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Modernization Challenges, Skills Gaps, and How to Achieve Faster Time to Value With a Managed Service Provider

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Abstract: This showcase highlights the interplay between cloud management networks and IT skills gaps and their impact on achieving faster time to value in modernization efforts. It explores how the evolving landscape of cloud technology necessitates a shift in IT skill sets, creating a gap that poses challenges to organizations striving for rapid modernization. By addressing this skills gap through a managed service provider (MSP), organizations can expedite their journey toward modernization, unlocking the potential for enhanced operational efficiency and agility in an increasingly competitive digital environment.

Overview

One of the big shifts in network management is the preference for cloud-based network management solutions. Cloud-based solutions are easy to access when working remotely, providing centralized visibility and control in distributed environments. In addition, cloud management networks are at the forefront of modernization efforts, offering scalability and flexibility, but their effective utilization is impeded by IT skills gaps. Organizations face challenges in bridging these skills gaps, hindering their ability to realize faster time to value in modernization initiatives.

Organizations need innovative strategies to address IT skills gaps, empowering IT teams to harness cloud technologies effectively and expedite the pace of modernization. Through targeted training, resource allocation, and skill development, organizations can position themselves to reap the benefits of accelerated modernization, enhancing their competitiveness and adaptability in the digital era.

In addition, the IT landscape is changing, and a growing number of organizations are shifting their IT operations to subscription models through an MSP, freeing up time to focus on their core business.

Navigating the IT Skills Gap by Accelerating Modernization Through Cloud Management Networks

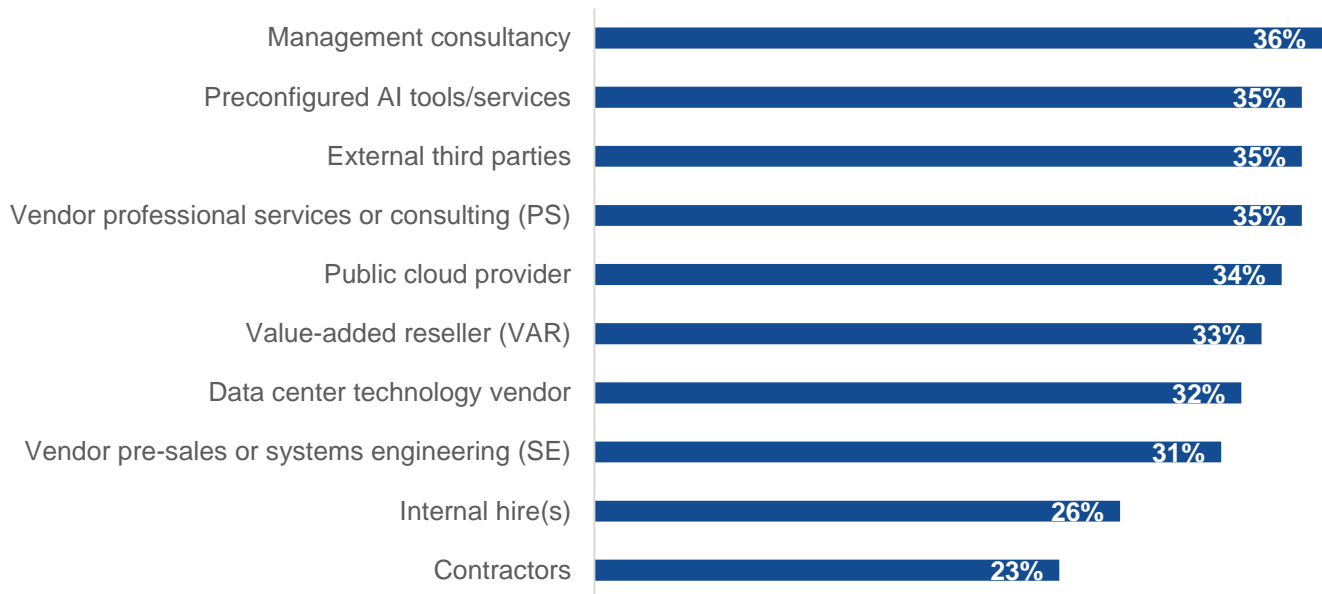
Navigating the IT skills gap continues to be a problem for many organizations. In addition, the IT environment continues to be complex, so it is key for organizations to look at the effectiveness of cloud management networks as they modernize. Exploring innovative approaches to bridge these IT skills gaps is important to enabling IT teams to harness cloud technologies and achieve faster time to value in modernization initiatives.

