accenture

Innovate and grow

Use cloud as a platform for reinventing
the business and accelerating growth

Take experimentation and innovation to another level

Cloud is so much more than scalable infrastructure—
it's a catalyst for business innovation, reinvention,
and growth

Why is business reinvention needed?

The extraordinary pace of change today means businesses need to be nimbler and more agile than ever. Being able to act quickly in response to new opportunities and new disruption, unencumbered by legacy constraints, is essential. Innovation is a core part of that agility. But it's also a trigger for a more fundamental reinvention, where a business transforms what it does, and how it does it, to find new growth in a connected world dominated by digital technologies.

What's cloud got to do with innovation?

Cloud is not only a source of cheaper and better IT infrastructure. It's also the delivery platform that accelerates innovation and the primary enabler of business reinvention today. Why? Because it brings together everything you need to innovate—your data, your people, your partners, your processes, your technology—on one streamlined platform. It allows you to analyze your data on a bigger scale—and get new insights out of owned and acquire data much faster. It lets your own teams innovate with new products, services, and experiences, while simultaneously benefiting from the innovation of others. It's also the source of countless new and innovative hyperscaler and third-party services from some of the brightest minds on the planet.

200 million—the amount the major hyperscalers are investing in cloud innovation every single day.

How does cloud increase my agility?

Cloud's flexibility enables business experimentation at speed. It lets you spin up new environments instantly, try out several ideas at once, and see what's working quickly and securely. It reduces or eliminates technical debt, freeing your organization from the shackles of your legacy estate. It means you can iterate faster, test out prototypes on demand, and get real-time information on which to base your business decisions. And when the business needs to pivot quickly—such as in response to a global pandemic—it's cloud that enables the necessary responsiveness, enabling you to push out new or updated products, services and experiences with unprecedented speed.

Why is cloud crucial to business collaboration?

Cloud facilitates coworking, cocreation, and co-innovation both inside and outside the organization. It's about enabling your own people to work together from different places and in more effectiv e ways, as well as creating a closer connection with suppliers and partners. It means you can share data securely, apply AI models more effectively, streamline supply chains, and create entirely new business models with your partners. It means enabling the democratization of new technologies for broader enterprise consumption.

How does cloud trigger a broader transformation?

The way a business creates value involves far more than its IT—it's about people, process, partners, and technology working in unison. However, the agility and flexibility of the cloud makes it the ideal platform for rethinking how the organization operates and what kind of value it creates for its customers. A cloud journey can expose and eliminate legacy inefficiencies, duplication, excessive customization, and siloed ways of working—enabling the business to refocus on customer outcomes.

Put simply, cloud is how you get from where you are now to where you want to be tomorrow.

Three focus areas for cloud innovation

From data and machine learning to edge computing and collaborative innovation, here are some of the key opportunities for using cloud as a catalyst for reinvention

Get smarter with data and AI

Data is the fuel that powers nearly all business innovation today. And cloud is the perfect platform to quickly tap into your data and create new insights using advanced data science. Even better, thanks to the huge array of hyperscaler services now available, you don't need deep data science expertise to do this. Advanced analytics and machine learning available as a service in the cloud means virtually any business can now access these capabilities.

Cloud also lets you bring much more data together, including highly valuable unstructured or unlabeled data that was previously locked away or hard to use (such as unstructured notes from call center interactions). Then, when it comes to mining that data for insights, cloud's ability to scale up and down means it's much more efficient to run AI models that require intense bursts of compute power.

The secret to a data-driven reinvention in the cloud? Ensuring it's one and the same with the business strategy. You should look to focus on the critical data elements and priority use cases that will deliver the greatest impact to the business and align with the overall goals of the organization.

71 percent of companies that scale AI strategically say they have a clearly defined strategy and operating model for scaling AI, while 92 percent leverage multi-disciplinary teams.

Things to think about when innovating with AI and data

Can your data tell you what's happening right now? As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, having up-to-date information about your business is essential in responding quickly to fast-changing circumstances. The goal is to get a real-time view of your data, whether that's your assets, inventory, suppliers, products, customers, or anything else. But you also need to think about surfacing and visualizing that data in a way your business can actually use.

