# The IAM Cloud Journey

## created from a webinar by iC Consult and SailPoint

### 1. Introduction

For many organizations, migrating Identity & Access Management (IAM) to the cloud is the next step into the digital world of tomorrow. While there are several different options to implement a cloud-based IAM solution, the most popular one is outsourcing IAM – and replacing it with a modern Identity-as-a-Service (IDaaS) solution.

Outsourcing identity management to an external IT service provider offers many advantages:

- **Focus on your core capabilities**
  Outsourcing often complex identity management to experienced external specialists will make life much easier for your IT team: The service provider will take care of the daily operation and maintenance of the IAM – including the support, the documentation and the protection of the systems and the data – while your inhouse experts can focus on more productive tasks.
- **Strengthen your security**
  IT service providers have access to powerful state-of-the-art infrastructures and a deep pool of talent to operate, manage and protect your IAM solution 24/7. This allows them to provide a higher level of security than most organizations can achieve on-premises.
- **A new degree of flexibility and scalability**
  IDaaS models can easily be adapted to new requirements: If needed, the scope of services, the runtime environment and the licensing models can all be updated in real time – and upscaling or downscaling the solution usually takes just a few clicks on the console.
- **Replace CapEx by OpEx**
  Outsourcing models eliminate the need for businesses to invest in dedicated hardware, software and infrastructure, and to train inhouse specialists in a new and complex field. Instead, they pay for the service on a subscription basis, replacing costly investments with affordably monthly rates.
- **Keep your solution up to date**
  Identity-as-a-Service providers update their software continuously to ensure that their clients are always working with the latest (and most secure) version. Your team will appreciate this, as they won't have to maintain and upgrade the software manually, and they won't have to worry about data breaches or cyberattacks.

All in all, it's easy to understand why so many organizations are looking to switch to a cloud based IDaaS model today. But while the migration offers many benefits, these do come at a price, and the road to the cloud can be rocky at times. This is why Identity Managers need to plan the cloud IAM strategy carefully and well in advance and why onboarding external experts is usually a good idea.

To give you a first impression of the journey ahead, we have developed the webinar "Your IAM Cloud Journey" with our partner SailPoint. It gives you a brief overview of the chances and challenges of modern IDaaS solutions, and it presents the key Best Practices for a successful cloud deployment with iC Consult and SailPoint.

This paper contains a short synopsis of the webcast and will hopefully guide you through the first steps of your cloud journey. If you would prefer to hear the webcast live, please get in touch with our team at sales@ic-consult.com – we are happy to set up a live webinar for you.

**Cloud computing is the broadest of the terms we use.**

**Terminology: Cloud vs. SaaS vs. IDaaS**

If you ask five cloud experts what the cloud actually is, you are bound to receive five different answers. To avoid any misunderstandings, let's start this guide with a few definitions:

- Cloud computing is the broadest of the terms we use. It refers to any technology infrastructure model that provides access to computing resources over the internet and involves multiple layers of infrastructure, e.g., servers, virtual machines, operating systems, middleware and applications.

- When we speak about Software-as-a-Service (or SaaS), we are referring to the specific cloud computing model where applications are hosted and provided over the internet by a service provider – so SaaS is a specific subset of cloud computing.

- And finally: When we mention Identity-as-a-Service (or IDaaS), this is an even smaller subset of SaaS – specifically: a cloud-native Identity & Access Management solution provided over the internet by an MSP who takes full responsibility for the environment.

## 2. The Cloud Journey

There are many good reasons why organizations are considering migrating to the cloud: Attractive cost savings, higher scalability, better accessibility, improved resilience, stronger security, easier compliance and more opportunities to innovate, to name just a few. However, organizations should never underestimate the strategic implications of this decision – and they need to carefully evaluate their needs, their budgets and their risk appetite before they begin their journey.

**When planning the steps ahead, business leaders need to consider the following key factors:**

- What are your goals?
- How do you want to achieve them?
- Where do you stand at the moment?
- What is a realistic framework for the project?
- Who needs to be brought on board?

