



**Xpediton**

 **Microsoft**

# **Move to Microsoft Azure to Accelerate Growth**



# Contents

- 01**    **Foreword**
- 02**    **Data is your greatest asset**
- 03**    **Unpacking today's business data challenges**
- 04**    **Why NOW is the time to move your data to the Cloud**
- 05**    **Cloud delivers powerful data management**
- 06**    **The benefits of moving to the Microsoft cloud**
- 07**    **A partner you can trust**
- 08**    **Next steps**

# Foreword



**Dan Thompson,**  
*Practice Director, Data and Insights at Xpedition*

*“A mind shift is underway within organisations. There’s a growing realisation that data of all types has become the lifeblood of successful businesses. Data has become a significant asset to be protected, valued and exploited.*

*In the past, data was often viewed in terms of problems or costs – the cost of storage; speed of access; issues of compliance; creation of silos of data owned by specific departments. Now holistic, accurate, timely data can provide the confidence to make crucial business decisions ranging from strategic long term planning and investments, through to the tailored options which drive the modern customer experience in the moment.*

*In parallel, the move to cloud continues apace. How do cloud and data converge to address the business challenges faced across the C-Suite – from the CEO, IT, Finance, Sales & Marketing, Governance and Compliance to the emerging role of Chief Data Officer?*

*In this white paper we take a business perspective on cloud and data, and how our depth of experience at Xpedition can help your organisation take advantage of the industry-leading Microsoft Azure capabilities to deliver on the significant opportunities from moving your data assets to the cloud.”*



# Data is your greatest asset

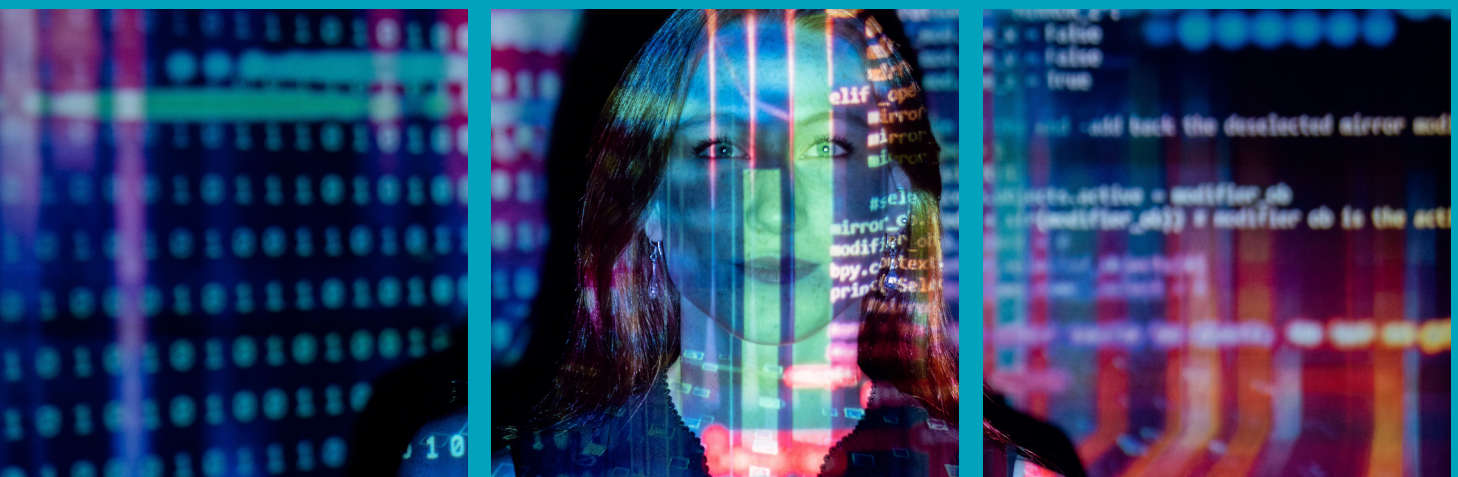
The volume of data available to organisations has exploded over the last decade. While this has created many challenges such as consolidation of data, cyber security and democratisation of data, these are heavily outweighed by the significant opportunities offered by these amazing new data assets. The question is how best to utilise and derive maximum benefits from the data now available to the business from all directions.

Business data is a tangible asset that can be mined to unlock huge potential and value within an organisation. Accuracy is critical if it is to provide the insight and confidence to make crucial business decisions to set the strategy and investments across the enterprise. Intelligence held within data provides the clarity to truly understand customers to deliver an excellent, tailored customer experience which can be optimised in the moment, at the point of delivery. In addition, information from both inside and outside the

business can provide insights that help predict what customers are looking to buy next and where an organisation can gain competitive advantage. For all of this, data provides the smart knowledge to direct product and service innovations.

All digital transformation projects rely on data as their backbone, and optimising that data is vital to deliver business agility and resilience, by understanding the risks and opportunities facing the organisation. This approach helps maximise business opportunities, while ensuring that risks are mitigated in line with the corporate risk appetite. Reliable, centrally managed information provides the holistic picture which supports fast and dynamic decision making based on fact.

Data is your greatest asset, and one which continues to accumulate and rapidly increase in value. In short, data can help maximise revenues and profit.



