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4 URGENT BUSINESS IMPERATIVES TO CONSIDER WHEN MIGRATING TO SAP S/4HANA

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INTRODUCTION

It's not surprising that many IT organizations have delayed their migration of SAP to S/4HANA. Overwhelmed by demands ranging from supporting work-from-home employees in the COVID crisis to fending off competitors to serving fickle customers and complying with data privacy regulations, many IT leaders have put SAP migration on the back burner—large and complex projects that are part of bigger digital transformation initiatives can be eclipsed by more immediate needs to "keep the lights" on in the current global situation.

However, as the world settles into the "new normal" businesses are realizing that some of these digital transformation initiatives should not be delayed and may be essential to their future. When IT leaders consider the value of their SAP applications, the choice of infrastructure—the residence of their most valuable asset, their data—takes on a new and more urgent aspect.

In fact, the choice of infrastructure to support and protect an SAP environment has the ability to make—or break—the organization's ability to effectively use the SAP stack. By considering SAP as within its overall cloud strategy, the business can enjoy the benefits of agility and scalability, simplified deployment and development, access to next-generation services, as well as the cost-efficiencies that come with a move to the cloud.

But a lift-and-shift of all SAP applications and data into a public cloud may not be appropriate or feasible for all businesses or industries. Data sovereignty laws and security issues may call for sensitive data to remain on premises. Workloads that are latency-sensitive or require fast throughput may be best suited to be placed near the apps and users that need them.

As such, the best solution is a hybrid installation of SAP S/4HANA; one that allows the flexibility to maintain current infrastructure, deploy new infrastructure, or split data and applications in a way that makes the most sense for the organization. By building a strategic plan, organizations can assure the best possible protection of data assets, flexibility and scalability of compute infrastructure for applications, and the ability to move workloads and data as business needs change.

HYBRID CLOUD USAGE

87%

Expected to more than double

42%

2020   2022
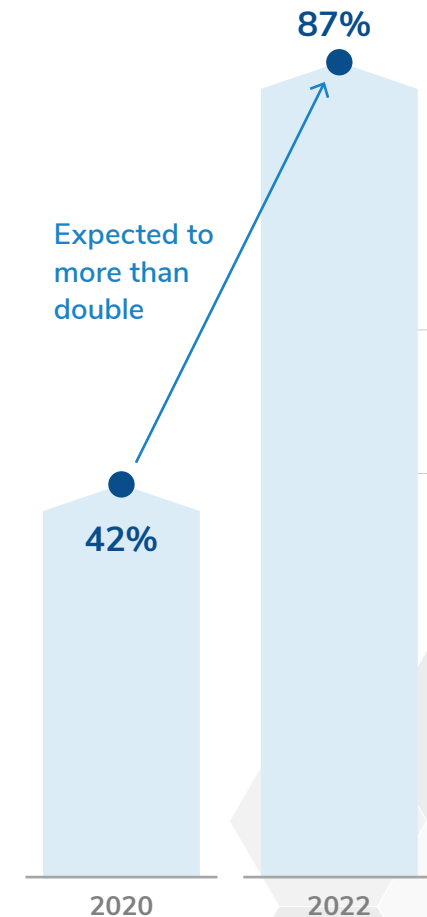
Source: 2020 Frost & Sullivan Global Cloud User Survey, August 2020

