

Enabling Application Innovation in Azure

WHITEPAPER



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Overview

Migrating to Microsoft Azure can deliver much more than optimized IT spend and enhanced technical performance. Once an organization moves its workloads and data into Azure, there are also numerous opportunities for innovation, ranging from the implementation of AI-powered chatbots, to the streamlined, systematic review of legal documents via machine learning engines.

Such innovations support better agility, plus enable key business functions across departments as varied as sales and customer support. But many companies still have plenty of room for increasing the overall ROI they get from their Azure deployments. A 2020 Accenture survey of 2,000 IT decision-makers found that less than 40% of them believed they had fully achieved their cloud objectives.

Moreover, public cloud adopters and heavy cloud users in particular felt they were further away from their goals for speed and business enablement than those for cost savings. This gap makes sense: For example, shifting Windows Server infrastructure into Azure can yield substantial savings relatively quickly, but getting additional value from the newly



moved data and applications will take more time.

Azure innovation requires not only transitioning assets into the cloud but also getting all of the right tools and services in place to tap into Azure's true potential. From the Day 1 activities of basic migration to the Day 2 and beyond tasks related to innovation, Hanu can guide your Azure journey through our AzureWOW offering, which combines our Azure experience and expertise in areas like cloud monitoring and optimization with Azure's comprehensive platforms and services.

Innovation: Going Beyond Azure Migration and Modernization

What does it really mean to “innovate” in Azure? First, let’s position innovation as the last step on a cloud journey that typically progresses as follows:

- Initial Discovery
- Strategy Development
- Migration Planning and Execution
- Continuous Innovation and Optimization

In other words, innovation is the stage at which organizations go beyond ensuring that everything is just configured and running properly, to exploring what’s possible with the different APIs, tools and other solutions in Azure. Ultimately, Azure can help teams get actionable insights at scale, re-engineer key business processes and reach new audiences. Some of the specific outcomes of Azure innovation include:

More informed decision-making

What will customers expect from future products and services? Answering questions in this vein requires ready access to high-quality data, like market research and reports. However, many organizations lack technical



systems capable of reliably storing, analyzing, and delivering such information.

According to Coveo, up to 90% of all digital information is unstructured and siloed. Azure enables better data stewardship through services like Azure Data catalog, which simplifies discovery, and Azure Time Insights and Stream Analytics, two tools for real-time information analysis. Everything is one place, united by a common architecture.

Decision-making is also easier due to application consolidation. On-prem and public cloud apps can be centrally managed within Azure for a consistent experience.

Cloud-native experiences

A simple lift-and-shift can be the easiest way into Azure; Microsoft itself has highlighted use cases like existing .NET apps as candidates for this type of cloud rehosting.

Applications built for traditional IT paradigms and moved as-is will usually not take complete advantage of Azure's capabilities, though. Instead of investing significant time and effort into refactoring and modernizing them, building a cloud-native experience is often a superior option.

Serverless applications are a prime example of this type of innovation. Using Azure Functions, developers can create an event-driven experience, with compute resources available on-demand in response to actions such as transaction process in connected data systems.

Fully empowered developers

Azure innovation isn't valuable only to company leaders and customers. Developers also have much to gain from Azure's advanced tools and services. These solutions enable more productive development, for instance through the ability to directly integrate AI into

an application via Azure Cognitive Services. Azure DevOps services also provide a foundation for scalable adoption, with Agile tools, CI/CD pipelines, and many other components for creating the right workflow.

Superior reach and access via Azure Marketplace

The Azure Marketplace is a vast library of Microsoft-certified applications and services that are easy to try and deploy. Customers may purchase new solutions or add specific services such as machine learning to their existing applications to drive innovation.

For ISVs, Azure Marketplace provides a unique opportunity to increase overall reach. The onboarding process is straightforward, after which an ISV can seamlessly deploy an application and also connect with millions of customers worldwide, plus thousands of ecosystem partners and other sellers.

Explore Application Innovations with Azure

Beyond the high-level benefits of better-informed decisions, more cloud-native experiences and more empowered development teams, Azure also paves the way for some particular application innovations, all of which can generate value across business and IT operations.



Chatbots

Conversation-capable, AI-enabled bots have rapidly become fixtures of systems such as customer-facing landing pages on websites, as well as corporate intranets and HR systems.

The 2019 Salesforce State of Service survey found that more than half of services companies expected to implement chatbots within 18 months. Plus, 64% of agents assisted by chatbots were able to focus mostly on solving complex problems, compared to only 50% of ones working unassisted.

The Azure Bot Service allows for the creation of intelligent chatbots, built on Azure Cognitive Services and deployable across channels like Microsoft Teams and Facebook Messenger. These bots provide around-the-clock customer service and accurate answers to common queries.

Data centralization

Azure facilitates much more sophisticated and integrated data workflows than possible with on-premises infrastructure alone. For example, data can be centralized into Azure Synapse Analytics for highly scalable querying under either a serverless or provisioning resource model.

This service combines the features of a data warehouse and a big analytics engine, offering features such as streaming data ingestion and code-free pipeline management that help



teams discover insights more quickly. The experience is unified and intuitive, unlike the typical setup when working with siloed on-prem systems.

Machine learning

Using the adaptive power of Azure Machine Learning, an organization can explore many possible use cases, including but not limited to:

- Analyzing medical imagery and legal case documents
- Forecasting sales and inventory demand.
- Making recommendations for customers.
- Detecting fraud.
- Creating a predictive maintenance schedule.



Making Innovation Happen With AzureWOW

AzureWOW from Hanu gives you a straightforward path toward Azure innovation. Our expert team will assist in the initial migration and ongoing management of your Azure environment, to ensure that you have the right setup for building innovation services within Azure.

The Hanu cloud services portfolio includes assistance with Azure strategy, architecture, design, proof-of-concept, migration, and ongoing operations. We deliver a comprehensive, no-limits experience that includes proactive monitoring and management, along with continuous optimization so that your environments are safe and cost-effective. Hanu has ensured the success of Azure environments for hundreds of customers, and we can do the same for your organization.

To learn more about AzureWOW and how Hanu can help you realize Azure innovation, contact a member of our team today.

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