To answer these questions, you have to start by analyzing your organization, your processes, your stakeholders and the IAM market in some detail. This will provide a robust foundation for the project and lay the groundwork for your future IAM cloud solution.

If you rush or skip any of these steps, this will invariably lead to some (more or less unpleasant) surprises further down the road. The following four stages will help you analyze and plan your project:

1. Understand what a modern IAM solution brings to your business.
2. Establish the desired outcomes for your IAM project.
3. Draft a technical and a business roadmap for the IAM deployment in your organization.
4. Ensure that you fully understand the deployment options for your IAM.

Stages 1 and 2 focus on the analysis of the internal processes described above. Once you have answered all of the questions that arose here, you can move on to planning in stage 3. All of this will then allow you to fully understand the possible uses of IAM in stage 4. And since this is an iterative process, if any new questions arise or cannot be answered at this point, you will have to return to the previous stages.

**Only 10% have mastered all stages and are ready for implementation.**

**How mature is your IAM?**
During a recent live webinar, we conducted a survey among the attendees – asking them to name the stage of their own IAM cloud journey right now.

- 20% are still in stage 1 – analyzing their business and trying to figure out if they are ready to start the cloud journey.

- 45% of respondents are currently in stage 2, defining their IAM goals.

- 25% of the participants are already in stage 3, planning their roadmap and thinking about the business and technical implementations.

- Only a small minority of 10% have mastered all stages and are ready for implementation.

## 3. iC Consult's Services

As your IAM services partner, iC Consult wants to meet you precisely at the stage that you are currently occupying. This is why we offer three different service models that allow us to join you at the current stage of your IAM cloud journey and ensure a successful implementation.

**Model 1: IAM Cloud Assessment**
Our IAM Cloud Assessment service is targeted at companies at the very beginning of the IAM cloud journey: Our experts will help you analyze your business and your processes and will plan your future roadmap with you – and we will accompany you up until the successful implementation of your solution.

One of the goals of the assessment is to show you that IDaaS is much more than just a flexible solution for your identity, security or compliance problems – it is a powerful tool to support your operations and might even allow you to further enhance them.

To unlock this potential, we will work closely with your team to develop a detailed and convincing roadmap for your stakeholders and employees – illustrating step-by-step how your migrations is going to unfold and which benefits it will bring.

Another important part of the assessment is a diligent calculation of the expected TCO: We will use a comprehensive maturity model – based on detailed process maps and process views – to analyze the costs and benefits of your cloud-based IAM solution. It will provide you with a deep understanding of where you are, where you are going and what your individual deployment strategy should look like.

And what if you are already in a later implementation phase and suddenly realize there are dangerous gaps in your planning that now delay or jeopardize migration? For this scenario, iC Consult offers a dedicated emergency concept: In a single workshop, we will try to make up for any deficiencies that have arisen and quickly provide an evaluation scenario and an updated solution.

**Model 2: Fully Managed Service**
Our second model is a fully managed Identity-as-a-Service (IDaaS) offering based on best-of-breed solutions of leading providers in the IDaaS sector. We will begin the project with an introductory consultation workshop to kick-start your selected solution and support you with the long-term planning of the IAM deployment.

Of course, migrating to a brand-new cloud-native solution poses its own challenges – e. g., when it comes to onboarding new stakeholders in the project team. For example, you might have to work very closely with the vendor to add required new security and compliance capabilities to your IAM cloud solution. In this scenario, we will support you with a dedicated team of experts, who will keep track of any new requirements and features – and ensure that your IAM solution expands its functionality without interfering with the cost and time budgets.

Another important pillar of the service is our support service team – experienced IAM experts, who will keep your system up and running 24/7 and assist you with

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**The fully managed Identity-as-a-Service (IDaaS) offer is based on best-of-breed solutions from leading providers in the IDaaS area.**

troubleshooting if problems should arise. Based on our deep understanding of your value proposition and your business, we are in a great position to support you in any emergency situation and to successfully bridge any gaps until a final solution is implemented.

**Model 3: Service Layers**

The third and last service case is targeted at organizations which cannot opt for a fully managed cloud based IDaaS solution. This can happen in a few select scenarios, usually because a customer operates in a highly regulated market – maybe insurance or banking – where a full migration to the cloud is not allowed due to security or compliance requirements.

