

OpenStack Momentum Sharpens Focus on Skills and Talent Shortage



“For the best return on your money, pour your purse into your head.” That piece of wisdom is credited to Benjamin Franklin and he would know. As a scientist, inventor and innovator, Ben knew the value of investing in education, new skills and self-development. He was famous for coming up with radical ideas and revolutionary new ways of getting things done.



In today’s fast-moving, technology-driven world, those are factors that are vitally important for every successful business. Simply doing things the way they’ve always been done won’t cut it any longer. Organizations that lack the ability to quickly adapt and innovate are seriously at risk of losing competitive advantage, or even worse, ending up on the corporate scrapheap. It also seems clear that having access to appropriate IT skills and talent is a critical factor in taking advantage of the latest technology and tools that can keep you ahead of the pack.

Cloud Computing Is Here to Stay

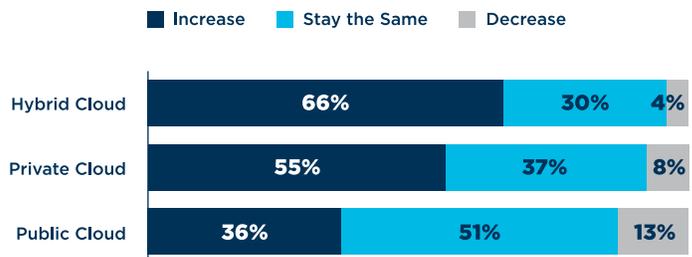
As we approach 2020, there is little doubt that cloud computing will continue to grow, with more businesses looking to transform and adapt to meet the rapidly changing demands and challenges they face. According to an independent global research study commissioned by SUSE¹, 95 percent of IT leaders now believe a software-defined infrastructure is the future of the data center. They see cloud platforms as the enabler to deliver cost savings, increased developer productivity, improved business agility and greater innovation.

95 percent believe a software-defined infrastructure is the future of the data center¹

Two-thirds expect hybrid cloud to grow over the next 2 years¹

Over the past decade, cloud computing has matured to become an essential part of the IT strategy of almost all organizations. Over 80 percent of enterprises are now using more than one cloud and adopting a multi-cloud approach². This allows them to decide where to deploy each application, choosing the cloud platform most appropriate for the requirements of specific workloads. SUSE’s research shows that while private and public clouds are expected to continue growing, hybrid cloud solutions are now the top priority for most IT leaders. Combining private and public clouds into a single, unified environment gives businesses the ability to deploy, manage and move workloads as needed. Two-thirds of businesses expect hybrid cloud to grow over the next two years¹. We are now at the point where some IT leaders might even be leaning toward adopting cloud-first or cloud-only strategies in the future³.

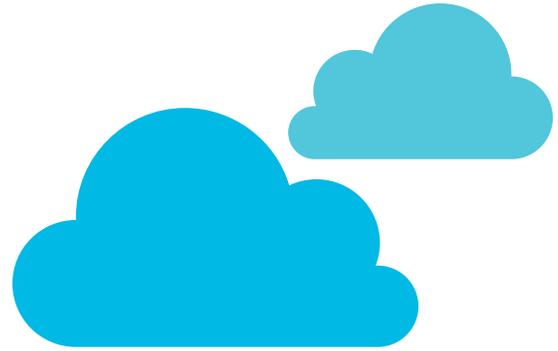
Expected Change in Usage of Cloud Solutions in Next 2 Years



¹ Source: SDI, Containers and DevOps - Cloud Adoption Trends Driving IT Transformation, https://www.suse.com/media/report/sdi_containers_and_devops_cloud_adoption_trends_driving_it_transformation.pdf
² Source: RightScale 2018 state of the cloud report
³ Source: Gartner press release, June 22 2016

Where Does OpenStack Fit In?

OpenStack got its start in 2010, and in 2018 the 17th iteration of the platform was delivered with the “Queens” code release. It has now reached the level of maturity where it is widely acknowledged as the “de-facto standard” for open source cloud software. OpenStack is growing so fast that analyst firm 451 Research estimates the OpenStack ecosystem will be over \$3 billion in 2018, and the market will just keep growing. At the current growth rate of 30 percent CAGR (compound annual growth rate), OpenStack is forecast to exceed \$6 billion by 2021⁴. SUSE’s own research study reveals that almost a quarter of organizations already have OpenStack in a production environment. A staggering 82 percent are either already up and running with an OpenStack cloud or plan to start using it in the next 2 years¹.



82 percent of organizations are already using or planning to use OpenStack¹

This is all pretty impressive stuff. It’s no wonder that OpenStack users are spread across a wide range of industries from IT, manufacturing, telecommunications, finance, retail, public sector and government. So, if you think OpenStack isn’t for you, it might be time to think again.

