



- #1 Define your marketing strategy.
- #2 Create a communications plan.
- #3 Develop marketing campaigns.
- #4 Measure.
- #5 Bridge the gap between IT and corporate marketing.

Top 5 Tips for Marketing Your Cloud Services

They're innovative, scalable, and cost-efficient. Make sure they're used.

You've made the investment in creating cloud services. Your teams have done the hard work of designing, developing, and implementing them. Now take the most critical step on IT's road to successful cloud service delivery. Promote them. Communicate their value to your customers. Here are 5 key tips for marketing your cloud services in order to drive uptake and maximize ROI.

#1. Define your marketing strategy.

The traditional role of IT as a "department" or a technical resource for the company is obsolete. Think about IT as a business and its cloud services as a brand. Like any other business, it must formalize its strategy for marketing its services. The key considerations include:

- **Know your customer.** Identify the prime prospects for cloud services across your organization's lines of business, and understand their business needs. If possible, leverage your company's market research expertise to understand which groups need which types of services, and what they'll be willing to pay.
- **Branding.** By creating a unique brand for your cloud services (naming, logo, and so forth) you'll raise recognition across the company. Branding also influences customer perception, so use your internal creative teams to design a powerful cloud brand.
- **Pricing.** Build a consistent service cost model that allows you to define the pricing principles to benchmark against competitors and also establish a consistent model for investing in improvements.
- **Differentiation.** Clearly identify the attributes that create an advantage for your cloud services. Examples include performance, availability, cost, support, compliance, customization, or bundling options.
- **Competition.** Know how your competitors are trying to differentiate, and leverage industry models to understand your business landscape.

#2. Create a communications plan.

Communication is the key to effective marketing. Your plan should define what information will be communicated, how it will be communicated, and when it will be distributed to which audience. Top considerations include:

- **Vision.** Articulate the overarching value proposition—now and in the future. The vision must be strategically feasible, effective, ambitious, and achievable.
- **Channels.** Identify the channels that influence your customers, including social media, company events, corporate Intranet, emails, etc.
- **Promotion and advertising.** Plan for public relations activities (press releases, blogs, and so forth) to advertise your expertise across the organization.

#3. Develop marketing campaigns.

Actively promote the IT organization's expertise and capabilities in cloud services. When developing tailored campaigns, you must identify what you are expecting from the campaign, what your customers can expect, what the impact will be on the audience, and how you will measure success. In particular:

- **Know your audience.** Be sure to address the specific needs of each customer group; for example, the DevOps teams will be interested in speed of provisioning; the marketing organization will be interested in rapid scaling, and so on.
- **Use education to build rapport.** Plan regular workshops with targeted customers to showcase specific use cases, and consider article marketing, too.
- **Use outbound marketing.** A wide range of outbound marketing vehicles such as newsletters, Intranet ads, blogs, and customer reviews will ensure that your constituents think of the IT organization for cloud (and don't go outside for help!).

#4. Measure.

Benchmark your cloud environment against competitive cloud services, and set achievable actions to improve the value to business. This includes defining the set of metrics and KPIs that your cloud services will be measured against; tracking and monitoring customer satisfaction; reviewing the performance of your cloud services against the KPIs; and identifying specific actions to continuously improve your cloud services.

#5. Bridge the gap between IT and corporate marketing.

To be successful with cloud services, you'll need tight integration between your IT organization and the marketing organization at two levels:

1. **Executive level:** Your CIO and CMO need to work in tandem to ensure consistency with the business strategy.
2. **Departmental lead/individual contributor level:** Your IT organization should work with the marketing communications team to execute your cloud services communications plan, and with the field marketing team to develop the marketing campaigns and success measurements.

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