Most organizations feel they need help with the infrastructure supporting the technology. In many cases, organizations are looking outward to address skills gaps or acquire help for the selection, implementation, and management of infrastructure that supports their initiatives. According to research from TechTarget's Enterprise

Strategy Group, organizations most commonly tap management consultancies (36%), followed by external third parties (35%) and vendor professional services or consulting (35%), as a result (see Figure 1).¹

Figure 1. Solving Skills Gaps Requires Multiple Steps for Many Organizations

How is your organization planning to address skills gaps or help needed regarding the selection, implementation, and/or management of infrastructure supporting its AI initiatives? (Percent of respondents, N=375, multiple responses accepted)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

The bottom line is that many organizations don't have the time or money for all of the steps required to address skills gaps, such as internal training or costs associated with onboarding new hires, but partnering with an MSP offers a solution. An MSP can help with an organization's lack of key IT skills, empowering businesses to leverage cloud management networks as catalysts for enhanced operational efficiency and agility.

Accelerating Time to Value With Cloud-managed Networks

Organizations should examine the transformative power of cloud-managed networks in expediting time to value when seeking to modernize their operations. Cloud-managed networks can facilitate the swift realization of benefits, such as cost savings, improved agility, and enhanced customer experiences. Unified network visibility offers organizations a comprehensive view of their network infrastructure, enabling streamlined monitoring, troubleshooting, and management processes, ultimately leading to improved operational efficiency.

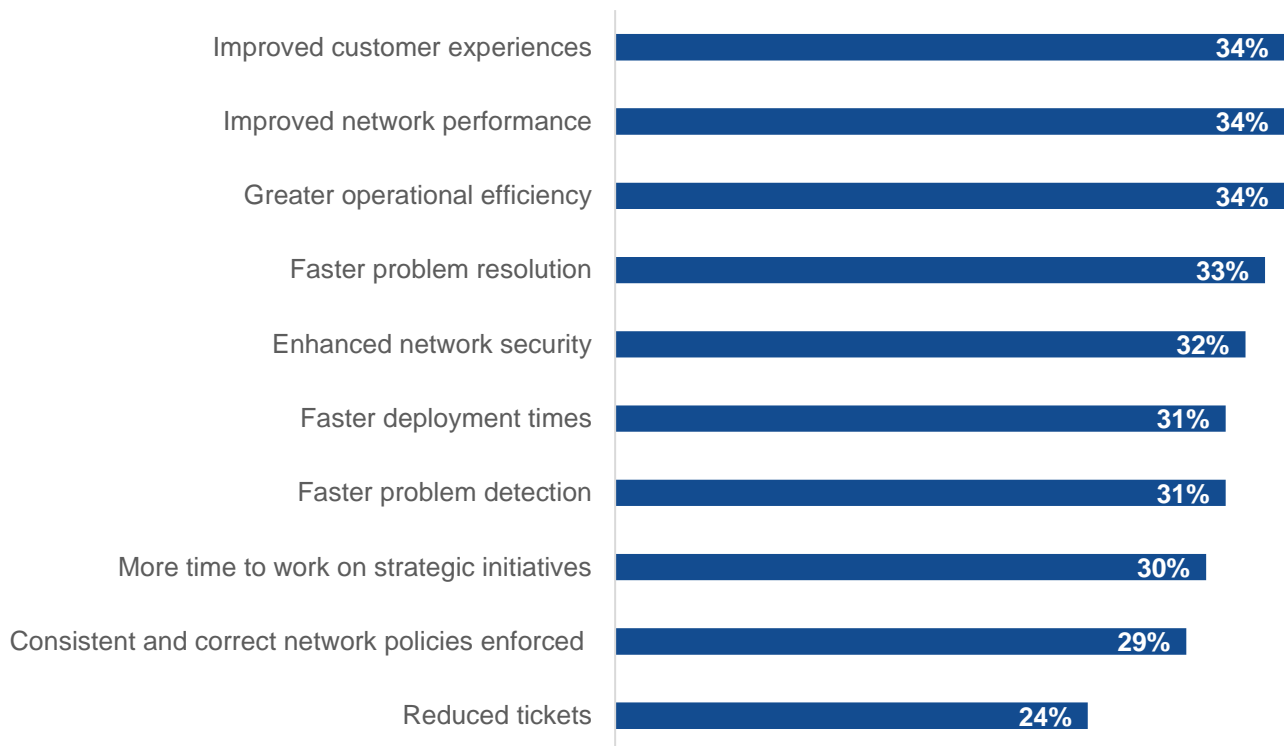
According to findings from Enterprise Strategy Group, enhanced visibility plays a crucial role in minimizing downtime, optimizing resource distribution, and gaining valuable insights into network performance. These factors collectively contribute to heightened operational efficiency. Figure 2 illustrates that 34% of survey respondents indicated that their organizations have already experienced or anticipate improvements in customer experiences,

