Look before you leap:
What to Consider Before Deploying Private Cloud
An increasing number of organizations are taking advantage of private cloud solutions to drive a paradigm shift in their IT strategies. Using private cloud and OpenStack can completely change the way in which business workloads are handled. When correctly deployed, an OpenStack-based private cloud can provide increased agility, innovation, reduced costs and improved flexibility. Yet, in order to ensure a successful private cloud deployment, businesses must carefully consider the following five points prior to implementation:

1. Clarify Business Requirements

Before implementing a private cloud, organizations must clearly define their business requirements. Once these have been established, IT will be able to paint a clear picture of exactly what the company needs from the cloud deployment. Deciding on a range of factors—from technical requirements, project constraints, service-level agreements—to profiling who the cloud users will be and what they will need will ensure that the private cloud project’s success can be clearly scoped, defined and measured.

These decisions need to be made at the very start swiftly followed by a process to obtain stakeholder buy-in. Involving stakeholders in the process from the beginning ensures that once a private cloud has been deployed, IT can rely on organizational support. This a critical upfront activity to reap the full rewards of private cloud at a later stage.
Align Business Processes

57% of companies see agility and innovation as key drivers for change when implementing a private cloud*

This technology speeds up the delivery of IT services, greatly increasing business agility. Unfortunately, many business processes today are not designed to be this fast and flexible and may end up inhibiting progress instead. As an example, automated private cloud technology can provision a virtual machine in several minutes, but the approval process can last for several days or weeks.

For an organization to maximize the value of their investment in a private cloud, the business must fully embrace the cloud and...
Define the Price of Self-service

Cloud computing is often about enabling end-user self-service. End users can receive on-demand access to resources through an automated portal and services catalogue. As a result, even users with little experience can easily carve out their own infrastructure. While the IT department has traditionally been responsible for provisioning, maintaining and then de-provisioning service requests, the cloud’s position as a complete self-service environment shifts these responsibilities, freeing up important IT resource.

Recent SUSE research* found that around two thirds of organizations have adopted private cloud solutions for financial reasons. To ensure a smooth private cloud roll-out and guarantee a reduction in costs, businesses must take a firm decision on how to implement and manage self-service and billing capabilities. IT costs may previously have been allocated by business unit, but the metering capabilities of a private cloud mean that usage can be directly assigned and charged to the end-user’s department. Ensuring a billing strategy is in place from the start allows IT to control costs and demonstrate business value. While these self-service and billing processes may require a cultural shift in the organization, they are vital considerations when planning a successful private cloud deployment.

Prepare for Widespread Use

95% of large organizations see software-defined infrastructure (SDI) as the future of the data center.

It’s no surprise that private cloud adoption is growing quickly, and this trend will undoubtedly lead to further use cases. In a short time, IT departments will see their cloud solution being utilized for far more purposes than were initially requested than were initially requested as they use more and more software-defined services. While this will demonstrate great user buy-in, it’s vital that IT ensures that initial success is delivered before expanding the use of private cloud within the business.

Carefully considering current processes and identifying those which impede agility is a key initial step. Once this has occurred, a business can gain real value from deploying private a cloud and maximizing the value of their investment.
Rushing into an expansion of cloud use cases can be risky. However, once the workloads initially deployed in the cloud are successfully set up, running smoothly and delivering results, IT can consider where to expand cloud usage. While this expansion is inevitable, the cloud should only be opened up to further workloads once the value of IT’s investment in the cloud has been proven.

Private clouds are the future for many enterprise workloads. Careful preparation and consideration prior to implementation is critical for businesses wishing to maximize the value of their cloud investment. Private cloud and OpenStack offer the opportunity to change the way business is done.

By considering the points above, IT can correctly position themselves for a smooth and successful private cloud deployment strategy, changing the way employees interact with IT, as well as creating new, more effective business processes to drive business innovation.

* Source: SUSE Global Cloud Research 2017

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