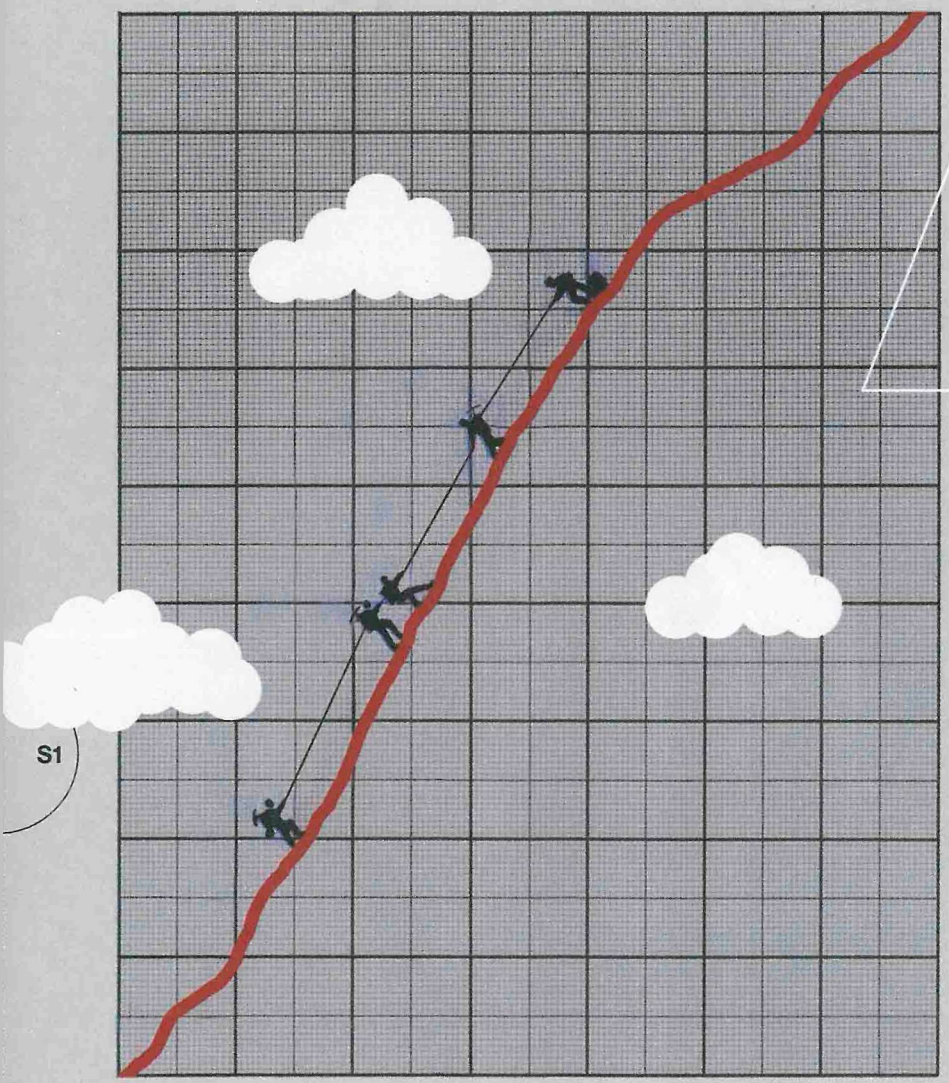


S1

UNLOCKING THE VALUE OF THE CLOUD

Whether it's in the form of seamless deployment, expanded storage or collaborative networks, businesses are looking up to improve their bottom lines

As cloud technology has evolved and gone mainstream, an ever-changing array of issues has driven the conversation about its adoption. Data security, the IT department's changing role and the challenge of transitioning from a private to a hybrid or public cloud were all topics that dominated the early discussion. Lately, however, with the usefulness of the ubiquitous cloud beyond debate, the conversation has turned to value, and how best to extract it from both the processes cloud enables and the technologies used to support it.

Take networking. Recently, the ability of Uber and Airbnb to transform traditional business paradigms in unexpected ways using cloud-enabled networks has had enterprises looking to see how they might benefit by incorporating social and collaborative elements in their own processes. The solutions aren't immediately apparent. Sure, social networks can be useful as a way to help employees fraternize, but does that necessarily add to the bottom line?

Sameer Patel, Senior Vice President of Products and Go-to-Market for SAP's Enterprise Social and Collaborative Software business, and a longtime champion of leveraging social networks for business, says that in order for collaboration to be considered a critical part of an organization's processes, it must directly solve real business problems.

"The goal is to solve a problem using social networks, not just social for social's sake," he explains. "True value only comes out of collaboration when it's across specific networks that are needed to make something happen—whether that something is closing a sale, training your new hires or solving a customer service issue."

Value, Patel insists, comes from context: Bring networks of relevant experts, data, processes and content together, and collaborative technology can be harnessed to help organizational leaders simplify how their employees, partners and customers connect.

