WHY YOU'RE READY TO CREATE A PRIVATE CLOUD

A major issue with private-cloud adoption – internal expertise. The majority of data center teams don't have the internal expertise required to execute effectively on private-cloud architectures. This isn't a knock on these teams, it's a near impossibility to have and maintain that internal expertise. Remember back when VMware was gaining adoption. Nobody had virtualization knowledge so they learned it on the fly. As people became experts many times they left the nest where they learned it in search of bigger better worms. More importantly because it was a learn-as-you-go process the environments were inherently problematic and were typically redesigned several times to maximize performance and benefit.

Looking at the flip side of that coin, what is the value to the average enterprise or federal data center in retaining a private cloud architect? If they're good at their job they only do it once. Yes there will be optimization and performance assessments to maintain it, but that's not typically a full time job. The question becomes: Because you don't have the internal expertise to build a private cloud should you ignore the idea or concept? I would answer a firm no.

The company I work for has the ability, reseller agreements, service offerings and expertise to execute on private clouds. We're capable of designing and deploying

these solutions from the data center walls to the provisioning portals with experts on hand that have experience in each aspect, and enough overlap to tie it all together. To put our internal capabilities in perspective one of my companies offerings is private cloud containers and ruggedized deployable private cloud racks. These aren't throw some stuff in a box solutions they are custom designed containers outfitted with shock absorption, right-sized power/cooling, custom rack rails providing full equipment serviceability and private cloud IT architectures built on several industry leading integrated platforms. That's a very unique home grown offering for a systems integrator (typically DC containers are the space of IBM, Sun, etc.) I accepted this position for these reasons, among others.

This is not an advertisement for my company but instead an example of why you're ready to build private cloud infrastructures. You should not expect to have the internal expertise to architect and build a private cloud infrastructure, you should utilize industry experts to assist with your transition. There are two major methods of utilizing experts to assess, design, and deploy a private cloud: a capable reseller/solutions provider or a capable consultant/consulting firm. Both methods have pros and cons.

Reseller/Systems Integrator:

Utilizing a reseller and systems integrator has some major advantages in the form of what is provided at no cost and having a one stop shop for design, purchase, and deployment. Typically when working with a reseller much of the upfront consulting and design is provided free, this is because it is considered pre-sales and the hardware sale is where they make their money. With complex systems and architectural designs such as Virtual Desktop Infrastructures (VDI) and cloud architectures don't expect everything to be cost free, but good portions will be. These type of deployments require in depth assessment and planning sessions, some of which will be paid engagements but are typically low overall cost and vital to success. For example you won't deploy VDI successfully without first understanding your applications in depth. Application assessments are extended technical engagements.

Another advantage of using a reseller is that the hardware design, purchase and and installation can all be provided from the same company. This simplifies the overall process and provides the ever so important 'single-neck-to-choke.' If something isn't right before, during or after the deployment a good reseller will be able to help you coordinate actions to repair the issue without you having to call 10 separate vendors.

Lastly a reseller of sufficient size to handle private cloud design and migration will have an extensive pool of technical resources to draw upon during the process both internally and through vendor relationships, which means the team your working with has back-end support in several disciplines and product areas.

There are also some potential downsides to using a reseller that you'll want to fully understand. First a reseller typically partners with a select group of vendors that they've chosen. This means that the architectural design will tend to revolve around those vendors. This is not necessarily a bad thing as long as:

- The reseller takes an 'independent view' and has multiple vendors to choose from for the solutions they provide. This allows them to pick the right fit for your environment.
- You ensure the reseller explains to your satisfaction the reasoning behind the hardware choices they've positioned and the advantages of that hardware.

Obviously a reseller is in the business of making a sale, but a good reseller will leverage their industry knowledge and vendor relationships to build the right solution for the customer. Another note is even if your reseller doesn't partner with a specific vendor, they should be able to make appropriate arrangements to include anything you choose in your design.

Consultant/Consulting Firm:

Utilizing a consultant is another good option for designing and deploying a private-cloud. A good consultant can help assess the existing environment/organization and begin to map out an architecture and road map to build the private cloud. One advantage of a consultant will be the vendor independence you'll have with an independent consultant or firm. Once they've helped you map out the architecture and roadmap they can typically work with you during with the purchase process through vendors or resellers.

Some potential drawbacks to independent consultants will be identifying a reliable individual or team with the proper capabilities to outline a cloud strategy. The best bet here to minimize risk here will be to use references from colleagues that have made the transition, trusted vendors, etc. Excellent cloud architecture consultants exist, you'll just need to find the right fit.

Hybrid Strategy:

These two options are never mutually exclusive. In many cases I'd recommend working with a trusted reseller and utilizing an independent consultant as well. There are benefits to this approach, one the consultant can assist to 'keep the reseller honest' and additionally should be able to provide alternative opinions and design considerations.

Source: http://www.definethecloud.net/why-youre-ready-to-create-a-private-cloud/