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Goodbye cloud-first approach, hello deliberately hybrid strategy!

The unforeseen results of the fallacy that businesses must take a cloud-first approach are now coming home to roost. This is according to Ahmed Mahomed, CEO at Datacentrix, a leading hybrid ICT systems integrator and managed services provider, who explains that, because cloud adoption had to be expedited due to the pandemic, many organisations did not have a defined strategy in place around their cloud journey before taking the leap.

“What we are finding now is that organisations that went the public cloud route have been at the mercy of fluctuating costs, which have unexpectedly escalated over the past few years, or companies have realised that they may no longer necessarily want to host all their core applications in the public cloud.

“Now that we have the luxury of more time to reflect and examine, it has become clearer that – as with any other type of technology – there needs to be a well-defined, deliberate strategy in place for cloud.”

Fortunately, there is great clarity in hindsight, Mahomed comments, and we are now able to look back at the valuable lessons learned by these earlier cloud adopters, who might not have experienced the smooth sailing their companies expected.

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There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all cloud strategy.

“In Datacentrix's opinion, cloud is not a one-size-fits-all type of scenario,” he explains. “There are several options, and each company's strategy will be different. Any technology strategy, including cloud, must be based on an assessment of the business, which should include determining the benefits and outcomes to be achieved, understanding which technologies are already in place, which applications are being run, and where the data should reside, be it in a centralised location or at the edge.”

Cloud technology can be deployed on-prem, within a centralised data centre, or even with a

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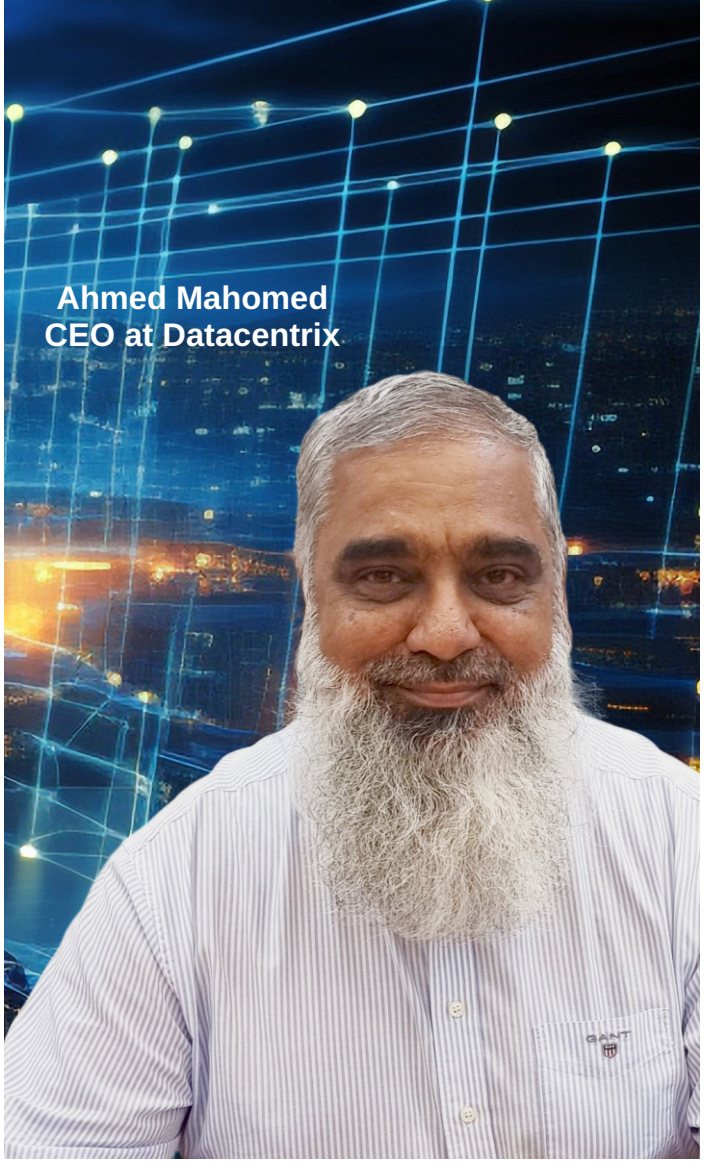
global public cloud player. These decisions can only be made after the current environment has been reviewed and the desired business determined to avoid potential obstacles.

“Certain applications don't run well in the cloud, for example, legacy applications might need to be modernised,” Mahomed explains. “Sometimes, however, you will find that the cost does not warrant modernisation of those applications, so these should be carefully evaluated, and it may be more prudent to keep it on prem or to use alternative technology solutions. In addition, the current legislative framework must be considered, as well as factors including governance, security, and other risks.

“Once this has been ascertained, the next step is to develop a strategy around how to execute on and deliver this value to the organisation.”

Within the South African context, entities are exposed to the additional complications of an inconsistent power source as well as the cooling challenges experienced in warmer climates. “In many cases, it makes sense to centralise and outsource cloud capabilities, allowing businesses to focus on their own core capabilities and eliminate the headache of loadshedding, while having the guarantee of uninterrupted availability and effective data centre cooling.

“In addition, data and digital sovereignty requirements and compliance to the legislative universe should be evaluated to inform the strategy. From a Datacentrix point of view we are sensitive to these nuances; any data hosted within our data centres resides within the borders of South Africa, so it does not traverse the globe.”



Becoming deliberately hybrid

Says Mahomed: “Becoming deliberately hybrid changes the way we apply technology concepts. Instead of the cloud being the central focus, data, and the business outcomes to be achieved becomes the centrepiece of the discussion.

“By answering questions such as where your data is hosted, where it is consumed, how it is processed and stored, and importantly, how intelligent information is extracted from it, it is possible to harness the power of data and deliver better services and products to clients.

“Adopting a deliberately hybrid strategy means that all aspects of a company's workloads, data optimisation requirements and business strategy need consideration. Organisations are therefore able to paint a clear picture of the environment and become more deliberate in terms of their technology and cloud approach,” he concludes.

Fore more information, please visit www.datacentrix.co.za/hybridit.html