¹ Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research Report, [Navigating the Evolving AI Infrastructure Landscape](#), September 2023.

enhanced network performance, and increased operational efficiencies through the consolidation of network visibility capabilities. Additionally, organizations acknowledged or anticipated quicker problem resolution (33%) and improved network security (32%).²

Figure 2. Common Benefits of Unified Network Visibility Include Improved Operational Efficiency

**What benefits has your organization achieved, or does it expect to achieve, by unifying or starting to unify its network visibility capabilities?
(Percent of respondents, N=319, multiple responses accepted)**



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Network Modernization and Building the Digital Future

Network modernization and performance are critical elements in driving excellence for organizations, including employee and customer experience. Network modernization helps organizations respond to the changes in how we now work, collaborate, and make decisions. In addition, it helps in building confidence in the agility and resilience of every organization. Advanced networking solutions are redefining the landscape of modernization, driving digital transformation across various industries.

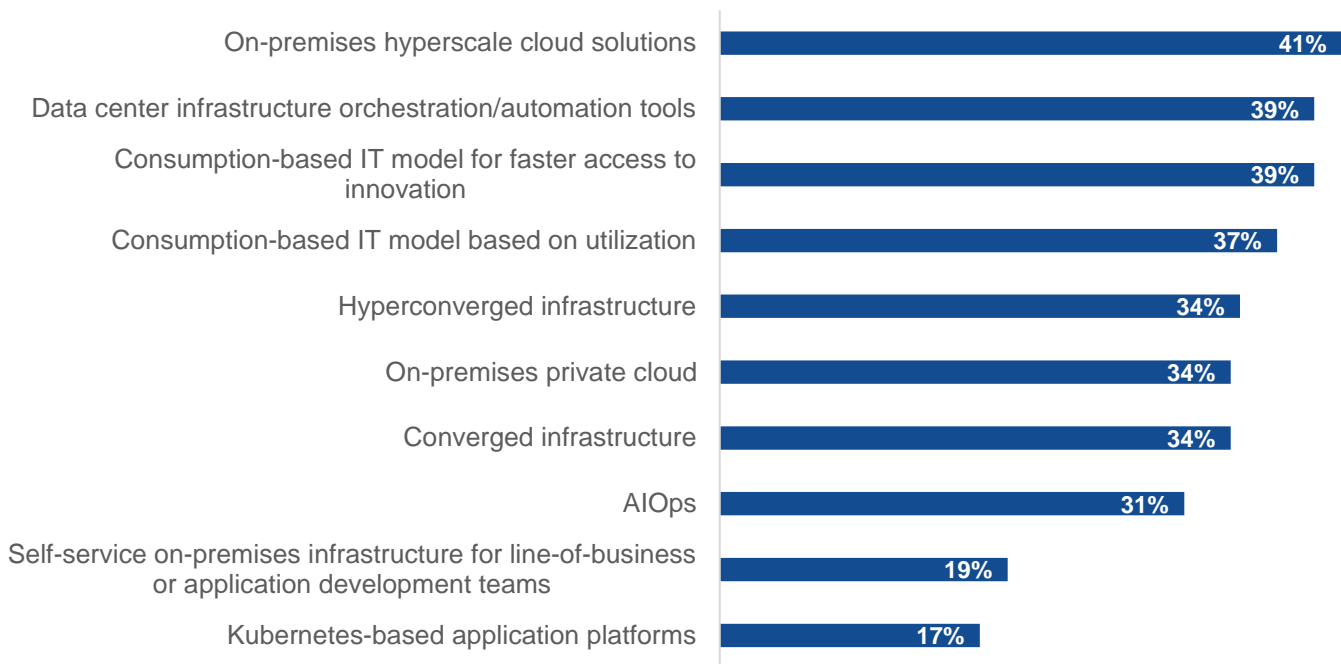
The strategies and technologies that underpin the synergy between networking and modernization drive innovation, scalability, and agility. Organizations are harnessing modernized networks to optimize their operations, improve communication, and enhance their competitive edge in the rapidly evolving digital ecosystem.

² Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research Report, [End-to-end Networking Visibility and Management](#), April 2023.

Enterprise Strategy Group research highlights that the landscape of IT modernization is evolving, with agile consumption-based models emerging as a prominent driver. Notably, 41% of organizations are gravitating toward on-premises hyperscale cloud solutions, managed services, and consumption-based IT models that hinge on utilization metrics (see Figure 3).³ This shift underscores a strategic departure from traditional, rigid IT infrastructures toward more flexible, scalable, and cost-effective approaches. By embracing consumption-based IT, businesses can align resource allocation with actual usage, optimizing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This trend reflects a broader industry acknowledgment of the benefits of cloud-like modernization, fostering a dynamic IT environment that adapts seamlessly to evolving business needs.

Figure 3. Consumption-based IT Rises as a Vehicle for Cloud-like Modernization

What technologies or approaches are key to helping your organization create a cloud-like experience in its data centers? (Percent of respondents, N=163, multiple responses accepted)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

The increasing demand for modernization to support cloud adoption and emerging technologies is a key catalyst behind data center retirement initiatives, as organizations seek to align their infrastructure with current business needs and future-proof their operations. The rising cost of maintaining and upgrading aging data centers is also driving organizations to consider retirement initiatives, as investing in modernization—including partnering with an MSP—often proves to be more financially sustainable in the long run.

³ Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Complete Survey Results, [Distributed Cloud Series: The State of Infrastructure Modernization Across the Distributed Cloud](#), August 2023.

The Cisco and MSP Advantage

Cisco offers partnerships with MSPs specialized in Cisco's broad portfolio of security products in order to streamline an organization's operations with a complete management system and simplify SaaS-based security. These MSPs can optimize capital investments in the data center on the customer's premises, including via a hosted SaaS offering, to assure the highest security for their customers.

Cisco offers MSPs a comprehensive and integrated portfolio of fast-to-deploy, easy-to-manage, quickly scalable, and secure solutions that will help get MSPs out of the vendor management business, as well as enable them to integrate Cisco solutions with management software and offer their clients integrated networking solutions with zero-day deployment that are backed by Cisco security.

Conclusion

Strategic cloud adoption has accelerated digital transformation but can also increase pressure on network infrastructure, stretching internal capabilities and resources. Organizations need new levels of agility in applying and enforcing security policies for users.

As a result, the network plays an increasingly important role. Given the need to not only keep applications available but also ensure optimized performance, organizations must have comprehensive, end-to-end visibility and management of these network environments.

Managed services are an essential and fast-growing part of the security market. With Cisco and Provider partners, organizations can access robust IT solutions and comprehensive security to help with the increasing demand for more security and capabilities for a remote and hybrid workforce.

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