



The Deloitte On Cloud Podcast

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Title: Cloud can drive innovation, but only if you rein in sprawl and complexity

Description: Small, cloud-native companies can profoundly disrupt their larger, less-flexible competitors via agility and innovation, but cloud complexity still looms for both large and small enterprises. In this episode, David Linthicum talks with cloud influencer Ian Moyses about how any company—no matter its size—can leverage cloud to move quickly and innovate faster. However, it's essential to reduce cloud complexity and sprawl to achieve a lean cloud ecosystem that drives innovation.

Duration: 00:28:10

David Linthicum:

Welcome back to the On Cloud podcast. Today on the show I'm joined by Ian Moyses, a sales leader in the cloud industry and a cloud influencer for many brands. And let me tell you, Ian's been an influencer. He is on every influencer list that I've ever appeared on, but he's on pretty much every one of them.

So, if someone publishes an influencer list, I always know that Ian's going to be number one or number two. So, catch us up. What have you been doing since last time you were on the podcast?

Ian Moyses:

Yeah. So, I've spent the last coming up on 18 months with a business called OneUp Sales, helping them grow in cloud gamification. So, as you may remember, I've played in over the years, cloud CRM, cloud telecoms, cloud gamification, and cloud security. So, I've got a fairly good hands-on feel for what the challenges and the discussions that go on at real world customers around different technologies and where the cloud fits, where it's right, and where sometimes it's not right for them.

David Linthicum:

And you kind of straddle sales promotion, influencer promotion, and technology. I find that unique about you. So, normally people are one or the other, but when I saw you speak in London seven years ago, I don't know if you remember that, it was really fascinating the fact that you could bridge the gaps. Is that kind of what you focus on?

Ian Moyses:

I guess I came from a technology background. I was originally a programmer, so it's probably that hybrid piece that there's still a homegrown techie inside me, deep, deep down, and buried. And I have a passion for technology, but my day role is sales leadership and helping businesses grow their revenue. But, no, what you're talking about, it's why I got into sales in the first place from the technology point of view. So, I guess it's that. That's probably how I straddle those barriers. I talk a lot about sales leadership and sales matters in sales communities. On the other side, I do a lot as, you've mentioned, kindly mentioned, cloud influence around technology and how it's impacting businesses and the good, the bad, the ugly that can happen around this still emerging, I think, technology. Whilst it seems to be standardized now there's still a long way to go, I think, in cloud adoption and cloud innovation.

David Linthicum:

Yeah. We're not as far as we think we are. So, what advice would you give to people who out there who want to become an influencer on a particular topic? What do you do that you think sets yourself apart?

Ian Moyses:

Yeah, that's I think talk, talk from authority, talk from authenticity. And that's the only two things. If you said to me a number of years ago, how are you going to go about becoming an influencer, Ian? I wouldn't have had a clue. I didn't set about doing this. It came about because I contributed, I took part as non-execs on, I contributed to industry bodies from my experience. I put my hand up when there was an opportunity and expanded, I guess my experience, my reach, and accidentally through that, and writing content and having some experience and expertise, got spotted and got used for the first blog. And then that tumble-weeded in, domino-effected into another one.

So, if someone said, tell me how to become an influencer, I don't think I could give you the, "Here's the project plan to do that." But I think what it is, is if you've got authentic expertise, put it out there; share it; volunteer to speak. As you said, you saw me speak. Volunteer for these things. Give back, take part, and it may come back to you. I don't think there's any way where you can engineer becoming an influencer in this sort of way.

David Linthicum:

Yeah. And also, I think you have the credibility and the knowledge, which get you in the space as an influencer because it's one thing to say I'm going to be an influencer, but it's another thing saying interesting things that people want to hear and want to understand and learn. So, that's—I think you're probably underselling your stuff there because I read your stuff. It's always first-rate in terms of getting right to the points and that's why people follow you, and they're going to continue to do that moving forward. Speaking of that, you had a recent article in a blog called Cloud Matters. They deal primarily with how cloud and cloud migration can help small business innovate in the marketplace. So, tell us about that article. Let's talk about that subject matter. I find it extremely interesting.

