

# **NON-IT ROLES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM GAINING CLOUD SKILLS**



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# Non-IT Roles That Could Benefit From Gaining Cloud Skills

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**Cloud computing** is becoming increasingly relevant and prolific.

Businesses around the world are moving more of their data storage, operations and customer-interface online.

Cloud service providers such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure or Google Cloud are vying for the top cloud position by providing a constantly evolving service.

Therefore, **employers need a workforce keen to embrace cloud computing skills.**

Once squarely in the territory of IT roles, cloud computing has evolved into a skill set that can benefit, and is indeed essential, for many non-IT roles.

It is one of the **top skills employers are looking for in 2021.**

# What Is Cloud Computing?

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**Cloud computing** provides the storage, handling and management of data, along with a host of related services. It does this via a network of remote servers that are accessible through the internet.

Instead of storing data and running computer systems locally, **a business rents 'space' from a cloud service provider and uses its hardware.**

Examples where cloud computing is used include:

- A banking system of customer accounts that employees can access and input data to and customers can also visit their personal bank accounts
- A retail website with a database of customer details and a stock check service
- A mobile app used to report in-the-field sample results
- A diary service where different members of staff can view or add appointments and meetings
- A customer relationship management (CRM) system which tracks customer responses to a series of emails

## The Advantages of Cloud Computing

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As cloud platforms evolve and improve their services to meet the growing needs of the business world, the advantages of cloud computing have become ever more evident:

### Business Integration

One of the greatest benefits of using cloud computing is the chance to **integrate data and IT systems across the whole business**, instead of each worksite holding these locally and separately.

Business integration using the cloud allows:

- A more rapid and efficient access to and exchange of data
- The ability to access up-to-date information
- All areas of the company to feed into the same business processes, platforms and tools
- The creation of common data sets
- Increased collaboration and faster decision-making

This ease of exchange of information and clarity on business processes, in turn, **speeds up customer communication and the fulfillment of orders**, increasing business.

In addition to this, cloud platforms and services benefit from **instant and seamless deployment of fixes and updates across the whole business**.

## Analytical Power

Data is invaluable for the insights it provides, for instance on customer behavior or supply availability.

But extracting those insights can be a lengthy and complicated process, requiring a lot of people and computer power, especially if different departments demand different information.

Many cloud service providers offer their own integrated analytics designed specifically to work with their cloud structure. This makes **automating all the tracking mechanisms and reports that your business requires possible**.

This saves the business the cost of separately purchasing and updating analytical software.

## Cost Effective

Cloud computing is generally a cost-effective option for a business as **many separate costs are bundled together into a single subscription fee** paid to the cloud computing

service.

It removes the upfront cost of purchasing servers and related computer equipment and their on-going maintenance costs – the cloud provider handles those.

Further, the costs of premises (such as purchase, rent or maintenance) are reduced as there is no need to provide a server room and the business can easily decrease or increase its computing capacity without changing the layout or buying new equipment.

Additionally, businesses can be assured that, through the cloud platform, they are using the most up-to-date software.

And finally, many of the cloud service providers offer services such as analytics and security which means that the business does not have to pay for these separately.

## **Inspires Innovation**

Cloud computing inspires innovation in two distinct ways:

First, the use of cloud computing makes it **easier for a business to automate their processes** (such as their ordering system), freeing up more company time to put towards development and to have more **informal discussions where true innovation occurs**.

Second, by its nature, cloud computing **requires a business to work in a novel, non-traditional way**.

For example, all worksites are required to share a data recording protocol, rather than have separate ones each. The development of such a protocol necessitates a close examination of what is truly needed, potentially improving the process.

Another example is cross-business clarity gained from analyzing the shared pool of up-to-

date information held in the cloud server – this could give insights into the ways different departments could more efficiently work together to achieve improvement across the whole business, whereas traditionally, they may have more idiosyncratic work styles that obscure these potential improvements.

Both factors – more time and operating differently – can lead to innovation within the business by shaking things up and giving manhours to implement insights.

## Enhances Security

Businesses are legally required to protect the customer data they hold. Preventing data breaches is an ongoing and serious concern.

All cloud platforms offer a high level of security in line with current, geographically relevant legislation, such as [GDPR \(Europe\)](#) and [PIPEDA \(Canada\)](#).

Data protection laws are constantly updated, and new online security threats appear, so **by working with a cloud service provider a business can be reassured its data protection stays top-notch.**

It is in the cloud computing provider's best interest to ensure all its clients' data are kept secure and this is passed on to the companies who subscribe to them.

## Why Are Cloud Skills Not Just for IT Roles?

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As increasing numbers of businesses move their data storage and processes to the cloud, they will expect their employees to know how to interact with cloud technology, whether in an IT role or not.

It is considered a core [competency](#).

This is especially pertinent where **cloud-led business integration has resulted in collaboration between the IT function and other departments**, such as a joint project between IT, marketing and sales to create a customer-facing app that works with the business's new cloud computing capabilities.

When researching an employer to improve your chances of landing a role with them, consider if they use cloud services and how your familiarity with them could make you a valued prospective employee – or perhaps it is an area your job search would benefit from you developing in.

There is a section on training and certification further down.



Non-IT Roles That Could Benefit From Gaining Cloud Skills

## **What Non-IT Roles Benefit From Gaining Cloud Skills?**

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**When a business moves its data and systems to the cloud, many non-IT departments will still be expected to use them.**

They must have a sufficient understanding of cloud computing to interact with that data in a variety of ways. Gaining cloud skills is beneficial to those functions.