"The strategy must be very specific," Patel continues. "The key is to embed

GARY WATERS/GETTY IMAGES

collaboration in processes and apps that already exist—customer management, employee training, and so on."

Early attempts to integrate social networks with business lacked focus and, as a result, didn't yield the expected returns on investment. SAP, with its collaborative platform SAP Jam, embeds engagement models in a company's existing processes—customer relationship management applications, for instance—that allow employees to communicate better internally, as well as improve communication with customers, help increase sales through shorter sales cycles and create interactions that directly impact their bottom line.

"Having pertinent information, and the best minds to utilize it, all connected to each other, is obviously crucial to the success of any business," Patel explains. "By having the tools to integrate all these elements, enterprises can achieve their goals faster and see significant improvements in their key performance indicators."

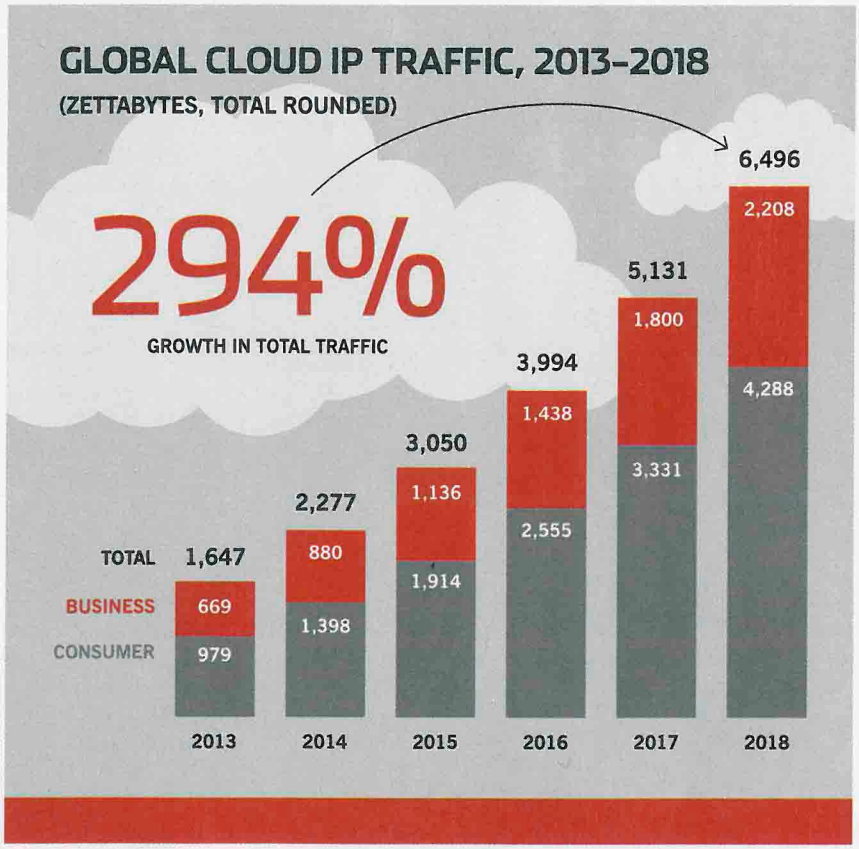
Using SAP Jam, companies can create networks to ideate, innovate, develop corporate strategy and improve customer service, as well as accelerate operational and financial performance. "Everyone understands the benefits of the cloud, but one of the central truths is that when all technology and transactional applications are deployed in the cloud, there will be little that differentiates one organization from another," Patel says. "Networking with employees, customers and partners at every touch point is an integral part of a transformation companies must undertake in order to compete today."

Since 17.5 million businesspeople have subscribed to SAP Jam in the past two years, Patel has plenty of examples to show how they've found value in deploying networks across a wide range of industries, as well as quantified this value with hard return on investment metrics.

In direct retail, for instance, one of SAP's customers deployed Jam as a knowledge-sharing hub to improve upselling, enabling its employees to share information about the most successful combinations of products and selling solutions they observed were driving sales. Another business successfully used SAP Jam to pass on sales skills from an aging workforce to new hires.

SAP Jam, a software as a service, comes preconfigured with 19 specific use patterns to give companies a 360-degree view into critical workplace activities. And the platform is adaptable: Businesses can use it to make customized configurations that conform to how they work, and they can add third-party data and develop custom applications for departmental or industry-specific needs.

"We put the customer at the center of the process, and offer extreme flexibility," Patel says. "If you have a completely different view on how you would like to leverage collaboration across your applications, you can build to address your unique needs."



DATA: CISCO

DATA MANAGEMENT, SIMPLIFIED

Another area in which businesses strive to extract better value is in their use of storage, a field where they're continually challenged to keep up with data growth and the complexities of platforms that don't always work together.

"With the amount of data captured and stored in today's disparate infrastructures, simplifying data management is more crucial now than ever," says Gary Quinn, President and CEO of FalconStor, a Melville, N.Y.-based software developer that's at the forefront of the multibillion-dollar industry shift to the modern, software-defined data center.