Ian Moyses:

Yeah. So, with cloud, one of the things that always struck me, going back to the "old days," there were different technology products for different types of business. So, there would be rich, expensive products from certain vendor brand names who would sell to the enterprise, and the smaller business may aspire to have that functionality, that richness, but they couldn't afford the platform, because to have that platform, you had to spin it up on certain amount of technology kit. It was complex, certain databases. You had to build this thing out. And the cost to build it for five users didn't make sense; for five-hundred it did.

So, economies of scale meant larger organizations would use ones, lots of brands of product, and smaller companies would use different products. What cloud's done is flattened that, right? So, if you take a cloud technology, whether it be in telecoms, whether it be a CRM system, whether it be an ERP, whatever sector of technology you want to pick, you can take that piece of technology, say, "Well, actually I only want to stick five users on it, or I want to stick 5,000 on it." And it's just a licensing issue. The provisioning is the same. You don't have to go and buy boxes, have expensive kit, have implementers come in and all this stuff, because it's just activate it and access it across the internet.

So, it really means what we see now is a lot of technology vendors have a broader audience, but also the consumer, the customer has more freedom of choice to say, "Hey, I can use this rich platform with all this wondrous links to banking systems, whatever it is. I can get all the wondrous things that the huge corporation can have, but I can get it in an affordable manner." If that vendor lets you license. They might have a ten years minimum or this sort of thing, "but I can digest it and consume it to my level of need," which wasn't there before. So, it means for smaller businesses, they can really empower themselves with rich technology without having to have the different products than those larger enterprise corporations and innovate themselves. You can be incredibly flexible.

And I always talk to businesses and leaders, and think, where there's reticence to change, one of the techniques I use with them is to say, "Okay, take the people in the business who know about your business. Maybe you've been going seven, eight years, ten years, whatever. You chose technologies, products, tools, processes, all this stuff. You did it for the right reason at the right time hopefully as you went through what was available in the market and affordable to you at that period of your life cycle. If you were starting again today, so you individuals in this room who understand your business, you've got to take this fully on board. You are going to leave this business and set up a competitor tomorrow, next week, next month. There's a whiteboard. From what you've now learned, the experience, the expertise, how would you do it? What would you do? Which products, how would you structure it? You're not tied into, 'Well, yeah, but we've got this product and we've got a five-year license left around and we've got this and it's embedded and integrated and we've customized it.' There's no objections. It's all new. What are you going to do? What would you choose? How would you do it?"

And inevitably, it's very different to how they're operating today because they're going to look at the richness of flexibility of things such as cloud solutions that are available and start picking those up. "Well, we'd do it this way. Now we'd pick this, this, this, and this, so we'd pick six systems, all different ones, the ones we've got today." Why? Because A: you could, you've got no legacy to worry about changing from, and B: they're available now. They may not have been when you made your decisions. So, then the task is how do you get there? And it isn't switch everything off and switch on. How do you get there? Which ones would have the most impact, but what's the effort waiting to get there on each one? Some might be an easy win that you could flick the switch. Your license is about to expire. You could move to that in three months. Great.

Others might be, well, that's going to give us the biggest advantage, but it's going to be the biggest amount of work. But it gives you the framework to start to plan. How do you transform your business into what you would build if you were starting today? Because there's so many, as you'll be aware, born in the cloud companies now who have started up and innovated and everything they've got is using different products than their competitors, because, not because they were wizardly clever, but because they started at a different time and different things were available at different pricing models and consumable ways of doing things, so they did it differently.

David Linthicum:

So, I kind of see two tiers here, and I've been in cloud for a long period of time, started in 1999. And, really, the first consumers, the people who were giving it a chance were the small businesses. And we did build some born in the cloud on digital-only business where they never owned hardware or software, other than laptops that people were given to start their workday. But at the end of the day, when you went through a five-year maturation period of me watching these companies, they were able to punch way above their weight. In other words, they were able to become more innovative. They were agile in nature. They wanted to be agile, but the larger companies also say they want to be agile, but they can't be because of the confines of the existing legacy technology that's really kind of around their necks and not be able to move as quickly as they can, acquire companies, get into new marketplaces, those sorts of things.

So, do you see this finally catching up with the larger players? In other words, if we had the board and cloud companies that are crossing billion dollars now, because they're growing and they're not small business interests anymore, they're large business interests. They really understand that the value is innovation, their ability to kind change the marketplace, their ability to innovate in pharmaceuticals for example, in manufacturing for example, and we're seeing that today where it's not a fair fight with the existing companies have been around for 150 years that have a huge amount of legacy technology and business processes that are static in their midst.