Is your data and AI supply chain industrialized? When circumstances change, the data changes, and you need to revisit the assumptions of your AI models. So think about adopting ModelOps—think DevOps for AI—as an industrialized process for monitoring and updating AI and data accuracy. Also consider how to multiply the value by repurposing data and AI assets for other use cases across the organization.

Don't wait for perfect data. Nobody has perfect data. There's almost always something that could be better—you don't have enough, it's poor quality, you have too much. This is where your teams' expert know-how comes to the fore. So invest in capabilities that let you tap into domain expertise to fill gaps, improve quality, and manage big data.

Are you acting ethically with AI? The risks and pitfalls of using data and AI irresponsibly are well documented. So look to build robust governance and compliance processes around your data and AI systems, and ensure ethical principles are translated into technical requirements that can easily be actioned by practitioners.
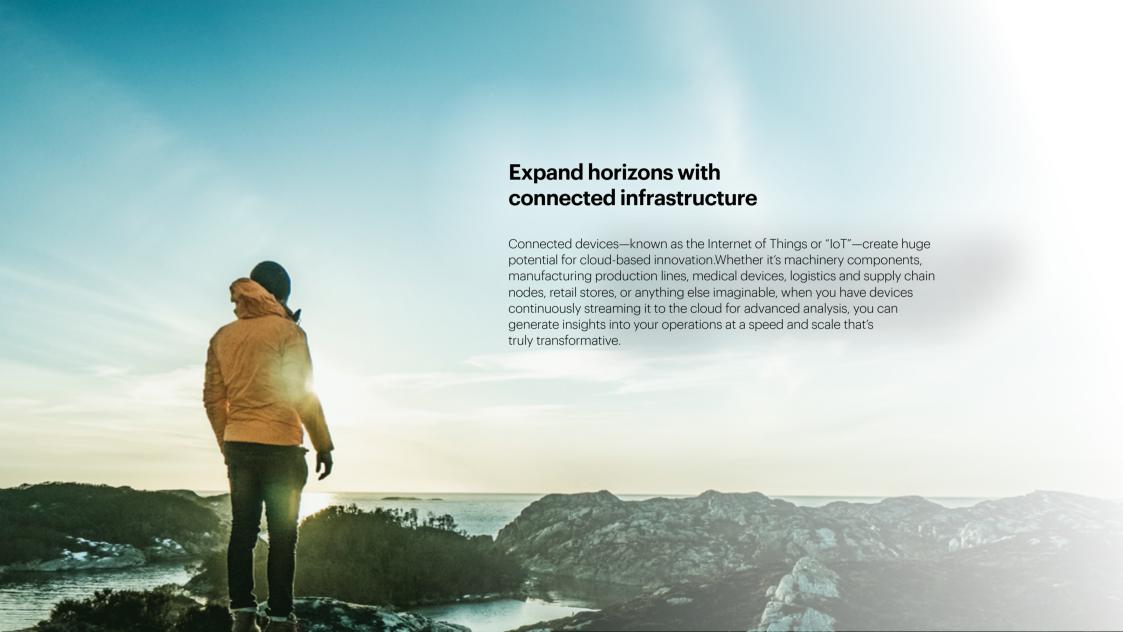
Have you professionalized your use of AI? Becoming a data-driven business is as much about behavior and culture as it is about the data and models themselves. That applies to business users as well as data scientists. So, commit to building a culture of data and AI literacy and proficiency across the whole organization.

Consider a consumer packaged goods company that set out to revolutionize their manufacturing operations with the introduction of Digital Manufacturing –

powering their production lines with data-driven intelligence. Leveraging cloud and working with Accenture, the company has answered a long-standing question – how to keep their production lines consistent. By developing a digital twin of the production line and introducing hundreds of sensors to capture real-time data and store it on the Azure cloud, they are now able to analyse, adjust or even stop the production line when it drifts outside of pre-defined control parameters.

Not only has this dramatically reduced the cost of quality and sparked innovative ways of looking at their manufacturing processes, it serves as a foundation for expanding the approach for even greater value by integrating other digital services for truly intelligent and dynamic operations.