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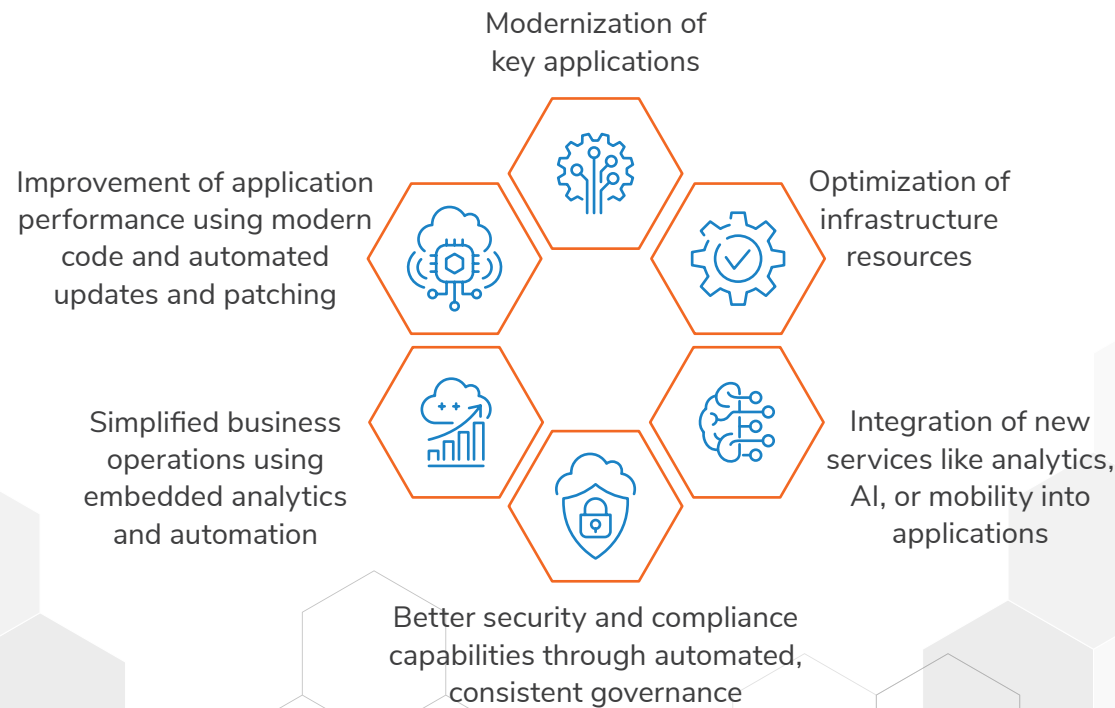
DRIVERS FOR SAP S/4HANA ADOPTION

To many, S/4 HANA represents an opportunity to improve business processes and streamline IT systems. Notwithstanding these advantages, SAP's business decision to sunset support for legacy ERP systems is applying significant pressure on its customers to accelerate their journey.

Changing familiar processes and interfaces can bring risk, especially when dealing with key workloads and data. Fear of

process change and business disruption may slow or derail progress. Similarly, building a strong business case for the migration is equally challenging. But communicating the business benefits of a move to SAP S/4HANA—aligned with corporate goals for digital transformation—can help colleagues better understand the reasons and outcomes, and champion the move.

Here are some points for business colleagues to consider.

SAP S/4HANA MIGRATIONS ENABLE

Modernization of key applications

Improvement of application performance using modern code and automated updates and patching

Optimization of infrastructure resources

Simplified business operations using embedded analytics and automation

Integration of new services like analytics, AI, or mobility into applications

Better security and compliance capabilities through automated, consistent governance

51%

Among SAP customers who have at least started planning their migration, just over half expect to migrate at least 81% of their ERP instances to S/4HANA

Source: SAPInsider Benchmark Report, February 2020
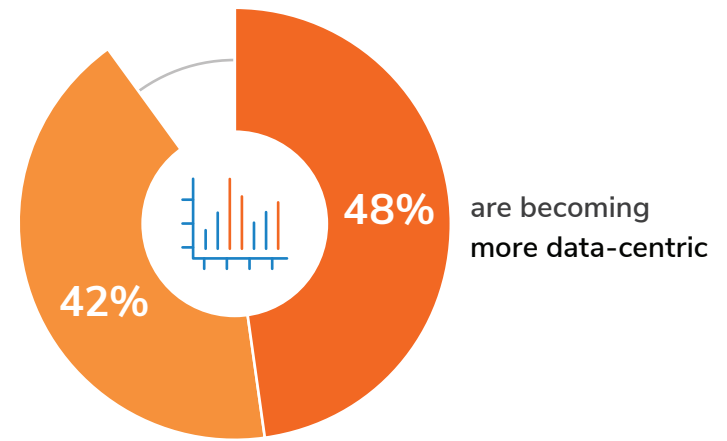
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THE CHALLENGES OF LEVERAGING CORE SAP DATA IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT

