



10 Free Tips to Picking a Cloud Provider

- 1) **Evaluate the Cloud Provider’s Data Center Infrastructure.** Take a data center tour and check out the “bells and whistles.” Ask questions about the data center’s physical security, cooling infrastructure, redundant power, back-up power, stand-by generators and IP network redundancy. Most qualified cloud providers will have documentation supporting their data center in regards to cooling, power and network. Private cloud providers should offer redundant data centers outside of their primary data center location. If they do not, you should look elsewhere.
- 2) **Ask for Data Center Certifications.** Many of your clients today, and in the future, will require compliances like SSAE 16, SAS70, HIPPA and PCI. If you are looking for a quality provider, these are a must.
- 3) **Evaluate the Cloud Provider’s Technical Support.** While on tour, ask the data center technicians (not the salesperson) any specific questions you might have regarding your operating system needs or other managed service requirements. Also, try calling or emailing technical support prior to signing a contract to see how responsive they are. Try contacting technical support after hours as well to determine the competence level of technicians on the second and third shifts. Some data centers are only staffed with “reboot” technicians at these times. Will that work for your business cloud hosting requirements?
- 4) **Evaluate the Cloud Provider’s Past Experience with Cloud Hosting and Managed Services.** Cloud computing is relatively new, and new cloud providers are entering the market every day. While cloud computing is fairly new, the problems it solves are fairly old. Seek a cloud provider with past experience offering dedicated servers, managed hosting and managed services. Stay away from the “pure play” colocation providers who just recently released a cloud platform because of a marketing push from upper management.
- 5) **Compare Local Cloud Providers to Well-Known Options like Amazon, EC2 or Google Cloud.** Local cloud providers in your geographic area may offer more options and flexibility than the big national cloud options. Many local data centers offer “hybrid cloud” options in which clients can have dedicated servers, colocated servers and cloud services all in one package. Others local cloud providers will allow clients to “showcase” their data center to potential clients or venture capitalists.

- 6) **Ask About Migration Services.** Many of the larger web-based cloud providers only provide “do-it-yourself” type service options. In many cases, new cloud clients require migration assistance because they don’t have the time and necessary technical personnel on staff. If you need migration services, find a cloud provider that offers professional and other managed services to assist you in developing a strategy and timeframe for the entire process. Even if you don’t require migration services at the start, it is a nice to have in case the need arises in the future.
- 7) **Read the Fine Print on the Service Level Agreement (SLA).** Spend the money upfront and have an attorney read through the contracts. This will be money well spent. Make sure both your IT department and marketing personnel are in agreement on the SLA terms before signing a contract.
- 8) **Analyze the Cloud Providers Entire Cloud Portfolio.** Do they offer both public and private cloud options? Do they offer hybrid cloud options? Even though you may only want a single public cloud server today, tomorrow you may require a more complicated private cloud solution because of customer requirements. What is their cloud infrastructure road map for new products and managed services such as application hosting?
- 9) **Pick a Provider Who Uses Well-Known Technology Vendors.** A cloud infrastructure is only as good as the hardware and network gear it resides on. Pick a provider who uses industry leading vendors like Cisco, HP, VM Ware and EMC. If the provider doesn’t offer brand names in their cloud platform, keep researching and find some more options. You will sleep better at night.
- 10) **Go With Your Gut and Work With Someone You Like and Trust.** Make sure you are comfortable with the cloud provider’s sales and IT teams. Depending upon your requirements, implementing a cloud project can be a long process. Pick a provider that you trust, one that you are comfortable with and one that understands your business and specific cloud hosting requirements.

If have any additional questions, please give us a call at 800-400-5732 or go to www.QuoteCloudComputing.com.