Expand horizons with connected infrastructure

Connected devices—known as the Internet of Things or "IoT"—create huge potential for cloud-based innovation.Whether it's machinery components, manufacturing production lines, medical devices, logistics and supply chain nodes, retail stores, or anything else imaginable, when you have devices continuously streaming it to the cloud for advanced analysis, you can generate insights into your operations at a speed and scale that's truly transformative.

What's more, the cloud itself is continuously being adapted, evolved, and expanded through hyperscaler innovation. Consider the way compute is expanding its reaches from the cloud back to IaaS and PaaS in the data center and to individual connected devices across the network. Cloud, in other words, is now a continuum that extends from public cloud right through to the network edge.

By carrying out compute on the device where the data resides, rather than the cloud, edge computing promises unparalleled data control and security, with the lower latency and higher reliability needed enabling "always on" applications. It means, for example, you can run analytics locally and get instant, secure and actionable results. That's especially valuable for situations where data privacy requirements or reliability concerns previously made cloud innovation impossible or simply too expensive or impractical to consider.

And, it opens the door to even greater applications of automation needed to support such things as digital manufacturing, self-driving cars, robotic surgeries, or Amazon Go style in-store experiences

For example, Accenture helped a global medical device manufacturer take robotic surgery to the edge. With the rate of robotic surgeries increasing by 25% annually, we helped the company develop a new Robotic Surgery Platform to securely connect cloud computing and robotics components needed for digitally-assisted surgery. This enables future possibilities like 3D-printed surgical instruments, accelerated surgeon training, patient personalization, and more. The platform has been designed to bring together an ecosystem of healthcare partners in support of better patient outcomes.

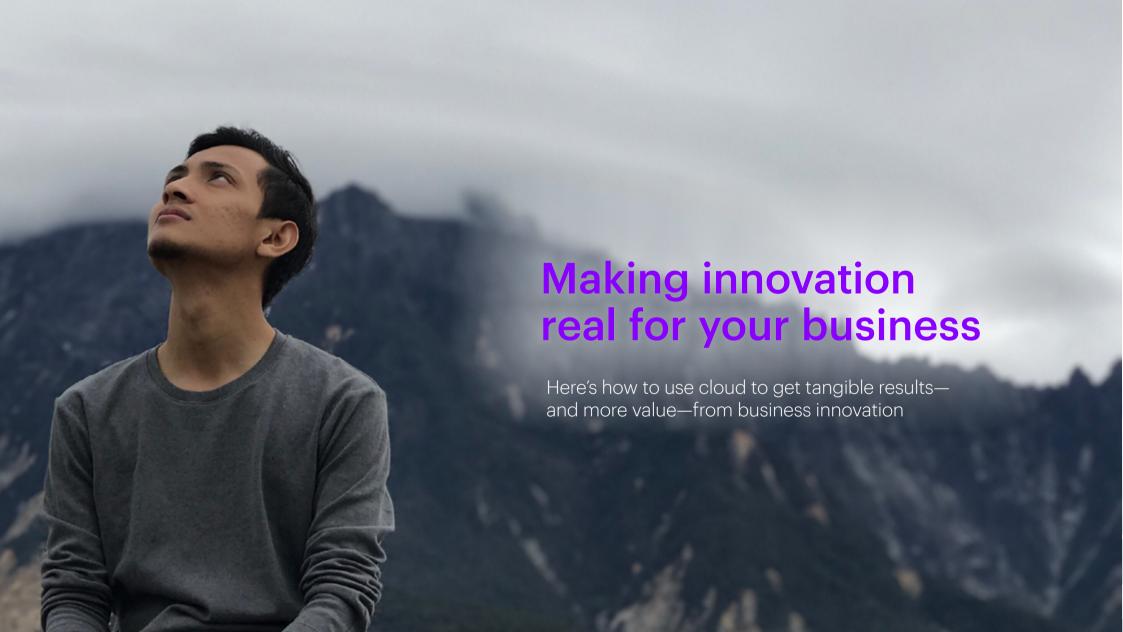## Maximize value through collaboration with the business ecosystem

Innovation in the cloud isn't only about what your own organization does—it's also about opening up a new world of possibilities for innovating with others. The ease with which new services can be adopted in the cloud—from your chosen hyperscaler as well as third parties—means you have a fast and low-risk way to benefit from others' innovation with cutting-edge technology. You only have to look at the vast array of industry-specific services the hyperscalers are releasing every month to get a sense of the opportunity.

