

CIOs Challenged to Achieve “Broker of Services” Model for IT

As businesses evolve toward hybrid architectures seeking to use the best of on-premise and cloud-based resources, most IT executives polled in a recent IDG Research Services survey see their roles evolving to become brokers of services who can help match business users to the most appropriate resource. But for most, progress in this transformation has been modest at best.

Increased agility, decreased risk

The IT function is in a state of flux. Many organizations—especially those at the mid-size and enterprise level—are working toward transforming IT into a “broker of services” by mixing and matching on- and off-premise services to achieve the right balance of cost, agility and operational efficiencies. This approach reduces risk, as well.

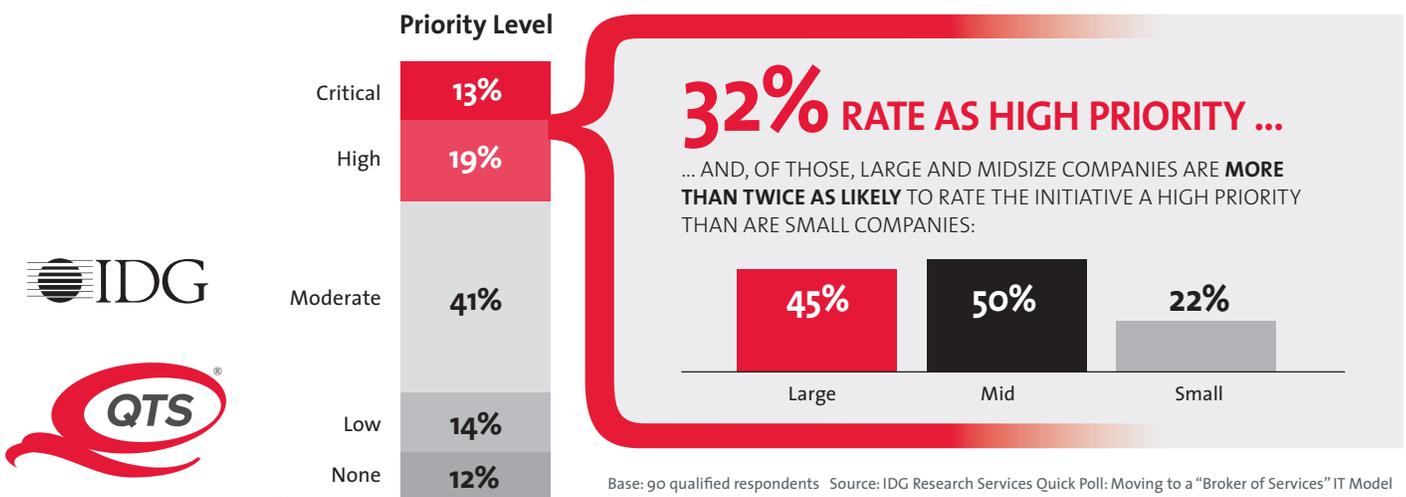
However, few organizations have succeeded in making this transformation a top priority to date, according to a new survey from IDG Research Services on behalf of QTS. Fully three-quarters of respondents said moving to the IT service-brokerage model as a priority. One-third indicated the priority level as “high” or “critical,” with respondents from large (45%) and mid-sized enterprises (50%) coming in at higher percentages for that question. The majority of respondents’ organizations are still managing most IT areas, including data security, in house. The exception is disaster recovery—64% will use an off-premise approach (cloud

or non-cloud) over the next 12 months.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents from organizations of all sizes cited data security and cost control as their top challenges to manage in-house. Meanwhile, respondents in large/mid-sized enterprises were significantly more likely to perceive compliance as challenging to manage in-house as opposed to small enterprises (large: 59%, mid: 79%, small: 31%). Participants with the title of IT/network/business manager from 90 organizations across industries took part in the survey. Respondents’ organizations had at least 100 employees.

More than half of respondents (52%) reported their organizations will use a hybrid cloud approach—a combination of cloud services and on-premises deployment—to manage one or more IT services including data security, disaster recovery and data storage, among others, over the next 12 months. So that is clearly a sign of movement in the direction of an IT service-brokerage model. Few, however, reported they are already there.

