

There are three crucial stages that a cloud ERP partner should be capable of handling effectively:

✓ **BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE**
A cloud ERP partner should offer financial planning and assist in crafting the business case in the early phases of the migration.

✓ **PREPARING THE DATA**
A cloud ERP partner can help organisations realise cloud value faster by aggregating data across disparate systems, achieving this with a clear and robust approach to application integration.

✓ **SELECTING THE TOOLS**
The initial application selection and deployment should be made in tandem with the deployment of core systems such as application integration, data aggregation, analytics, and reporting.

Finding the right partner

The right cloud ERP partner can help to quickly bring the benefits of the cloud to an organisation. **While there are many important questions an organisation should ask a potential cloud ERP partner, here are three of the most critical**:

1. Does the cloud provider have industry-specific experience?

Deep experience within an organisation's industry is vital to success of a cloud-based ERP solution. Not only should the cloud ERP partner be very familiar with an organisation's market, but the ERP solution itself should deliver functionality that's designed for an organisation's industry.

For example, Infor® offers vertical solutions tailored for discrete industries, which are further broken down into multiple micro-verticals. These micro-verticals address industry-specific issues, such as business processes, standards, KPIs, and fulfilment models.

A cloud ERP partner should also offer knowledge around best practices to boost staff productivity when using the cloud-based ERP solution. This includes specialised skills around deployment that can help reduce the likelihood of security breaches and downtime—which can result in substantial savings.

2. Can the solution be implemented quickly?

On-premises ERP system implementations are often slow to deploy and mired in delays. Due to Infor's relentless focus on developing cloud-based ERP solutions that are industry focused, customers enjoy faster time to value due to rapid implementation. A 60:30:10 principle means that the majority (60%) of the software capabilities come out-of-the-box, while 30% is seamlessly tailored via minor configuration tweaks. The final 10% is customised as required, offering the perfect balance between time to value and differentiation.

3. Is the cloud platform secure, stable, and reliable?

When running mission-critical functionality in the cloud, organisations need to know that the cloud platform is stable and reliable. Otherwise, an organisation puts itself at risk of deteriorating customer satisfaction, lost revenue, and other potentially adverse outcomes.

The Infor cloud is a cloud operating platform that provides a robust technology framework for business ecosystems. It's built on Amazon Web Services® (AWS®), the market leader for cloud-based infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS)—with a well-established track record. Leveraging Amazon's multi-billion dollar annual R&D investment in technology allows Infor to focus on its core mission of building critical capabilities into our applications. In addition, as a privately-owned company that's not beholden to shareholders, Infor can make decisions based on the long-term, without the pressure of having to realise quick gains.

At Infor, we are focused on building an ecosystem of people, services, and systems around delivering quick results as your partner of choice.

A cloud environment is only as secure as its weakest link in the cloud security chain. Infor and AWS employ a "defence-in-depth" strategy—which includes multiple layers of overlapping security that safeguard customer data through each link of the chain. These security controls are enforced by a team of specialists who continuously monitor and improve Infor's cloud security posture to stay ahead of threats and vulnerabilities. Infor's dedicated cloud security staff works 24/7/365, vigilantly monitoring the Infor cloud environment. If a customer requires more active collaboration to address security issues or concerns, Infor is readily available and easily engaged.

Gaining agility

Organisations are turning to the cloud for the agility and capabilities that enable them to weather unpredictable times and stay ahead of the competition. The right cloud ERP partner can customise and match a cloud ERP solution to an organisation's precise requirements. Infor offers the flexibility to best suit the evolving needs of an organisation's business, transparency around usage to eliminate billing surprises, and ease and speed to obtaining support when needed. Infor's SaaS customers rely on 24/7/365 support for all severity-1 infrastructure outage and production system issues, with a response time of 30 minutes. With a partner ensuring that an organisation's systems keep running as expected, organisations can focus on meeting the needs of its customers and innovating with new services and capabilities.

In addition to demonstrated world-class security, robust capabilities, and ease of deployment, Infor solutions' built-in industry-specific functionality allow organisations to quickly implement the bulk of the solution "out-of-the-box," while still being able to make the unique customisations that set them apart.

The Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights

The Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights was born from building and living our customer-first culture. The Bill of Rights articulates Infor's vision for providing modern cloud solutions and building long-term relationships based on trust and shared success. It formalises our commitment to flexibility, transparency, reliability, and providing customers with peace of mind.

We know that plans can go awry, businesses grow, and needs change over time. We want to be your partner and support you—even as your business evolves differently than you expect.

Learn more about the Infor Multi-tenant Cloud Customer Bill of Rights.

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[1] Kaewkamol Pitakdumrongkit, "ASEAN's perspective on economic recovery," The Brookings Institute, December 17, 2020.

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