How to think like a retail disruptor

Developing a digital transformation mindset

QUISITIVE

Microsoft Azure

Retail is moving to the cloud. Where are you?

We're well aware that in this computer age, all business is digital. In fact, in the very near future, the standard for retail operations will be in the cloud. By 2020, 80% of businesses will have migrated to the cloud.[1] And a recent study of 450 technology leaders found that:

- **80%** of respondents said that they were at risk of being left behind by digital transformation.
- **54%** said that without a successful digital transformation strategy, their companies will go out of business or be absorbed by a competitor within four years.[2]

These are the stakes—and the battle will not be won by simply deploying the cloud. It will be won by ensuring that your organization stays ahead of the lightning-fast changes being driven by new customer expectations, including:

Personalization

More than half of consumers say they're more likely to make a purchase (51%) or become loyal to a brand (49%) if the content is personalized.[3]

Improved Experience

According to Walker Consulting, by 2020, customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.[4]

New Buying Modes

There are over 28 billion connected devices in the world. Four times the human population. Each one represents a potential marketing channel.

All these shifts represent new opportunities to improve your business. They also represent wedges where your competition will seek dominance. Are your business leaders pursuing new offerings, such as predictive product delivery based on past consumption or internal operation modifications to operate more efficiently? Do they dream about the things they can do today that they could not do last year, and about what they will be able to do tomorrow? Do they have a process to go from the art of the possible to the practice of the actual? What about value identification and realization? Adoption and deployment of new initiatives? And consumption of new data and capabilities through the Azure cloud?

[1] Seven Ways to Up Your Azure Game, Catapult & Azure.

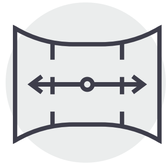
[2] "10 top digital transformation trends for 2018," Software Development Times, January 4, 2018.

[3] Adobe Consumer Content Survey, 2018.

[4] Walker Consulting Customers 2020: A Progress Report.

If you're like most companies, odds are you find yourself mired in:

Figuring out how to hire costly data scientists and marketers to try to connect and streamline single-channel data.



Siloed data systems that obscure your unified view of customer preferences, behaviors, and journeys.

Making the case to the executive team as to why the cloud is your company's Netflix vs. Blockbuster moment.

Struggling to clarify clouded reasoning about potential new line-of-business ventures that work.

In this e-book, we'll show you the specific opportunities and modes of thought that we have found to drive business success most effectively with our clients. In the end, you'll come away with a powerful launchpad for digital transformation of your retail business today and in the future through the world-leading Microsoft Azure cloud.

How migration moves you from reaction to prediction

The process of digital transformation using a world-leading cloud platform like Azure has already been well proven through years of practical success. It delivers major business advantages such as faster innovation, improved operations, and better customer experiences. It adds up to greater opportunities to provide value to your customers over time, from application improvements to consumable insights and metrics.

The question is, how do you decide which outcomes to prioritize and how to best go about building a cloud-based solution to improve your business? Ask yourself and your teams which insights and metrics would provide the best route to solutions for your most challenging problems. The answers will help you decide how to take advantage of new technologies—such as those Microsoft Azure releases on a regular basis—for a business edge.

As a starting point, we recommend conducting a workshop to identify initial organizational need (this is what we do with our clients). This process allows you and your teams to explore your modernization standing, paths, and goals. Use the Workshop Guide at the end of this e-book to take you through this initial process. But start by establishing a clear picture of your success goals.

The 4 stages of cloud success

Like any process, migrating to the cloud is best done in well-identified stages. Here are the four steps we recommend our clients follow:

Step 1: Understand your needs

Determine what on-premises technologies you have and whether they are a priority to move to Azure. Are they mission-critical? Are they an important asset that cloud-enabled services like artificial intelligence could enhance right away? Then, analyze your datacenter:

What are the current silos?

What level of visibility among silos would render the largest impact on business performance?

What workloads are you managing currently, and what are their impacts?

Action items:

- Conduct a cloud assessment
- Understand the cost savings
- Assess the level of difficulty
- Outline cloud impact on strategy

Step 2: Initiate your migration

Now that you understand what's in your datacenter, move something to the cloud to get a feeling for the process. The first thing you migrate should not be mission-critical and should have few stakeholders involved so it gives you an easy cost-benefit win.

