



“Cloud!” You only have to read the technology or business news (served up of course over the internet straight to the news app on your smartphone) to realise that Cloud – (the latest collective noun for all things, technology based delivered to you over the internet) is hailed as the future model for everything from internet shopping to the software you run your business on.

As a profession that’s watched its own customers undergo transformation and disruption from technology based change (and generally found the executives to lead it) executive search firms are relatively early in the cycle of bringing technology from a back office role to a more central and fundamental position in the business. But times are changing and every year that passes brings another wave of clients, candidates, and staff who think digital

Executive Search in the Cloud

David Grundy, CEO of Invenias, reflects on the opportunities Cloud technology brings for executive search firms

first, and firms increasingly need to be asking themselves what business relevance and value could the Cloud bring to them.

At its most basic level, Cloud, like all new technology paradigms, should allow a firm to reduce its costs. This may not be revolutionary, but costs matter, especially in down turns, and on a like-for-like basis a small to medium business is unlikely to be able to purchase and operate IT infrastructure as cost-effectively as a Cloud service provider, with its ability to deliver to and support vast numbers of users from a shared platform and support team. In addition Cloud providers can offer elastic pricing which, put simply, allows you to align your costs up and down with the business staffing levels.

Executive search has been enhanced by technology. Therefore, having a system unavailable for a few hours

is serious, a few days is critical, and permanent loss of data can put the entire firm at risk. Larger firms can afford the specialist knowledge and skills to run an infrastructure which assures highly secure, available and recoverable environments, but many small and mid-sized firms cannot. Cloud presents the opportunity to address these issues, and build resilience and protection into the business.

While the office remains a central hub for the operations of most search firms, internet and Cloud based applications are enabling a shift to more agile, flexible and mobile working. With Cloud applications people can start their day working at the office, continue to access data en route to, or at, a client meeting and then continue working from home at the close of a day. People want to connect to the Cloud using the device that works the way they do: at home and in the office this is invariably a laptop or desktop computer, but on the move laptops tend to be complemented by tablets and smart phones.

Perhaps the most fascinating, and in the longer term most important aspect of Cloud is its potential to evolve the way a firm thinks about the communication and relationships with its clients, candidates and other people in the professional and private network that underpins much of the firm's value. Connecting these people directly to the firm, capturing their valuable insight and data that can be shared and leveraged, whilst delivering valuable information and tools back to these stakeholders allows a digital engagement and relationship

About David Grundy

David Grundy, CEO & co-founder of Invenias, is ideally placed to comment on technology trends and their impact on the executive search industry having had 20 years of experience working in the software industry, plus direct experience of working in executive search as a co-founder of Ereveva, a London based executive search firm focused on the technology sector. The lack of suitable technology in the market drove him to co-found Invenias, the world's fastest growing provider of technology for executive search.

to compliment the direct and personal engagement, not replace it. For some firms these changes seem far off, and for others it's already happening.

Of course, critics suggest that Cloud will: cost you more; bring risks of data security, service failure and vendor lock-in; require staff to be office based. Furthermore, some people argue that client and candidate engagement should always be through direct contact. While these points are valid, they are also helpful as considerations in the way you might evaluate and select Cloud vendors to ensure concerns are addressed, leaving you free to focus on the opportunities Cloud can bring.

Perhaps the most commonly raised objection to Cloud is based on a misunderstanding that Cloud means losing the valuable and highly productive native desktop environment

and native apps and being forced to run your business life in a browser. Many people in search firms see their desktop and tablet apps such as Outlook as essential tools of the trade. Of course many of these firms are already connecting their Outlook to Cloud based Exchange services rather than run Exchange themselves. This is a great example of how Cloud has evolved to a pragmatic platform that allows you to leverage its benefits without giving up all the power and value of your smart devices with local applications.

Cloud clearly has the potential to reduce costs, manage technology risks, enable a mobile and agile workforce and evolve the way you interact with clients and candidates. If the risks are addressed through vendor selection, and the Cloud model deployed is a good fit for your overall business needs, then Cloud is not only relevant, but holds great promise to deliver real value for executive search firms.

To find out more about how AESC Members have benefited from using the Invenias Cloud applications for Executive Search click here to view our recent testimonial booklet. ■

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