Why is OpenStack proving so popular? That’s a good question. According to SUSE’s research¹, IT leaders choose an OpenStack cloud for the following reasons:

- **Flexibility is at the top of the list.** OpenStack is helping organizations to break out of the rigid confines of a traditional data center and embrace a software-defined infrastructure approach. It enables them to spin up, deploy and manage compute resources in a fraction of the time it would have taken in the past.
- **Reduced costs.** It’s no surprise that reducing cost is a high priority as businesses feel the pinch from ever-tighter budget controls. There’s no doubt that cloud solutions offer the opportunity to rewrite the rules on CAPEX (capital expenditure) and OPEX (operating expenses), and OpenStack is particularly attractive for those looking for the best economic outcome.

- **Agility, adaptability and integration are important factors.** Almost all businesses need the ability to move and react quickly to take advantage of new market opportunities and deal with risks or competitive threats. Since its inception, OpenStack has proven to be the ideal platform to take advantage of and integrate with new and emerging technologies or trends.
- **Freedom of choice and avoiding vendor lock-in. OpenStack is arguably one of the most successful open source communities ever.** It is also closely aligned with all the other leading open source projects that you would expect. This means you get a wide choice when it comes to what technologies to use and which partners or vendors to work with. It also makes it easier to change those options if or when you need to. This all helps to minimize risk, lower migration issues and avoid the high cost often associated with proprietary technology alternatives.

From this list of priorities, it seems clear that while cost might be the initial attraction of an OpenStack cloud for many, there is far more on offer. Driving agility and innovation are likely to be more important in the long run for the survival and growth of the modern business. And OpenStack is well placed to deliver on those needs.

⁴ 451 Research press release, November 6 2017



Addressing Skills and Talent Gaps with SUSE OpenStack Cloud

While OpenStack offers many compelling business advantages, not everything is smooth sailing. According to the OpenStack user survey⁵, the average OpenStack cloud deployment uses 11 OpenStack projects. Deploying, configuring, maintaining and managing a modular platform with that much complexity is no small feat. SUSE’s research¹ calls out that 4 out of 5 users find implementing OpenStack software difficult.

4 out of 5 users find implementing OpenStack software difficult¹

Things become all the more challenging if an organization is lacking the right skills and experience. As many as 72 percent of IT leaders are concerned about the lack of cloud skills available to them¹. As one OpenStack user put it, “Without the people – no cloud.” And this concern over the skills shortage is exacerbated by over half of IT leaders regarding upskilling as the responsibility of the employee rather than the organization they work for.

72 percent of IT leaders are concerned about the lack of available cloud skills¹

Realistically, this is destined to be an ongoing issue. The pace of change is not going to slow down any time soon. And with leading-edge skills continuing to be in short supply, they are only likely to be available at a premium. With this in mind, it’s little wonder that building the right skills is a key focus for anyone looking for career progression or job security.

Here are some ways that SUSE OpenStack Cloud can help in addressing these concerns:

1. Let’s make deploying OpenStack easier.

The level of difficulty users experience is exacerbated by 55 percent of OpenStack users choosing to adopt a “do-it-yourself” approach¹. On the other hand, 40 percent choose a packaged distribution¹. SUSE was the first to release an enterprise-grade, commercially supported OpenStack distribution in 2012. SUSE OpenStack Cloud has since earned the enviable reputation for being the fastest and easiest OpenStack solution to deploy, configure and manage—and it has won awards to prove it. Designed from the ground up to deliver a stress-free experience on day one, it also does a great job of simplifying the ongoing management of the entire OpenStack platform.

2. If you don’t have the right skills in-house, you need an experienced technology partner to help you get up and running.

As an OpenStack veteran and founding member of the OpenStack Foundation, SUSE is a great partner of choice. With SUSE Select Services⁶, you can get prompt access to OpenStack consultants, premium support specialists, on-site technical expertise and training professionals to fill any immediate skills or experience gaps. And because no two customers’ needs are exactly the same, these services are flexible and cost-effective, so they won’t break the bank. After all, lowering costs and budget constraints are key reasons for adopting OpenStack in the first place.

3. Finally, remember Benjamin Franklin’s words, “Pour your purse into your head.” Investing in training and self-development is always a good decision in the long run.

SUSE has been working closely with the OpenStack Foundation to design and deliver training courses and certification programs⁷ to help you build the right level of in-house skills and experience to take full advantage of an OpenStack cloud for your business. SUSE has been running this training, free of charge, at each of the OpenStack Summits for some time. If you are planning to be at an OpenStack Summit in the near future, register for one of these courses quickly—quality training like this fills up fast.

⁵ OpenStack User Survey - November 2017

⁶ www.suse.com/services/select-services

⁷ Information on SUSE OpenStack Cloud training is available at <https://training.suse.com/>



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