The Importance of Transforming IT Into a “Broker of Services”



Progress toward IT brokerage model is slow

Just 12% of respondents said IT is truly a “broker of services,” while the majority (61%) of organizations reported they have made moderate progress at best toward this model. Respondents in business management roles were significantly more likely to see IT as a true broker of services in comparison to those in IT/network management roles (30% and 7%, respectively). Those whose organizations are already managing IT services in a hybrid cloud are more likely to report significant progress has been made in transforming IT into a “broker of services” (18% vs. 3% among all others). Presumably, the rate of migration to this model will pick up over the next 12 months as organizations add more cloud offerings into their IT services mix.

Key barriers to cloud adoption

However, barriers to cloud adoption remain, including legacy system integration, security and compliance concerns; lack of in-house expertise to manage and maintain hybrid environments; and the complexity of moving workloads from one cloud to another. Security appears to be a major sticking point as executives fear the loss of control of data and applications.

Respondents to the survey emphasized managing data security and cost control challenges, specifically in a hybrid cloud environment.

Enabling hybrid IT

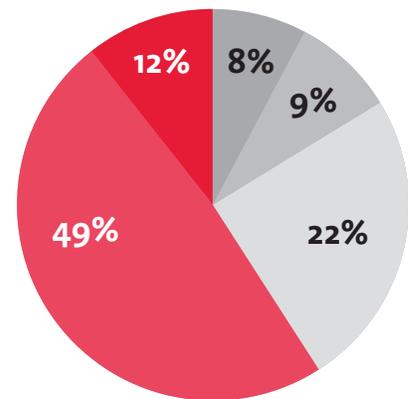
CIOs can more quickly migrate their organizations to the broker of services role by collaborating with cloud service providers offering highly secure and compliant, enterprise-level solutions that can be customized/tailored for specific business needs and requirements.

The service provider should have options including self-service Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) (public and private cloud services), workload mobility across hybrid clouds and managed cloud services. Reliable and secure connectivity is by far the most important service offering when evaluating vendors that can help solve hybrid cloud challenges. All of these options enable the CIO to deliver the right mix of services that transforms IT into a more agile and efficient organization.

The “broker of services” model allows technology executives to offload the mundane, day-to-day tasks IT is currently doing. As the IDG Research survey results showed, IT managers don’t have necessarily the expertise to manage cloud or the time to spend figuring how to manage workloads. Cloud is complicated. Unless an organization has in-house staff dedicated to managing cloud, business and technology managers often worry it will be difficult to make the transition and then manage and maintain the cloud environment.

The good news: Organizations do not have to have the expertise in-house to effectively manage the hybrid environment if they select a true cloud partner.

Progress Made in Transforming IT Into a “Broker of Services”



Base: 90 qualified respondents
Source: IDG Research Services Quick Poll: Moving to a “Broker of Services” IT Model

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The right cloud services provider will help you manage clouds from multiple vendors, providing a single view to seamlessly move workloads from one cloud to another. Without this capability, cloud becomes a substantially less attractive option as IT organizations lose the freedom to choose the most cost-effective cloud providers and hypervisors, based on their business needs. Workload provisioning and bi-directional migration across on-premises and cloud resources would remain complicated and organizations would face increased risks if they were unable to enforce consistent network and security policies across hybrid clouds.

QTS offers a full array of cloud managed services solutions that enable hybrid IT, including combinations of colocation and cloud, private and public, dedicated and multi-tenant, as well as self-managed and managed services. The company’s full-featured portfolio of cloud services includes QTS Enterprise Cloud, Managed Cloud, Federal Cloud and Carpathia’s Private, Public and Hybrid Cloud solutions. As a hybrid service provider and cloud operator, QTS is able to integrate its cloud solutions with an organization’s on-premise systems.

For more information on how QTS helps its customers manage workloads between clouds and from cloud to customer premises, please go to www.qtsdatacenters.com.