



# Ready to put your business backbone in the cloud?

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CIOs are still on the fence  
when it comes to cloud adoption



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# Feet on the ground – head in the clouds

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Today's CIOs must be focused on developing technology-empowered business strategies. Even if the company itself isn't an early adopter, the CIO must be at the starting gate, at the forefront of technology and must be the one who brings the company to that point. They are responsible for business outcomes no less than any other member of the company board or executive management.

Leading a business is no longer about focusing on operational systems, it's about analyzing and identifying market trends, generating knowledge and insights, forecasting causes and effects of business activities and finding and implementing systems that will proactively advance the company.

In recent years, enterprise management software has had no choice but to evolve in response to a changing technology landscape born from reduced budgets, cloud computing, mobility, big data analytics and social engagement.

Factors such as the consumerization of IT together with changes in human behavior require instant information at our fingertips, wherever we are – and from any device.

Unsurprisingly, this has led to vendors looking at ways to disrupt the market and the rise of cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP). Leading market analyst, Gartner, has suggested it will be 10 years or more before the majority of organizations decide to move ERP to the cloud.

But the ERP world has been looking up, so to speak – looking 'up' in the direction of the cloud. Despite their predictions, Gartner and others, are now witnessing a slow but steady migration to the cloud by ERP vendors. Cloud ERP solutions are on the rise in industries such as professional services, business services and digital media.



# Does 'every' cloud have a silver lining?

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The cloud is regularly touted as the silver bullet for greater efficiency and flexibility. It reduces costs, inspires innovation and delivers value to business from transforming internal practices.

As business leaders, we're becoming accustomed to expecting the same app convenience we enjoy in our personal lives as in the workplace. Cloud adoption is inevitable and many CIOs have already placed non-essential business applications in the cloud.

But when it comes to cloud-based ERP, it is the CIOs who are really committed to future proofing their technology who have made the decision to move the business backbone - such as software maintenance, supply chain management and HR data - into the cloud. So what's stopping other CIOs from making the change and how can they overcome internal barriers?

Firstly, there is a suspicion among some business leaders around the security of sensitive data in the cloud. As part of developing a strategy for transferring data to cloud, it's important to find a vendor who has transparency on the quality of data processing within cloud-based ERP, particularly in relation to industry recognized compliance standards.

Indeed, many vendors have invested heavily in enterprise level security which may exceed what an on-premise solution could provide.

Secondly, there are often conflicting messages from the top of organizations who despite using cloud for some functions, aren't willing to look at upgrading their ERP system due to past experiences of lengthy IT deployment. Additionally, organizational adjustments are almost always a part of the transition to the cloud and the organization needs to be ready and willing to make the changes.



# The good CIO

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In order to address these barriers, businesses should undertake a proper evaluation of their goals and the current processes in place. The business needs to drive the project and the IT team has a role to play in highlighting the benefits.

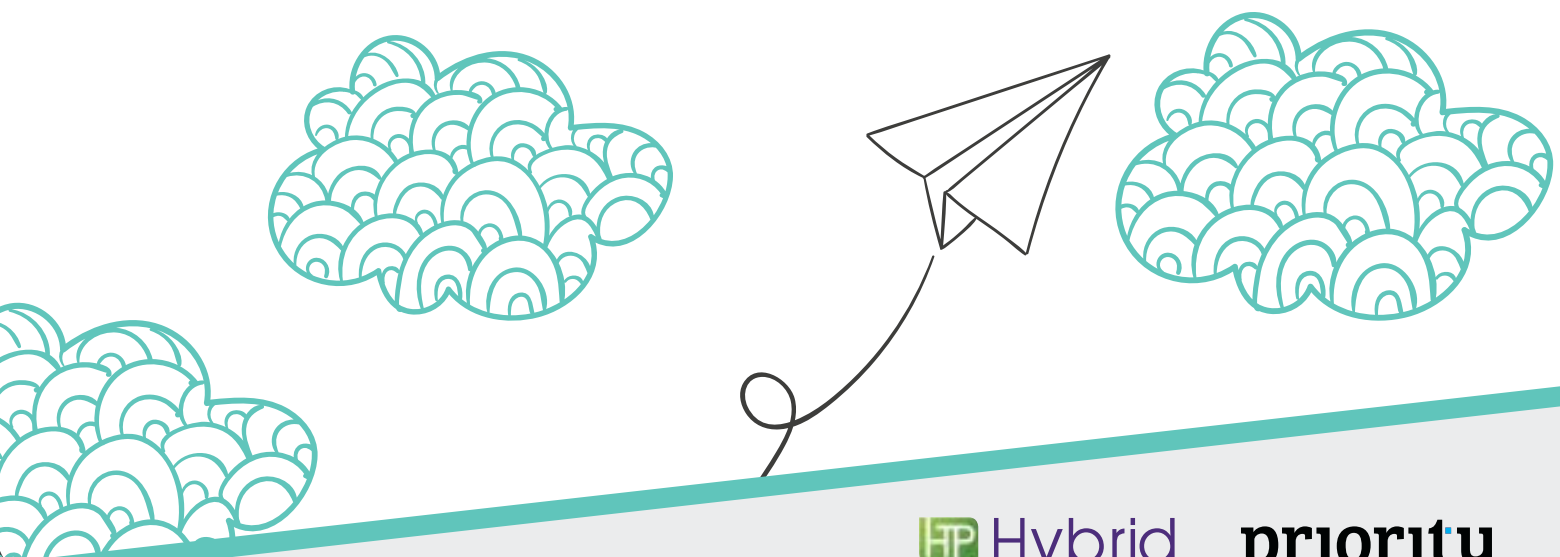
It's of paramount importance to connect business objectives to your ERP strategy to ensure value is realized.

Transitioning the operational side of the business to a cloud environment can be done efficiently. Once installed, businesses can benefit from core application scalability and reduced hardware costs. This is particularly useful for companies who are looking for affordable alternatives to the up-front expense of upgrading servers.

The scalability afforded by "pay as you go" business management is another way of ensuring time and money isn't spent on the IT team managing hardware, software, and upgrades.

The good news for CIOs and their teams considering moving some or all ERP functions online is that at least some ERP vendors are prepared for this move. The impact of flexible cloud-based solutions combined with the growing appeal of SaaS and outsourcing processes means there is an alternative for business users who remain dissatisfied with their incumbent system.

In addition to the well documented benefits of cloud such as ease of deployment, immediacy and accessibility, cloud ERP greatly improves the agility of business operations.





# All aboard

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As with any IT move, measuring post implementation results will allow for complete clarity on the real value cloud can bring to core business processes.

Partner relationships become easier to get up-and-running, integrating systems in response to business growth becomes a more efficient process and real-time collaboration is enabled across the enterprise.

In a mobile age, there is an ever-increasing need for businesses to engage more effectively with employers, customers and suppliers. This should continue to propel companies beyond the era of on-site ERP and to the cloud as they look for ways to stand out from competitors.

For companies who are tired of dealing with an ageing legacy system, maybe it's time to 'bite the (silver) bullet' – or risk getting left behind.



## About Priority Software

Priority Software provides flexible, end-to-end business management solutions for organizations of all sizes in a wide range of industries, from a fully featured ERP platform serving multinational corporations, to small and growing businesses. Recognized by top industry analysts and professionals for its product innovation, Priority improves business efficiency and the customer experience, providing real-time access to business data and insights in the cloud, on premise, and on-the-go. With offices in the US, UK, Belgium and Israel and a global network of business partners, Priority enables 10,000 ERP customers in 40 countries to manage and grow their business.

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