Beyond the cloud: what your business will look like in the future

South African companies moving to cloud-based infrastructure need to understand that the cloud is not the end of the journey – it is just the first step on the way to truly revolutionary new ways of doing business, says Interactive Intelligence.
By Andre le Roux, Interactive Intelligence Managing Director, Africa Region

Cloud Adoption

After a slow start in South Africa, cloud adoption is picking up fast, following global trends in which spend on cloud services is rapidly doubling and even tripling. According to IDC, spend on public cloud services will grow from around $70 billion in 2015 to over $141 billion in 2019, with Infrastructure as a Service and Platform as a Service growth outpacing Software as a Service growth. IDC predicts cloud IT infrastructure spending will pass the $53 billion mark by 2019, accounting for 46 percent of total expenditures on enterprise IT infrastructure.

While this growth is impressive, it shouldn't be surprising. Moving to the cloud dramatically simplifies infrastructure, removes impediments to change, improves security, and allows for the collection of massive amounts of data for analysis. Most importantly, however, it facilitates experimentation, rapid change, and easier adoption of new technologies.

So, while the cloud offers inherent benefits, it's also just the first step on the road to the new order of business. This is the point where the real business revolution begins.

Multimodal Interactions

Beyond the cloud, businesses must meet customer demand for multimodel engagement, where they can use multiple channels of communication within a single interaction seamlessly. An example is escalating from a Web chat to a video session with co-browsing.

Collaboration Technologies

Increasingly, customer engagement and collaboration technologies will merge. The above example illustrates this capability. Another is the ability of agents, along with business users, to be members of subject-specific chat rooms. Being able to quickly tap into a

resource such as this would enable agents to far more effectively address customer issues in real-time.

Virtual Reality

Virtual reality is another area that's transforming business. Imagine agents and customers walking together through virtual worlds to exchange information, demonstrate complex concepts, or showcase goods and services. As part of a multimodal interaction, the customer experience becomes deeply personalized and effortless.

Artificial Intelligence

We are already moving beyond data analytics to artificial intelligence (AI). AI automatically and proactively identifies problems and recognizes trends so supervisors don't have to search through enormous data sets. This knowledge will drive disruptive change in products, services and customer engagement.

Conclusion

The cloud presents a wealth of as-yet untapped opportunities to completely disrupt business and society at large. The question now isn't whether or not to embrace change. For businesses that want to succeed, the only question left is how fast can you do it?