Ian Moyses:

Yeah. And it's interesting if you look at, and I wish I had the exact—I'm not going to quote the exact numbers cause I'll get them wrong, because I haven't got them in front of me, but I've written and read many a time on the Fortune 500 and the 100, etc. And if you look at who's in there now, compared to who was in there not so long ago and the average time it's taken them to get there, the world's transformed, right? Companies who've been in business less than 15 years are up the top of that list, and legacy business who've been around 60 or 100 years have been moving down it rapidly. Not because they've done anything wrong, because, as you indicate, others have innovated and operate differently, more relevant to the world that we now live in. Because we all expect businesses to be faster, easier to deal with. The expectation for customer experience, customer service has been changed dramatically.

If we went back 20 years and talked about the concept of ordering something and perhaps getting same-day delivery, then for free delivery, it would've been pie-in-the-sky, science fiction movie type thing. Now we take things like that for granted because these businesses have utilized efficiencies, new operating models, technology underpinning that to enable them to do things that weren't previously possible on scale. I think the barrier in a lot of larger companies and a couple of points, I think the barrier, you're absolutely right. I think a lot of it is politics. A lot of it is barriers go up of why they can't do that quickly. But if we look at the pandemic, look how quickly businesses adjusted their business models and adjusted technology. If you look at the obvious one of course is on cloud video conferencing, the sort of platform we're using now to record this call with us both on different sides of the world. But if you look at what happened then.

All the barriers of, well, we've got to spend three months evaluating it, discussing it, and then we've got to look at the "why" and look at the "when," that went out the window because of necessity, and they just switched the things on and it worked and the cloud vendors didn't crash to the ground. If that had been, again, a number of years ago, and you'd been using old video conferencing technology where you had to order some hardware and the network in and do this stuff, it would've crippled that industry because the product wouldn't have been available. They wouldn't have been stockpiling, "Well, what if suddenly we have 20 million users want to come on board?" But with cloud, elasticity just worked. The proof point was there, right? It was forced upon us all how fast businesses could take on something in the cloud. And admittedly, that is a digestible platform, right? It's not like changing your ERP system or something, but it just shows how fast decisions can be made if they need to be made.

And it drove businesses to move quicker and change how they were doing things. How fast did businesses have to adopt cloud telephony? Because their workers were now at home, and you couldn't have the call center in the office. Crikey, how do we transform this? And it opened people's eyes to new ways of working and what's available out there.

So, I was working in telephony at the time, and many businesses were tied to their office because they were using legacy telephone systems with a PBX on-premise and re-routing. It was just complex to take an inbound call, and we all probably experienced that, calling a business where they said, "Well, I'll take your details and I'll get someone to call you back when I can put you in the kit." And there was all these cobbled-together things. Whereas some businesses who already had, or deployed quickly through cloud telephony, you just phoned them and it was business as usual. The fact whoever you were speaking to happened to be at home was irrelevant to you. You might have heard a dog barking in the background, and we were all more receptive to that, because we all knew what was going on, and we were in the same boat, but you were speaking to a human being, on a phone, who worked for that company, who was servicing you just as if they were in the office.

That was because technology empowered them to do so. And I think the pandemic if nothing else has accelerated the cloud adoption, the openness in people's minds to moving quicker in terms of taking something on board. It certainly opened people's eyes and we saw cloud adoption probably jump five years ahead. And I see businesses have certainly still got that on cloud video conferencing turned on still, the majority of them because it worked and it was useful.

David Linthicum:

Yeah, it seems that we've changed the way in which we do business now, and I think that's for a good way. So, larger companies, as you mentioned, we're moving slowly into the cloud, or moving quicker into the cloud, and just really adopting better and more agile ways of doing so. So, they're picking up the advantages of being a small business for doing a big business. It's interesting the way that whole thing's going to evolve and keeping an eye on the market, not only just the cloud marketing growth and technology, which I do, but the ability to look at how it's actually changing legacy business, core startup businesses, the disruptors that are moving up today. The ones that are growing by leaps and bounds that are weaponizing technology to gather businesses and to gather market share in businesses that maybe 20 years ago they would have no chance of getting, but they're doing so through innovative technology, leveraging cloud computing and other technologies to provide themselves with a differentiator. So, let's talk about cloud sprawl. So, touch on what you're seeing around the cloud sprawl that's out there right now. What is cloud sprawl and what should we be looking out for?