But cloud also enables you to collaborate and co-innovate far more easily with your peers and partners. That's about much more than holding meetings with videoconferencing software. When your data, platforms, and applications are in the cloud, you can share information in real time, and completely reimagine how the business operates and how value is created.

Take supply chain and bill of lading processes for example.
On average, you need 20 different bill of lading documents to get a product from the point of manufacture to the point of consumption. Each of these documents needs to be reconciled as it passes between different parties—manufacturer to logistics and distribution to retailer, etc.—creating delay and adding cost. When all the parties' data is in a cloud environment, with appropriate security and access control, every part of the supply chain can share a "single version of the truth", creating the potential for a radical streamlining of supply chain management.

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Making innovation
real for your business

Here's how to use cloud to get tangible results—
and more value—from business innovation

How to use cloud to get tangible results

#1.
Know where you're going.

To provide a sense of drive and purpose in a cloud innovation initiative, it's essential to see the bigger picture—to have a North Star vision of where you want to be. That means clearly defining what the future holds for your business, how cloud enables it, and ensuring the organization is aligned behind it. This North Star can then guide the whole innovation program, ensuring it remains focused on delivering the outcomes the business is targeting.

#2.
Don't try to get there in one leap.

For many organizations, that North Star can seem a long way from where they are today. Attempting to get there in one go—as a "Big Bang" transformation—can seem just too big a leap, and too risky. A better approach can be to break the innovation journey into a series of smaller and more manageable initiatives. Done right, each success will then not only deliver a measurable return but also open up a new set of possibilities for the next round of innovation.

#3.
Innovation is not a side project.

For large incumbent businesses in particular, it can be tempting to view innovation as something that happens outside of the core organization, perhaps even in a separate business. Similarly, cloud innovation sometimes gets seen as an "IT initiative" and ignored by the wider organization. When that happens, you risk your innovation initiatives getting sandboxed or sidelined—and failing to scale. Strong senior executive sponsorship will go a long way in ensuring your initiative receives the focus necessary for success.

#4.
Innovation is everyone's opportunity.

To get the most value from cloud innovation, it needs to be a core objective for the whole organization. That calls for a clear strategy with strong alignment between IT and the business. It will probably mean rethinking ways of working, breaking down any legacy silos in how the organization is structured, and building a business-wide culture of innovation and experimentation in the cloud. This organizational flexibility and mindset is vital, not only in generating the innovative ideas that will reinvent and grow the future business, but also in scaling them, sustaining them, and continuously adapting them as circumstances change.

#5.
Piggyback on hyperscaler innovation.

Cloud hyperscalers are pouring huge sums into innovative new services on their platforms. The effect is to rapidly industrialize capabilities that organizations would once have had to build themselves, whether that's traditional capabilities like call center operations and networking or cutting-edge tools like machine learning and quantum computing. Rather than trying to recreate the wheel, look to piggyback on this hyperscaler innovation and focus your own innovation efforts in the "last mile" where you can really differentiate your offering.

#6.
Leverage the growing industry specific cloud.

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Cloud is the mother of business reinvention

Business today is about managing constant change. Every leader in every industry shares a similar set of objectives: to build up resilience, outmaneuver uncertainty, create new experiences and products, enhance trust, increase speed, and reduce structural costs.

To do that, the business needs to be able to capitalize on opportunities for reinvention and growth as soon as they arise. Its people need the time, space, and tools to innovate, experiment, and scale up the ideas that will drive growth tomorrow, not just today.

That's why cloud is now so vital. With the speed provided by the cloud, and by working with cloud hyperscalers and other service providers, enterprises can shift away from "keep the lights on" operations, freeing up their budgets and their teams' time to fundamentally rethink how the business operates and how it creates value.

This is the ultimate objective of a cloud journey—to create a platform for innovation, for agility, and for future business reinvention.

About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world's largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 505,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

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