While cloud is the ideal deployment model to help businesses modernize business processes, data is the currency that makes cloud-based applications work. Separated from data, most applications—particularly SAP-based applications—have limited value. In today's hybrid IT world, the business needs to access its data from any platform where its applications are housed, including on premises and any number of cloud providers. If the applications move, the data still needs to be easily accessible, and without massive re-engineering or re-coding to point the data to a new location.
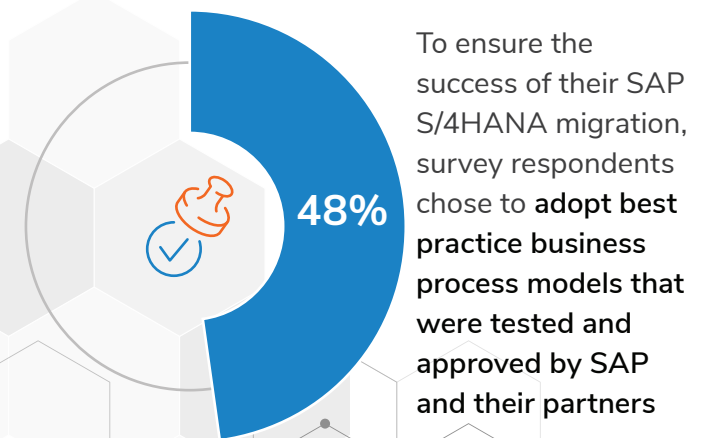
Security is also a major concern, especially when dealing with data generated by SAP applications. Many applications deal with sensitive employee or customer data, as well as financial information and transactions that are subject to regulations.

Business leaders are highly aware of the risks associated with security breaches, including costs to repair damage, loss of reputation, regulatory fines, and even loss of customers or the business itself. They need to see that the data platform that supports their SAP workloads can provide the required agility, as well as high security and compliance, to minimize business risk.

48% are becoming more data-centric

42% expect to start a journey toward data centricity by 2022

Source: 2020 Frost & Sullivan Global Cloud User Survey, August 2020

48% To ensure the success of their SAP S/4HANA migration, survey respondents chose to **adopt best practice business process models that were tested and approved by SAP and their partners**

Source: SAPInsider Benchmark Report, February 2020

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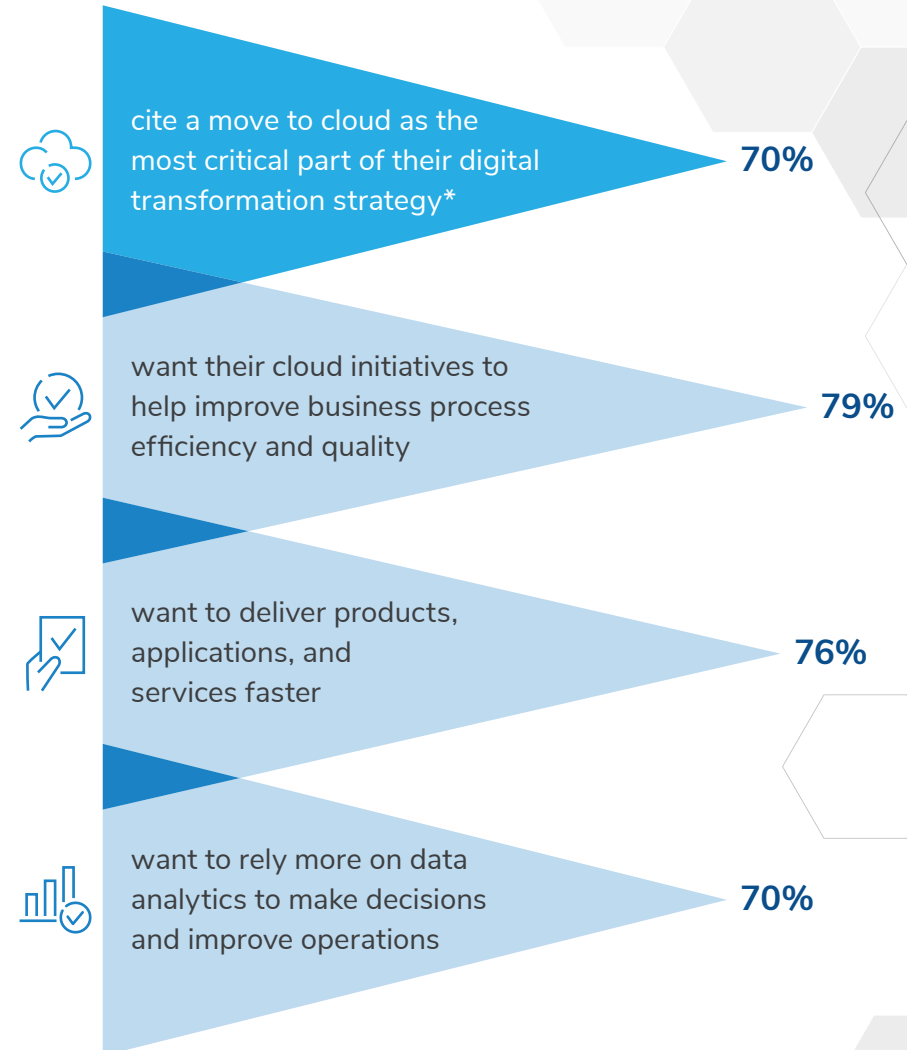# TRANSLATING BUSINESS IMPERATIVES INTO THE RIGHT DATA FABRIC

