

Chapter 24

Ten Cloud Dos and Don'ts

In This Chapter

- ▶ Choosing the right starting point
- ▶ Standing on the shoulders of SOA giants
- ▶ Watching your back
- ▶ Being part of a SOA team

We spend most of this book describing the cloud in great detail. In this chapter, we focus on a few simple dos and don'ts.

Don't Be Reactive

Many businesspeople who want to save money fast are tempted to throw out the data center and put all computing into a public cloud. Although this might sound good for a few hours, it isn't a thoughtful approach. In the end, you *might* decide which capabilities that you should put into the cloud, but you need to do your homework first. For example, do you have compliance issues to consider? What is the difference in cost between a public, private, hybrid, or even a traditional data center? You need to make sure that all the possible impacts have been considered before you spring into action.

Do Consider the Cloud a Financial Issue

You might start looking at some approaches to the cloud that sound really good. But before you jump in, do the math. How large is your company? What's the nature of your computing environment? How many applications do you support? How much does your current environment cost? How much spare capacity do you have in your data center? Are there applications that can cost effectively be moved to a Software as a Service model? Before you do anything, follow the money.

Don't Go It Alone

Although some companies have the sophistication to build their own clouds, they're the exception. Most companies need help, so don't go into this alone. An entire industry is just waiting out there to help you. Don't ignore it. Beg, borrow, steal, but get help. Talk to your peers who have done some early cloud projects. Consult with systems integrators, technology companies, and other consultants who have solid experience with best practices. Some cloud Web sites and organizations have great ideas and collaboration opportunities.

Do Think about Your Architecture

Just because you're thinking about moving into the cloud doesn't mean architecture is no longer important. In fact, it's more important than ever. You'll probably have business services that are designed for reuse that should be stored in a private or public cloud that need to be designed for reuse. You will likely have a hybrid environment that needs to be well planned to conform to your company's service level agreement and performance requirements.

Don't Neglect Governance



If you don't pay attention to compliance and governance, you're putting your company at risk. For example, some industries require that you store data in a very specific way. Some countries require that your customer data never is stored outside of its territory. You still have to comply with government regulations. These issues don't disappear into a cloud.

Don't Forget about Business Process



Start with the business process that you want to automate with your cloud initiatives. No matter which form of cloud you're considering, process is the building block. If you haven't figured out how business processes will be managed in this new distributed world, your business could be at risk.

Do Make Security the Centerpiece of Your Strategy

It's easy to get caught up in the mix-and-match euphoria and forget about the nitty-gritty issues. Pay close attention to the security implications of moving to the cloud. You still need a well-planned security strategy.

Don't Apply the Cloud to Everything

Don't get carried away. Not everything belongs in a cloud. For example, your data center might have a large, complex, and customized application used by a dozen people. It's critical to your business. You have no economic or business reason to move that application to the cloud.

Do your homework so you have guidelines to help you determine if an application or a function belongs in the data center, a public cloud, or a private cloud.

Don't Forget about Service Management



It's easy to make the assumption that if something is in the cloud, you don't have to worry about managing it. This isn't true. Although many cloud providers allow you to have a portal view of their own service levels, it's your responsibility to keep track of any service you have put into either a public or a private cloud. Because many companies inevitably have a hybrid environment, you need to manage your overall service level.

Do Start with a Pilot Project



Cloud computing will be around for a long time, so get experience now. Start with a pilot project. For example, you might want to start with a Software as a Service platform. You might use a public cloud for testing a new application before it goes into production. This gives you a feeling for what it means to give up this level of control.

You are still responsible for the integrity and security of your information. Finding out how to manage your cloud vendors is an important starting point.

