



# How Leaders Build Resiliency and Modernize Infrastructures by Migrating Windows Workloads to the Cloud

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## Overview

This knowledge brief analyzes the challenges and drivers that organizations face when it comes to migrating workloads and files to the cloud.

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### Get Your Workloads into the Cloud!

For years now, businesses have been following this advice. In fact, Aberdeen research shows that 80% of organizations run services in a public cloud.

But interestingly, for day-to-day needs, businesses rely on data stored in servers—typically Windows servers—and have fallen behind when it comes to migrating the vital workloads and files on these servers to the cloud.

Aberdeen has found that successful organizations are accelerating their cloud migrations. This key strategy transforms infrastructures and ensures that data is always available and protected, especially for data used in critical enterprise applications, databases, and file services.

However, not all cloud migrations are the same. Aberdeen research suggests that to effectively migrate Windows workloads to the cloud, there are three keys to success: the choice of public cloud, the solutions used to manage the migration, and the understanding of how to best run Windows services and files in the cloud.

Making the move to migrate Windows workloads to the cloud isn't without potential hurdles and pain points. To understand these in greater detail, this knowledge brief will look at key issues in Windows cloud migrations. It then looks at how successful organizations can achieve benefits in improved resiliency and security, with lower costs, by following the right path to Windows migrations.

### Overcoming Complexity and Lack of Expertise for Windows Cloud Migrations

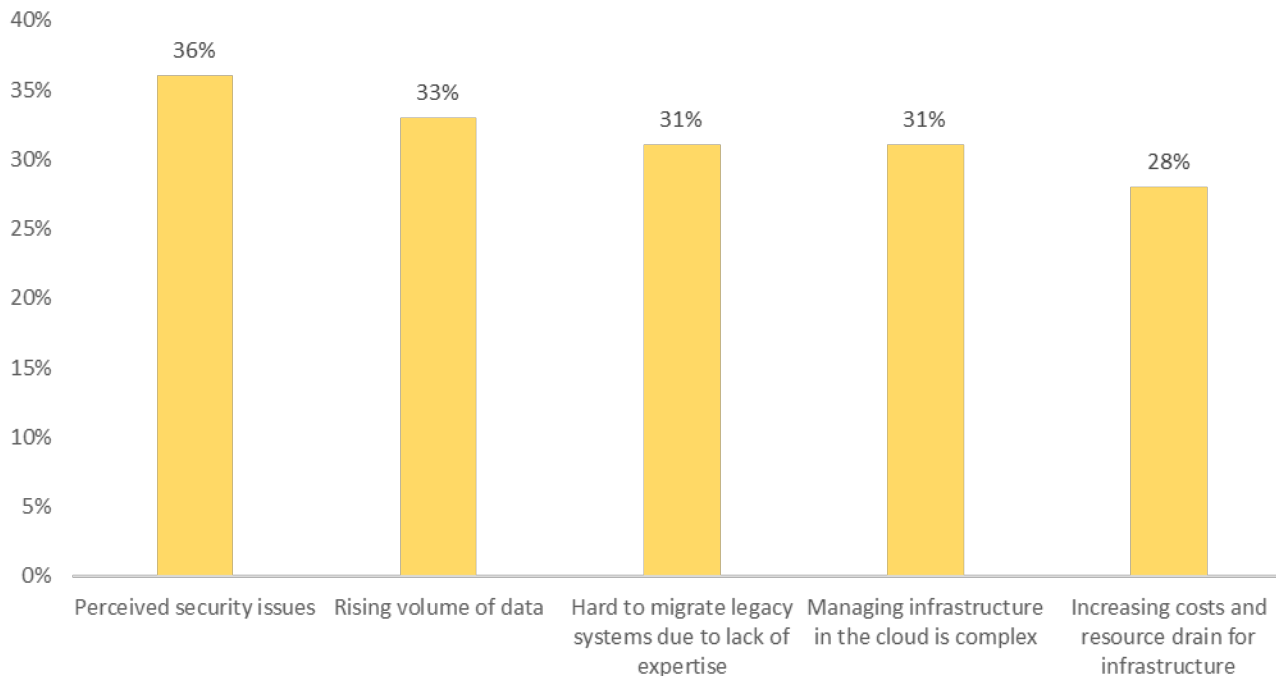
Businesses today face many challenges when protecting and optimizing their infrastructure. They're eager to take advantage of the opportunities and increased capabilities that are within reach in modern IT environments.

In order to achieve the agility and benefits that come with modernization, organizations must overcome the challenges and misconceptions that can slow innovation, reduce security, and increase costs. To understand these hurdles, Aberdeen asked businesses about the top challenges they face when it comes to improving their IT and cloud infrastructure, as shown in Figure 1.