Ian Moyses:

Yeah, and I think there's a couple of things here, and there's a couple of types that are seen. One is the platform level. So, if you look at business, larger organizations deploying things like Microsoft Azure, AWS, Google Compute, underlying their platforms and developing their own applications and using that as hosting. What I've seen is there's a lot of that going on where initially I think people thought we'll just standardize on one of those platforms, which is easier said than done. So, I think in enterprise, what I've seen is there is a mix of deployment of these platforms going on, and the challenge is they're managing them and we've seen a whole raft of new applications come to market to better manage and cost utilize those because we've created our own dichotomy. These platforms are so easy to spin up. If you've got an IT department that needs to test some application or test something, they no longer have to go through procurement and go, well, have we got some hardware? We've already got some hardware. We can redeploy that.

And procurement picks up on this and then we've got this operating system. They can just spin up, easily, instances of these cloud platforms and start using them. The question is, do you spin them down again? The question is how many of you got open out there that you don't know about? Because it's very easy for your development team if you've got a large organization and multinational with different teams going on in different applications, in different regions for different requirements to start having this. So, there's a lot now of tools, as you may have seen, to look at consolidating and managing that cloud sprawl at the platform level.

I was going to say, what I see at the other end of this is, and I've seen a number of these discussions starting up recently, which is interesting, and I think it's because of particularly the economy we all face and certainly in the UK is a lot of organizations are reviewing the cloud applications they've got even at a SaaS level because there was a rush, as you'll remember from those early days.

One of the big value propositions was moving from CapEx to OpEx. In the cloud you pay a—basically, you are paying a rental every month or quarter or a year, depending on the billing cycle for access to a service. But what's happened, and certainly in a lot of sectors is they've moved more and more to the cloud. It's very easy to sign up to these services and oh, that's great, and then forget, and it's trundling along, and do you actually sit down and consolidate and go, actually, how many of these bills we got going on every month? And a lot of businesses I've seen recently because of the economy as it is and the challenges that are being faced are starting to reconcile and go actually, are there any of these we can spin down or reduce the cloud licenses for, if not turn off altogether, because they've got an ongoing commitment, which has grown exponentially by just adding and adding over the last three or four years.

David Linthicum:

Yeah. As one of my CIO friends mentioned, we have an abundance of choice, which is both a problem and an opportunity. And I think that really kind of captured it. We've been tracking the growing complexity. Certainly, we're deploying things around multi-cloud and we still have to maintain our legacy systems and aren't those aren't growing away. And now we have edge computing and IOT-based systems that we're building. So, we're running into what the industry is starting to call a complexity wall, where we get to an operational state. We just can't keep the amount of talent and the amount of systems around to maintain these things. So, that's one argument.

And then you made the argument that a lot of CIOs are making, well, let's normalize that and start reducing the number of applications and cloud resources we're leveraging to reduce the complexity, and therefore we can basically operate the thing at the previous level of budgets versus ten times amount of money, which is what people are talking about today. The problem with that is you may be stopping some of the innovations. In other words, if we're not able to leverage best-of-breed technology, which is the reason that we're getting into a cloud complexity state, they're leveraging whatever technology they need for their particular application solutions that they're looking to drive, then they're not optimizing those solutions. The downside is going to be the resulting complexity. So, is this something where we need to reduce the complexity manually by eliminating cloud resources and applications, or do architects like myself and the folks out there working on cloud-based technology need to get more clever around how they're managed?

Ian Moyses:

I think it's a bit of a combination of the two, right? Because as you said, choices out there, and I named three of the major cloud platforms, but you've also got others. So, the complexity and the choice levels is broadening. It's not getting less, it's getting more – by the end of the month for example, or with new innovations, new ways of doing things in sectors that need disrupting. So, I think what we're going to see is a continued complexity and technology. Cloud, I think, was oversold in terms of in the early days of removing complexity.