In this use case, we like to bring in the experts from our Service Layers unit. This iC Consult subsidiary is specialized in developing, hosting and providing tailor-made IDaaS solutions, once again based on leading best-of-breed solutions on the market.

Unlike traditional cloud offerings, the Service Layers solution is always hosted as a highly secure single-tenant cloud in our own regional datacenter. This allows you – our customer – to tailor the scope of services and the delivery method precisely to your needs – thus ensuring a seamless integration into your processes and full compliance with any relevant security and regulatory requirements.

In a nutshell, you will only leverage the parts of the IDaaS solution that you are allowed to use – and can further enhance these components with additional services or on-premises systems to make sure it meets all of your organization's needs. Of course, if the requirements in your industry or your organization change, you can always continue your cloud journey, until you reach full cloud maturity sooner or later.

**Service Layers is targeted at organizations which cannot opt for a fully managed cloud based IDaaS solution.**

## 4. Questions and Answers

The webinar ends with a question-and-answer session about cloud-based IAM solutions. Some of the more frequently asked questions that tend to come up are:

**4.1. What should we migrate first – our applications or our IAM system?**

There is no clear-cut answer to this. It depends on your processes and the urgency of your cloud strategy as well as your approach and your roadmap. But the reality is that most organizations have already started transferring some applications to the cloud, and bringing the IAM system up to speed is the next step for them. Also, bear in mind that the feature set and the capabilities you expect for your cloud IAM are usually not dependent on the application stack – so you can easily migrate them separately.

**4.2. How does AI relate to cloud IAM, and do you think you need AI today?**

Yes, AI is an important component today. In modern enterprises, there are countless authorizations and accounts, and managing them manually is not really an option any-more.

In addition to this, AI can provide valuable recommendations when it comes to merging permissions or help with the decision-making processes during access certifications. And since all of this is fully automated, your role model is enhanced day by day and always up-to-date.

That said, using your own AI is prohibitively expensive as it requires a lot of hardware, and it is hard to evaluate the benefits of a "breathing organism" like an AI, which is used heavily on some days, but maybe not at all on others. Therefore, a more realistic approach for the near future is integrating AI-as-a-Service solutions or adding AI via external interfaces.

**4.3. How can we enforce MFA at production-only sites where mobile devices are not allowed?**
MFA does not necessarily require a mobile device – you can simply work with tokens (UV tokens) or similar tools. Of course, this depends on how you define a "mobile device" – if no hardware at all is allowed at your production site, MFA will be a tricky proposition. That said, a smartcard solution could be an option, if you can control distribution and possession.

## 5. Conclusion

**Cloud-based IAM solutions are the next evolutionary step in future-proof and modern Identity & Access Management.**

Cloud-based IAM solutions are the next evolutionary step in future-proof and modern Identity & Access Management: From day one, they grant organizations access to the powerful infrastructures, the deep technological understanding and the experience of leading IT service providers – and thus allow them to unluck the full potential of leading best-of-breed technologies without having to invest in dedicated on-prem resources.

That said, the migration to the cloud remains a complex and challenging project with far-reaching strategic implications. It requires a concise as-is and to-be analysis, thorough and detailed planning and a structured migration process – and should not be underestimated. In view of this complexity as well as the required expertise and manpower, organizations are well-advised to onboard experienced consultants and integrators at an early stage.

## About iC Consult

iC Consult is the world's leading independent consultancy, systems integrator, and managed services provider for Identity & Access Management with more than 800 employees worldwide.

We are committed to excellence and innovation, and with the best-in-class technology in the IAM space, we provide our customers with next-level cybersecurity solutions. Our service portfolio covers Managed Services for IAM including advisory, architecture, implementation, integration, support, and operations.

iC Consult is headquartered in Germany with offices in Switzerland, Austria, France, Belgium, Spain, Bulgaria, the UK, the U.S., Canada, India, and China. The world's largest brands trust in our expertise, to secure and manage their most valuable assets: their identities.