Three tough business challenges a private cloud can handle

More organizations are discovering that private cloud gives IT the right foundation to tackle three tough business challenges every day:

1 How to leverage information technology to quickly respond to new or changing requirements

2 How to optimize efficiency and keep a lid on costs

3 How to enable more productive and satisfied employees, partners and customers

Private cloud: potential benefits

In simplest terms, a private cloud is an evolution of datacenter virtualization that allows organizations to transform the way they provide IT, from an infrastructure-centric to a service-centric approach.

Having your own private cloud can offer huge advantages, especially if you've been feverishly watching your organization's IT struggle to keep up with rapidly changing requirements in an era of increasing financial pressures.

Right now, as a CEO or business owner, you may be worried that your organization doesn't have the right IT to capitalize on the next big opportunity. Your CFO may be juggling the budget for new hardware, software, upgrades and add-ons on a regular basis, just to keep you up to date with technology. And what about your IT department? Is it coming up short when dealing with user expectations? Is your user experience as appealing, fast and safe as common Internet experiences?

If any of these things ring true, then a private cloud might make sense for your organization.

Where a private cloud fits with your current virtualization and cloud efforts

If you've already started down the path of virtualization, or if you have already started to use some public cloud services, then a private cloud solution may be the next logical step.

The good news is that, at its core, private cloud computing can leverage the assets you already own and enable the configuration of a range of service-level pools. The

investments you've made so far in data management will still be valid, and your new private cloud solution can be adopted incrementally. Of course, depending on your current infrastructure, there may be more involved than just installing some cloud management software to oversee your existing servers, storage and networks.

You may be using public cloud computing for the lower cost considerations, and in turn finding security and availability not up to standards. You can address both concerns with private cloud hosting. Once the infrastructure is built to suit your applications, you can connect to a public cloud provider hosting cloud services on a compatible layer to transition to flexible hybrid-cloud capability. There are several other options to consider as well.

Private cloud solutions don't fall into the "one size fits all" category, so it's important to look for providers that can give you exactly what you need. The payoffs can be significant over the long run, which is why many organizations are actively preparing for private clouds to play a major role in their IT strategies.

What else can a private cloud solution do?

Ask almost any business leader at any company if they'd like to eliminate IT-related bottlenecks, while also improving the user experience, and the answer will be a resounding, "yes". A private cloud can effectively serve to do both.

A private cloud can empower users and customers with the right service levels for each application and user, optimize application delivery with streamlined and simplified IT operations, and enable service-centric IT that accelerates organizational responsiveness.

Let's look at how private cloud addresses the common challenges we've identified:

Tough business challenge #1:
Quickly responding to new or changing requirements

Private cloud computing can give you increased agility, speed and flexibility. It lets you aggregate resources – those you have, and those you add – into reusable pools that can be rapidly configured to roll out new functionality, or scale an existing application.

Along with this comes on-demand self-service functionality, in which provisioning of workloads from your resource pools can be delegated to individuals or teams to support their projects. Those users can then use the resources in ways they see fit, such as creating new applications and services. A private cloud solution is flexible in a way that allows the streamlining of processes that once slowed organizational responsiveness.

- The CXO can drive a quick response to new or changing requirements while minimizing risk of service interruptions, data loss and compliance violations.

- IT managers can roll out new users and applications more quickly.

Tough business challenge #2:
Optimizing efficiency and keeping a lid on costs

The metered usage that comes with a private cloud allows you to see the financial payoff that comes with greater IT efficiency. In a private cloud, the costs associated with IT resources are more visible to individual departments. This allows for more accurate financial tracking than in traditional corporate environments where IT generally proposes an estimated budget for maintenance, upgrades and new technologies.

When it comes to managing capital expenditures, you can reduce upfront costs with a private cloud's higher densities, better investment protection and higher asset utilization. By allocating the right level of resources, you can reduce your total cost of ownership (TCO) and reduce over-provisioning with service-level pools.

Operating budgets can also be better managed. Reduce power and cooling costs with a power-efficient solution through service-level pools. Streamlining configuration and delegating workload provisioning cuts hours spent on managing infrastructure. Finally, simplify with resource abstraction and automated tools and reduce your IT environment's physical configuration with converged infrastructure.

Tough business challenge #3:
Enabling productive and satisfied users

By improving the experience of the end users – no matter what their roles – a private cloud solution can also enhance users' productivity and satisfaction.

Application delivery can be optimized, which reduces the time and manpower required to launch and maintain applications. As a result, the end user is provided with the right performance levels for each application, along with the simplicity of a graphical user interface that consolidates control over key aspects of the platform. Their productivity levels are increased.

Systems can be engineered for high availability of service, meaning there is redundancy in place to keep them continuously operational for longer periods of time, while maintaining the infrastructure in the event of any unforeseen component failure.

Integrated data protection within a private cloud environment minimizes the risk of service interruptions and minimizes the potential for data loss. It also helps with recovery from outages, should they occur.

How Dell can help with your private cloud initiative

Dell takes a practical approach that lets you leverage your existing IT investments, apply private cloud capabilities incrementally and simplify management of your cloud.

With Dell's private cloud solutions you can transform your IT environment from infrastructure-centric to service-centric. The flexible modular portfolio of intelligent platform building blocks, heterogeneous management tools and cloud services enable you to get the optimized IT environment your organization is looking for.

Dell works in partnership with Microsoft and provides complete private cloud service offerings, from design stage to deployment to operations.

To learn more about the Dell and Microsoft private cloud solutions, visit Dell.com/privatecloud

Sources: "Priming Data Center Infrastructure for a Private Cloud", by Mike Laverick, TechTarget Inc., 2011. "Tips for Building a Private Cloud", by Steve Cimino and Greg Shields, TechTarget Inc. "Private Cloud: Watch Results Soar with a New Freedom", by Nicola Massier-Dhillon, Metia. "Dell Enterprise Systems for Private Cloud, GTM solution summary", provided by Dell.