It's going to be simple. You just flick a switch and off you go. It is simpler that you don't have to spin stuff up, but it has different complexities as you mentioned. Integrating multi-clouds is not always, it's getting better, but it's not always the easiest thing and isn't for the lay small business owner. If you just want to spin up a SaaS service, you don't need a technical team to do it, right? You can just switch on and access an in-the-cloud video conferencing CRM, whatever it may be. But it's when you have those cross systems, you've got a billing system and you want to link it to your CRM system and have a workflow that is seamless for the customer so they can sign a document and it can go, the integrations are there, but someone has still got to bring those things together.

David Linthicum:

Absolutely. It's something we're going to have to continue to solve. And now we're getting different concepts such as the metacloud and the super cloud as abstraction layers are able to remove some of the complexity from this. So, we're getting into things that are very sophisticated and probably very expensive to solve this issue moving forward, but I think it's going to be cooler heads prevail. And it's going to be a balance of normalizing some of the services, as well as putting some of these systems in place that's going to reduce or increase our ability to deal with complex systems with fewer people and hopefully with less risk and better security. So, tell us about the future of the cloud market, maybe three things really quick. We have just a few minutes left, so what do we need to look at now and what people who are listening to this show should be monitoring in terms of where the market is going?

Ian Moyses:

Sure. So, the ones that come to mind, number one is don't forget to review the cloud systems you've got. I think whilst people moved to cloud, and that was a real differential between old legacy and a cloud system, wow, look how different this is and how shiny etc. Don't forget to review that. Don't get stuck in while we've been on this cloud service now for seven years because other stuff is coming out and disrupting and often it's easier to change and you've already done it once, but it's easier than moving from a legacy system.

Review again. You have multiple renewal points with cloud to often customers are signing up for a two- or three-year contract I know, but they're not signing up for five or seven as we saw in some of the legacy system days. When you get to that point, review what's out there because stuff is moving and innovating so quickly. What was the pioneer three years ago may not be today, right? So, it may not be best for your business as you've scaled and things have changed.

So, one would be that. Two would be on the platform layer, I think. Again, keep reviewing, but be prepared to use multiple platforms. And as you've mentioned, I think layered on that would be think about the abstraction layer. If you look at what IBM's done, for example, with Red Hat, that you can build an abstraction layer for an application, that means you can lift and move it from a zero to AWS far quicker, but still take advantage of the API layer stacks within those platforms. You are getting more, we're getting closer and closer to that freedom of choice for the customer where you can move around easier. You can take advantages of the consumable and your power of the buyer to leverage getting the best deal and the best platform for what you need then.

You're not tying yourself into the many years we saw on legacy, on the old platforms. You don't need to stay around as long as you used to unless your provider's doing a good job in which case carry on. And I think the final one would be, as I've always said, and to your point, there's still a lot of legacy out there. Cloud isn't right for everyone in every situation at every time. By all means when you come up for a project, consider cloud, but don't feel obliged that because it's the day we're in that there's anything wrong with keeping a legacy solution.

There are many legacy systems as you'll know out there that are so embedded. If you look at the airline industry and some of their platforms and the banking industry that are so inherently embedded, it is hard to move and it is incredibly costly. Don't do it for the sake of doing it. Make the right decision and don't be afraid of sticking with legacy, even if it's for a planned period of a number of years. This isn't about switching as fast as you can. Everything hasn't got to be on the cloud. And I'm pragmatic about that, even though I'm an advocate for cloud platforms. Be a realist to what the reality is of the pain and cost of getting there and the upside to you and your customer.

David Linthicum:

So, where can the listeners find you on the web?

Ian Moyses:

Sure. Thank you. Yeah. Two easy addresses that will bring you to my main social accounts are IanMoyse.co.uk and IanMoyse.cloud.

David Linthicum:

Make sure to follow Ian. He is one of the brighter voices out there and also very pragmatic advice, which I like as well. So, in other words, he's not hyping things. He understands the reality of leveraging this technology and things you have to go through to leverage it, and if you should leverage it, and the business purpose of it, which is, I think far more of a more productive message than everybody shifting to whatever technology we think is cool at the time. So, if you enjoy this podcast, make sure to like us, rate us and subscribe. You can also check out our past episodes, including those hosted by my good friend, Mike Kavis. Find out more at deloittecloudpodcast.com, all one word. If you like to contact me directly, you can email me at DLinthicum@deloitte.com. So, until next time, best of luck on your cloud journey. You guys stay safe. Cheers.

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