In considering data platforms, the IT department needs to take time to think about both the what and the why. At the end of the day, business leaders aren't concerned with platform specifications—they care only about the benefits the platform delivers. The IT department's job is to translate their concerns and needs into benefits offered by its chosen platform.

The business wants agility—the ability to make changes to business processes, service delivery, or even product development—at a moment's notice. From IT's perspective, this requires the ability to move workloads across different infrastructures, to provide the right availability, resiliency and performance under any usage conditions.

The IT team must choose a data infrastructure and management solution that supports migration with minimal disruption. Based on the available choices today, a data fabric—or an architecture and set of services that offer consistent capabilities across multiple endpoints spanning both on premises data centers and different cloud environments—is the best choice. The right data fabric simplifies data management in a hybrid environment, including access and control. It also enables the ability to leverage data-related services (like analytics, AI, and ML), and protects data in a single platform.

The IT team's task is to show the business why its chosen data platform—one with a unified data fabric—is the BEST INVESTMENT TO HELP THE BUSINESS SUCCEED TODAY, AND INTO THE FUTURE.

BUSINESS AND IT LEADERS...
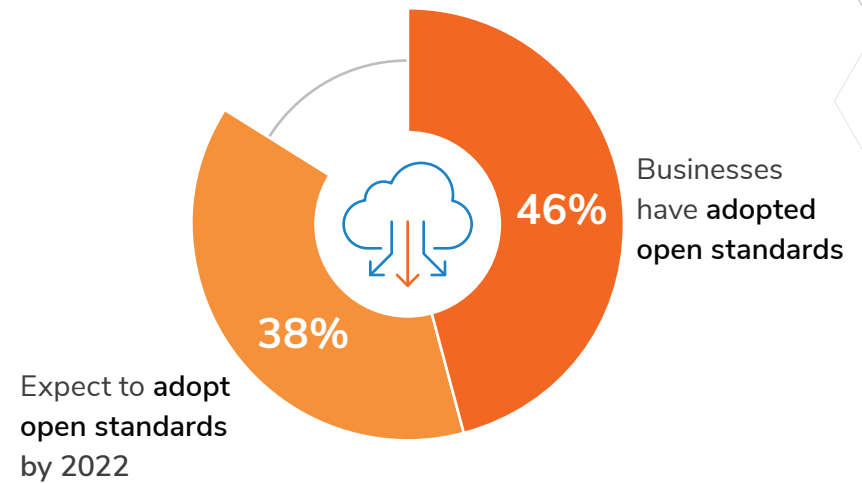
cite a move to cloud as the most critical part of their digital transformation strategy* — **70%**

want their cloud initiatives to help improve business process efficiency and quality — **79%**