## **1. Sales**

The first benefit of cloud computing to the **sales** department is as **leverage**.

It can add value when pitching to a client to work with the business.

Examples of this include:

- The ability to continuously update the company's website, so its information is always correct
- Automated systems that speed up the supply chain process
- Apps that the client can use on-the-go to connect with their account information and check on the progress of their orders

When a **salesperson** demonstrates their understanding of how the business uses the cloud, this offers **a level of reassurance and professionalism to the client**.

Further, with client data stored in the cloud, the sales team can access and edit it wherever they are, whether on-site or in the field. Maintaining up-to-date records helps **build a trustworthy reputation**.

Finally, when the sales team needs to analyze the company's data, knowing how to access and manipulate it in the cloud server, such as how to sort it into data sets or download it for offline processing, is necessary.





## 2. Marketing

For the **marketing** department, the main benefits of being familiar with cloud computing are:

- The ease of accessing larger amounts of data than can be stored locally
- Knowing how to analyze that data to gather insights for future marketing campaigns
- Making use of the cloud server's external processing power to perform powerful analyses

Without being skilled in using cloud computing, a marketing team can lose out to other, more technologically skilled marketing teams when it comes to market assessment.

Cloud computing also makes it **easier for marketing to collaborate with other departments** within and beyond the company.

For instance, if working with an external IT team to develop a customer app, cloud servers enable the marketing team to allow access to specific parts of their data in real-time but without the security risk of allowing this external team access to the company's internal computer system.



Marketing Course

## 3. Executive

Cloud computing may well be the concern of the CIO (Chief Information Officer) and CTO (Chief Technical Officer), but an awareness of its usefulness and reach can prove advantageous to all executive positions within a business.

**Executives need to understand all of the cloud's effects on a business to stay on**

**top of what is happening in their company.**

They can include:

- Workforce numbers
- Financial projections
- Product development
- New markets to move into
- Future innovation
- Data security and compliance
- The value of collaboration between IT and other departments

While an executive may or may not be the one directly interrogating the data, with cloud skills they can better understand the results returned to them by the **teams they delegated data analysis to**, how they came to those conclusions and what the insights mean.

Without cloud skills they would have to take these teams' analyses at face value, entirely trusting them to have done everything correct and to have fully plumbed the results for all possible meaning.

The uniformity of information that a cloud solution provides, empowers executive roles to interrogate and disseminate all aspects of their business at the push of a button.

## **4. Project Management**

Cloud skills allow **project managers** to **play a greater part in collaboration** with their team and other departments delivering on a project.

Changes can be viewed in real-time because the files are hosted on the cloud where they can be accessed by multiple parties simultaneously and do not have to be sent back-and-forth for project managers to oversee every change.

Understanding exactly what the cloud platform can provide for business allows the project manager to plan, share data and communicate with all concerned parties.

## 5. Finance

Cloud providers generally charge for their service on a subscription basis. As mentioned above, this simplifies payment for data storage.

Instead of the up-front cost of purchasing a server, premises overheads, and the cost of licenses and their updates over time, there is one regular subscription payment to make.

**Subscription-based cloud service reduce the financial team's work.**

Replacing local servers with a cloud service saves time, is more cost-effective and the predictable bill makes it easier to build financial projections.

Cloud systems can also be used to **automate certain finance tasks**, such as ensuring certain sub-files are kept updated with the latest figures from payroll.

## 6. Legal

Cloud providers offer a **high level of data security**, which **complies with the up-to-date legislation relevant to both the business and its clients.**

For the **legal department**, this eases two of their major concerns regarding data storage.

The legal department can access the cloud-stored data whenever they need to and will find it simpler to collaborate with other departments due to the ease of sharing that data.

## Cloud Skill Training

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There are several cloud service providers. The major platforms are:

- Amazon Web Services (AWS)
- Google Cloud Platform
- Microsoft Azure
- Oracle Cloud Infrastructure
- IBM Bluemix

There are **basic cloud skill certification courses** open to non-technical roles.

Some of them will benefit from existing experience using one of the cloud platforms, but there are always some for complete novices.

They can be available through your company's **personal development** area or sometimes taken as an independent party.

Any basic cloud skill course should include:

- An explanation of cloud computing, including the difference between on-premises (local), hybrid-cloud (a mixture of local and cloud storage) and all-in cloud
- The infrastructure of the specific cloud platform, locally and geographically
- The benefits of using the cloud over local servers
- The specific cloud platform services offered
- How security and compliance are handled by this cloud service provider
- The process of cloud migration
- The various pricing models available and what each of those models includes

Beyond basic certification, more advanced and specific courses can be taken, such as serverless development or cloud management.

The format of the course, cost, who it is relevant for and exactly what it contains will vary depending on the cloud platform your employer uses.

Find out more about certification by visiting:

- [AWS](#)
- [Google Cloud](#)
- [Microsoft Azure](#)
- [Oracle Cloud Infrastructure](#)

It is also good to know [why IT skills](#) and [technical skills](#) are important in general and will be [increasingly required by employees in the future](#).

## Final Thoughts

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In a drive to remain relevant as an employee, it is always astute to keep an eye on developments in the business world.

Many businesses are going the way of cloud computing and, by jumping on, you can avoid being left in the dust.

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