Quinn says the company's new product, FreeStor, provides data mobility, continuity, protection, recovery and optimization for any storage environment through a single management interface.

What makes this possible is FreeStor's software-defined Intelligent Abstraction™ core, which optimizes storage resources—regardless of type, connectivity, brand or speed—into a storage resource pool that

can be provisioned to physical or virtual applications, along with common, unified data services across the entire pool. The software is designed to simplify data management by giving businesses the ability to control it seamlessly across legacy, modern and virtual environments, including new storage options such as hybrid cloud, software-defined storage and flash.

"Our Intelligent Abstraction layer allows us to take any hardware and abstract it so it looks the same, whether it is from IBM or EMC, or whether it is a disk drive, a tape cartridge or a flash memory array," Quinn explains. "When you can do that, you can apply a common set of services, which enables better economic performance. FreeStor's introduction of a virtualization layer brings a whole new level of simplicity and flexibility to the protection, recovery and integration of both virtual and non-virtualized resources."

FalconStor's added value proposition for businesses is that, since FreeStor is hardware-agnostic, there's no vendor lock-in to tie businesses to specific hardware, networks or protocols. It also follows that businesses can continue to use their existing legacy storage assets while taking advantage of new, more adaptive technologies and capabilities, including flash and commoditized storage options, without wasting money on a total "rip and replace."

"We are making it easy for people to move from the past to the future of data technology," Quinn attests. "A lot of competitors want customers to throw out the legacy storage into which they've poured resources, time and money. In contrast, our approach is evolutionary. We make it possible for customers to migrate from disparate software solutions and from legacy environments onto newer, modernized platforms—but at their own pace."

FreeStor also comes with a simplified pricing model for data storage—$350 per terabyte per year—to make the cost of buying storage flexible. Capacity starts at 100 terabytes and can expand as large as a customer needs, meaning the days of costly licensing and maintenance are over with FreeStor. "We only charge for storage under FreeStor management," Quinn says. "The data services are free, and this 'pay-as-you-grow' pricing model is a big selling point. The price has to be competitive for the customer who's looking for value, and FreeStor dramatically changes storage economics for the better."

78%

BY 2018, MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF WORKLOADS WILL BE PROCESSED BY CLOUD DATA CENTERS

THE POWER OF CLOUD DEPLOYMENT

Dimension Data, the $6.7 billion global IT solutions and services provider, is becoming the enterprise cloud provider of choice by aligning its lineage, decades of experience working with large enterprises and domain expertise—including network integration, data centers, security and converged communications, as well as consulting and managed services—with their clients' specific business goals.

"We don't see ourselves as simply providing capacity on cloud to our clients, but as providing an enhanced, managed IT-as-a-service experience for them," explains Manish Pratap, General Manager for Dimension Data ITaaS, Asia Pacific. "We focus on the business outcomes that our clients want. Our experience and understanding of enterprise IT challenges enable us to transform our clients' businesses and reduce risks."

Over the last three decades, Dimension Data has established itself as a leader in the provisioning and management of specialized IT infrastructure solutions and services. Currently it has operations in over 58 countries, more than 28,000 employees and in excess of 6,000 enterprise clients.

By leveraging its understanding of both the global business and global technology landscape, Dimension Data makes it easier—as well as less costly and risky—for clients to transition to new operating models. "We support our clients at every step of their cloud journey, from choosing enterprise workloads that can be moved, to actually making them work and supporting them after making the move to ensure expected outcomes are achieved," Pratap says.

And so Dimension Data's client-centric approach starts with an assessment of the customer's environment, requirements and expectations from the cloud migration to the complete service delivery, including the creation of a future-proof IT roadmap.

"With cloud being a platform for innovation, we're helping clients to truly transform the way they are doing business today," Pratap says.

To further complement its full-service offering, Dimension Data has invested in cloud platforms that enable IT to be delivered as a service on demand, with elastic scale and at a competitive price point. The goal is to allow clients to accelerate time-to-market for new products and services, without the complexities of making a transition to the cloud.

"We've invested tremendously in building 16 global cloud platforms—what we call the Global Cloud Exchange—that's been architected in such a way that it can be customized to our clients' requirements," Pratap explains. "So, as well as being able to provide on-premise IT solutions, we've used these platforms to create new services, such as Enterprise Mobility as a Service, Collaboration as a Service, Managed Security services and Backup and DR as a Service, which can be optimized and tuned according to our clients' needs."

Ultimately, the competitive DNA in all of Dimension Data's product offerings is the close attention the company pays to integrating its operations, service management and hosting with the clients' requirements to maximize efficiency and prevent waste.

"We don't see many other providers doing that at this point in time," Pratap concludes. "We build trust by actually working with a company on the 'how' to get to the cloud and unlock business value. That is where we are most effective."

— John O'Mahony