want to deliver products, applications, and services faster — **76%**

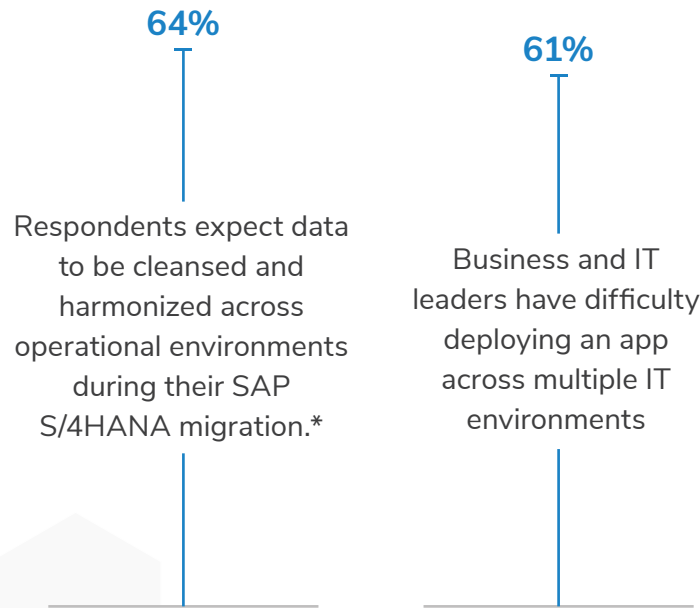want to rely more on data analytics to make decisions and improve operations — **70%**

* Frost & Sullivan 2019 Global Cloud User Survey, June 2019

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IMPERATIVE 1: GIVE THE BUSINESS CHOICE

When designing a comprehensive data management strategy to support SAP workloads, it's important to encompass all possible environments, workloads, and applications that the business may use. The data fabric must enable data to be accessed from any infrastructure, applying the same consistent governance regardless of where data resides.

A data platform with an open architecture ensures that data will be accessible by any application in any infrastructure today, and remain accessible as SAP workloads move. It also allows the same services to be accessed across environments, and applies the same data protection and compliance policies, ensuring the safety and integrity of the data.

64%

Respondents expect data to be cleansed and harmonized across operational environments during their SAP S/4HANA migration.*

61%

Business and IT leaders have difficulty deploying an app across multiple IT environments

46%
Businesses have **adopted open standards**

38%
Expect to **adopt open standards by 2022**

The data fabric must **ENABLE DATA TO BE ACCESSED FROM ANY INFRASTRUCTURE**, applying the same consistent governance regardless of where data resides.

* SAPInsider Benchmark Report, February 2020

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IMPERATIVE 2: LOWER TCO

While there are many paths to deploying SAP in a hybrid cloud, some models offer benefits that others cannot. By choosing a data platform that is purpose-built for hybrid environments and unified in terms of its architecture, it not only ensures high performance of the data platform, but also helps deliver a lower total cost of ownership to the business.

Traditional data solutions may operate in a more siloed manner, keeping storage and management platforms separate. This requires different resources to manage each "silo" and requires more time, energy, and ultimately budget to manage each separate component of the total solution.

In a unified approach, the storage infrastructure, management plane, and related data services are delivered as a single unit that is easier to configure and maintain, and less costly over the life of the platform—important for business critical workloads like SAP that scale over time and can become unwieldy in cloud environments. Controlling the associated costs is key to the lines of business that may be charged back for usage, as well as for C-suite executives who watch the bottom line.

Choosing a data platform **PURPOSE-BUILT FOR HYBRID ENVIRONMENTS AND UNIFIED IN TERMS OF ITS ARCHITECTURE**, ensures high performance of the data platform and helps deliver lower TCO.

WHAT BUSINESSES WANT FROM A DATA MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

68%

Managing costs is a key concern when moving to the cloud

33%

Only one-third of business and IT leaders consider their current data management solution "excellent" when it comes to migrating data across environments

Source: Frost & Sullivan.

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IMPERATIVE 3: DELIVER APPLICATION PERFORMANCE AND UPTIME

At the heart of any digital transformation is the need to enable the business to be more agile and respond faster to ever-changing needs. Whether usage patterns make moving an application to a new infrastructure the best move for the business, a localized event brings a regional infrastructure down and requires recovery to a different environment, or a global event suddenly changes everyone's work location overnight, organizations need to be able to move or access data—particularly the vital data leveraged by SAP applications— at a moment's notice to ensure both the proper function and the continuity of workloads. And should the business' needs change quickly; the data platform must be able to support dynamic development requirements, at any time—today and in the future.