Things to consider in this step:

- Active Directory migration
- Disaster recovery
- Data storage
- Lift-and-shift simple VM/workloads

The 4 stages of cloud success

(Continued)

Step 3: Build on the initial success

Move on to opportunities for migration that will have a larger impact. These can be applications or databases that can benefit most from the Azure cloud and improve IT operations. Consider moving applications and infrastructure that could leverage Azure DevOps.

Other actions to consider in this step:

- Modernize your apps
- Cloud-enable your data
- Migrate critical infrastructure
- Create a dev/test environment for COTS and internal applications
- Implement automation to take advantage of serverless resources

Step 4: Optimize your cloud

When you've got a few successful migrations completed, you'll find that cloud innovations and new cloud tools emerge almost weekly. Keep up with what's new and make use of it as you expand cloud migration and use it globally across the organization. As the cloud becomes the universal standard, look for new business problems you can solve.

And remember, don't be afraid to learn from your experiences (and mistakes) along the way.[5]

[5] "Your Cloud Journey" infographic, Catapult.

Find the right guide to the cloud

One of the barriers to moving to the cloud is analysis paralysis. Many organizations just stop because they don't have the internal expertise to ensure return on the investment. In these cases, hiring data scientists and cloud architects with the expertise you need can be prohibitively expensive. That's why a Microsoft Partner is essential unless you have a virtually unlimited hiring budget.

An effective guide on your cloud journey should become your source for innovative, reliable insights and customized solutions that scale easily to give you the agility you need. Your guide should have specific experience and skill in building custom solutions for retail clients to:

- **Uncover** business insights and drive new sales opportunities
- **Optimize** the business journey
- **Synchronize** cross-departmental intelligence
- **Maximize** with the agility of the cloud
- **Personalize** customer engagement
- **Reveal** hidden data either on-premises or in the cloud to accelerate innovation
- **Lower** compliance overhead
- **Improve** security posture
- **Embrace** new markets

Any partner you choose should offer best-in-class secure cloud integration for public, private, and hybrid cloud migrations built on Azure. Naturally, you can count on Quisitive for all these skills and expertise.

Why we work with Microsoft Azure

90% of Fortune 500 companies trust their business on Azure

With over 70 compliance offerings, Azure boasts the largest portfolio in the industry

54 global Azure regions — more than any cloud provider

Azure provides machine learning, AI, and other advanced technologies developed for insights

Get your feet wet

A guide to envisioning your solutions

To get started, we recommend that you conduct an envisioning session with your team to create a concrete vision of the improvements and initiatives that you hope to implement. Evaluate how the capabilities of the cloud could impact your organization, either through a guided innovation workshop or self-run team exercises. Here are a few things to consider:

1. Take a look at the opportunities

- Identify the key industry trends and insights that matter to your business.
- Write down the ideas you have about how technology can change what's possible.
- Consider new customer experiences to address them.
- Consider what digital technologies can do for your business.

2. What are the pains, needs, and desired outcomes of your customers?

- Outline the pains your customers feel now as they buy from you.
- For each pain, note a better outcome and solution.

3. Envision your ideal end-state

- Write down a simple story of your desired future state.
- Don't sell yourself short—note the highest goals you imagine.

4. Take a look in the mirror

- How do your customers interact with your organization now?
- Sketch out your customer journey as it stands and note all the touch points where customers engage with you.

5. Imagine some scenarios

- Note a few ideas you've had that you'd like to try.
- Why do you want to try them?
- What would you like the outcome to be?
- What would be the benefits and lessons from trying them?

6. What's the business outcome of doing this?

- Write down the top three business improvements (revenue, customer building, for example) you feel this process can achieve.

7. Map out your journey

- List the crucial steps you'll need to take to achieve your outcome.
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How will each step's success be measured?
- What new technologies will you need?
- What will each phase cost?
- What will the business impact be at each stage?

To help you navigate the forest of services available in Azure, it's critical to have a guide and partner with deep expertise not only in the cloud, but in cloud for retail, specifically. Quisitive can help you select the tools for maximum impact today and in the future with a strategic roadmap.

A tradition of disruption

At Quisitive, innovation has never been enough; we give our clients the means to disrupt industries, businesses, and modes of thought. Working with us, organizations become masters of digital solutions that not only solve complex business challenges today—they drive the future. Those aren't just words. Quisitive has consistently been recognized as a leading Microsoft Partner for outstanding expertise in digital transformation and cloud-based technologies.

Contact us at ask@quisitive.com to learn more on how to get started with your digital transformation.

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