### Case in Point.

*A large North American retail organization was challenged by security issues, an infrastructure not designed for growth and a lack of expertise to modernize that infrastructure. To improve, they migrated their Windows Server 2019 systems to the cloud and embraced hybrid cloud and edge computing.*

**Figure 1: Top Server and Cloud Infrastructure Challenges**



Source: Aberdeen Strategy & Research, 2021 n=137

Security remains the top concern, and increased risks of ransomware heighten the urgency to secure data. In fact, recent Aberdeen security research found that the median annual impact of ransomware for organizations is around \$490K per year—with a 10% likelihood that it will be more than \$2.5M per year.

Businesses face a plethora of barriers to keep up with the demand for security. The rising amount of data stresses infrastructures and increasing cost impacts bottom lines. In addition, the complexity of modern cloud infrastructures and the lack of internal expertise needed to migrate workloads to the cloud are among the top challenges for IT leaders.

These challenges can seem daunting at first. However, Aberdeen research shows that organizations that adopt shared file service solutions can:

- ▶ Ease the migration of enterprise workloads to the cloud
- ▶ Simplify data management, enhance data protection, and unlock actionable intelligence
- ▶ Better integrate with major public cloud providers
- ▶ Remove barriers, successfully modernize IT, and optimize operations

# Effective Windows Workload Cloud Migrations Lead to Big Benefits

A key element of modernization for most businesses is to migrate files and workloads to the cloud. Aberdeen research shows that many organizations are including Windows servers in these plans, as 68% say that they are planning to migrate Windows Server 2019 workloads to the cloud.

But doing so effectively requires more than a basic migration. Windows file services can be notoriously difficult to manage in the cloud. Using traditional cloud services that aren't specifically designed to work with Windows workloads can lead to increased management complexity and poor visibility into performance.

However, when businesses utilize migration and storage solutions that are built from the ground up to handle Windows migrations, and tie this to public cloud providers that have strong end-to-end integration with these solutions, they overcome complexity and simplify management.

And as Table 1 shows, organizations with shared file service solutions designed for Windows workloads and cloud migrations see a number of other key benefits and advantages.

Table 1: How a Complete Windows Cloud Migration Boosts Reliability and Performance

Businesses that effectively migrate Windows workloads to the cloud are:

50%	More likely to report improved disaster recovery capabilities
95%	More likely to see higher management satisfaction
2.5x	More likely to reduce amount of storage hardware required
45%	More likely to have increased edge technology capabilities

Aberdeen research has shown that by embracing modernization and migrating workloads to the cloud, businesses see improved security by removing legacy issues and easing overall security management. And they also improve security through much greater disaster recovery capabilities, which can help overcome threats such as ransomware.



When it comes to increased resiliency and protection against threats such as ransomware, organizations with optimized Windows file and workload cloud migrations are 50% more likely than those who've yet to migrate to see improved disaster recovery capabilities. These improvements help IT leaders avoid costly downtime, protect data, and keep vital business services up and running.

These leading organizations are more innovative than their peers, as they leverage critical technologies such as edge computing at a much higher rate. They're also more efficient, as they are 2.5x more likely to lower costs and reduce the amount of hardware dedicated to storage.

By utilizing all the advantages that lead to increased modernization, these organizations are boosting management satisfaction by 95%—gaining an advantage over those solely reliant on traditional IT. Migrating Windows workloads to the public cloud further drives this management satisfaction. Considering the reduced complexity and ease of management that comes from a Windows cloud migration, IT staff can reduce their server administration demands and instead focus on core business requirements.

## Key Takeaways

Businesses today have found that the most effective way to achieve agility and success is to embrace modernization and effectively transform and optimize operations. To modernize, they not only need to embrace the cloud, but improve all areas of IT to be cloud-ready to take advantage of new technologies like edge, hybrid cloud, and microservices.

Successful organizations understand that modernizing their Windows server infrastructure through cloud migration is a key step in this transformation. Leaders have found that by choosing the right migration solution and public cloud provider, they can ease this modernization and overcome challenges.

By utilizing solutions designed to facilitate Windows file and workload migrations, these businesses efficiently ready their infrastructure for a cloud native future. In addition, they see vital benefits in lower risk, high availability, increased satisfaction, and more innovation for years to come.

## Case in Point.

*Challenged by security and reliability issues, along with infrastructure complexity, a large U.S. healthcare business migrated their Windows server systems to the cloud, as well as a majority of their data. By following this modernization of systems, they gained improved disaster recovery and saw a 90% reduction on overall downtime.*

## About Aberdeen Group

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