A full-featured data platform allows the data to be stored and moved anywhere it's needed—whether to a centralized data center or closer to an edge location. It enables the IT department to protect and assure compliance, as well as integrate pre-vetted services, all from within a single platform. It gives the business the tools it needs to help the business prevent, and if necessary, recover from adverse events as well as respond quickly to any scenario the market brings to bear. Choosing a unified data fabric now offers better application performance and uptime, which means more productivity.

> A full-featured data platform ALLOWS THE DATA TO BE STORED AND MOVED ANYWHERE it's needed

FEWER THAN HALF OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FELT THEIR DATA MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS…

...did an excellent job of protecting data on multiple endpoints — **33%**

...were able to migrate data from any source to any target — **33%**

...were effective at increasing business agility and delivering products and services faster. — **41%**

Source: Frost & Sullivan.

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IMPERATIVE 4: PROTECT DATA THROUGHOUT MIGRATION

As a business migrates to SAP S/4HANA, a common benefit is the ability to leverage clouds—whether public or private—for running dev/test workloads, bursting, or occasionally, for production workloads. As such, data leveraged by SAP workloads is likely to be moved and queried by a variety of applications in a variety of locations. Data needs to move freely, while still ensuring the highest levels of protection.

SAP data accuracy and protection throughout migration is critical. Dropped packets, lost data, or breaches in transit impact application performance, or even the ability of the application to function. This poses a significant threat to business productivity and the ability to deliver services efficiently.

Building a data fabric that connects multiple clouds and unifies data protection ensures that important data will be moved without loss. Integrated tools and services assure data integrity and compliance.

Data needs to MOVE FREELY, WHILE STILL ENSURING THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF PROTECTION.

DATA MIGRATION POSES CHALLENGES TO BUSINESSES

59%

state that as they implement their cloud initiatives, migration was a crucial or very important challenge

36%

have repatriated applications due to problems with migration

Source: Frost & Sullivan.

WHAT DO BUSINESSES NEED IN A MANAGED DATA PLATFORM PROVIDER?

A trusted partner with an integrated data fabric and the experience of successful past migrations will be able to ease concerns over failed migrations. Their past experiences and partnership with SAP will help to ensure the success of the business's move to cloud.

There are many potential partners to help businesses migrate SAP data to S/4HANA. Consider the various options based on the following attributes:

STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH SAP

Vendors with a long history with SAP will have earlier access to new enhancements, tools, and features and will be able to bring those to the business faster than their competitors.

CLOUD CONNECTIVITY

To enable a truly hybrid experience, businesses need a data platform provider that delivers seamless, secure data movement across any environment. The cloud provides unique capabilities that enable developing, testing, training, and deploying SAP workloads faster.

UNIFIED ARCHITECTURE

Vendors that bring infrastructure together with the best tools and services are in the best position to provide management tools, advanced services, and infrastructure in a single, unified platform that can be easily managed by fewer resources—which keeps costs in line as well.

FLEXIBLE

Choose a platform that can run on any cloud or infrastructure and can move data quickly and easily when business needs dictate, without sacrificing availability, security, or compliance.

EXPERTISE

The chosen partner should have a team of SAP experts on hand to ensure a smooth transition to S/4HANA, as well as a strong core of talent with knowledge of the next-generation technologies.

Source: Frost & Sullivan.

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THE LAST WORD

In order to remain competitive, businesses need to ensure their critical business operations are fully modernized and cloud-ready. Migrating legacy SAP Business Suite to SAP S/4HANA will enable the business to be more agile, efficient, and cost-productive. However, the migration must be performed with careful consideration, as part of a strategic cloud initiative.

As businesses make this critical transition, ensuring that data is available across a hybrid environment is essential to success. Data must not only be moved without incident, but must be formatted in a way to make it highly accessible across a variety of infrastructures—regardless of where the application is querying from. If data migration fails, the disruption to the business can be devastating.

Organizations need a full suite of tools and services to modernize their applications and ensure they can provide the kind of functionality the business expects. Most important, they require a data fabric that is flexible and functional, and an expert partner to run it. By choosing a unified data fabric, business leaders can rest assured their data will be accessible, safe, and available—wherever and whenever the business needs it.

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