# Unpacking today's business data challenges

So what are the key challenges standing in the way of businesses making the most of their data? Most organisations have built up a complex IT environment over the years. This has led to multiple solutions and technologies being grafted together with the result that data is often locked away deep in different systems. This provides a significant challenge to realising the full potential of the organisation's data assets.

In research by Deloitte that asked about the Insight Driven Organisation (IDO) Maturity Scale, an industry-level benchmark of how well companies are adopting an analytics mindset, it stated that:



Fewer than  
**4 in 10**  
executives believe their companies are in the Top 2 categories of the IDO Maturity Scale



**25%**  
believe this is due to a lack of predictive insights



**39%**  
of leaders find connecting data from disparate systems a challenge



**61%**  
of executives are aware of analytics but lack technology infrastructure or are still working in silos

## Addressing the data issues of the C-Suite

In most organisations reporting capabilities are limited because data is siloed. The CEO and board need enhanced visibility across the entire business to support strategic decision making and investment.

These are some of the specific data challenges that affected different areas of the business, which our customers told us they faced as they looked at their data maturity:



### CMO & CCO

- The veracity of data is not trusted. It is not possible to cross-check and verify the validity of data and so it is difficult to ask the right questions, trust the answers and be sure the correct decisions are being made.
- Out of date manual processes and the need for data cleansing means that answers to questions are not available in a timely fashion.



### CTO & CIO

- Even though data is increasingly perceived as an asset to the business as a whole, it can still be seen as a cost or a problem – for example, maintaining large volumes of data to enable trends and cycles to be identified will increase data storage costs and may be at odds with data governance regulations. This will leave the business trailing more savvy and innovative competitors.
- Maintaining data security and privacy is critical as cyber threats increase, which can disrupt business operations, destroying reputation and brand value.



### CFO & COO

- There is a need to keep pace with rapidly evolving regulatory compliance requirements in all relevant jurisdictions.



### Chief Data Officer

- Challenged with breaking down silos and establishing a vision for a data-driven enterprise.
- Enforcing data governance and improving data literacy to create a culture of sharing.
- Treating data and analytics as assets and maximising their economic value.

Customers are increasingly demanding exceptional, personalised experiences from all areas of the business – sales, marketing, service, support, billing, delivery – which recognises them across all channels – online, social, email, phone, live chat, in person. To tailor customer experiences in real time at the point of delivery requires sophisticated, speedy access to all relevant data.

According to Gartner, the number one top trend in strategic technology in 2022 is data fabric, which is the flexible, resilient integration of data sources across platforms and business users, making data available everywhere it's needed regardless of where the data lives. Harnessing data in this way will ensure enable organisations to identify trends in customer behaviour, ensuring that they remain on the leading edge when it comes to customer service.





# Why NOW is the time to move your data to the Cloud

In most organisations the push to derive greater returns from data assets is coinciding with a drive to move more business functions to the cloud. Bringing the two trends together can address many issues simultaneously. Indeed, the FSTech research found that of the 37% of companies with the highest level of data maturity, nearly half (48%) significantly exceeded business goals across a 12 month period.

Issues inherent with on-premises servers and systems are even more obvious now cloud options are available:

## **Keeping systems current takes resource**

On-premises systems and technology require major in-house upgrades every few years as technologies evolve and functionality enhancements are developed. This requires parallel environments, functionality, security testing and updates to interfaces. This places a high overhead on the business

as a whole and IT in particular, due to the resources required to maintain legacy systems, patching security vulnerabilities and cobbling together workarounds to keep old systems running.

## **Security patches need immediate attention**

The Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2022 reported ransomware attacks in the UK have more than doubled since 2021 and that 39% of businesses have experienced a cyber-attack. Such events cause financial and reputational damage to any company, large or small. Therefore, regular bug fixes and security patches must be applied so that systems remain secure and performing as expected, this burden can create significant ongoing cost and risk for the organisation. Using a cloud solution provides access to automatic updates and an optimised solution, enhances security and ensures that systems remain 'evergreen'.

## Loss of competitive edge

If system enhancements are not added regularly, it can be hard to keep up with the market and remain competitive. Working with a cloud service provider, organisations have access to the latest technology, such as AI, machine learning and process automation.

Cloud also provides employees the option to work remotely or in a hybrid way, allowing for the attraction and retention of the brightest talent looking to be exposed to best-in-class technologies. The cost of employee turnover is significant and employee frustration with legacy systems and broken processes can be a key cause of recognition, impacting not only operational costs but also revenue, productivity and company culture.



## Agility and flexibility

Cloud solutions support scaling businesses as data storage requirements expand and contract based on business needs, mergers, acquisitions and divestments. Capacity can be changed rapidly providing agility and flexibility to the business.

**Economies of scale (OpEx v CapEx)**  
Cloud solutions benefit from the skills, technology and heavy investments from major IT players. Cloud solutions provide a subscription model (anything-as-a-services or XaaS), allowing organisations to control costs and enhance business agility. It is also easier to build a business case based on operating expenditure rather than capital expenditure (OpEx v CapEx).

## Operational resilience

Cloud solutions give flexibility on a number of fronts to support operational resilience. Secure access to data is possible from any location, at any time allowing employees to work remotely. With increased processing power and AI, businesses can predict market trends, leading to greater agility and increased innovation.

## Disaster recovery

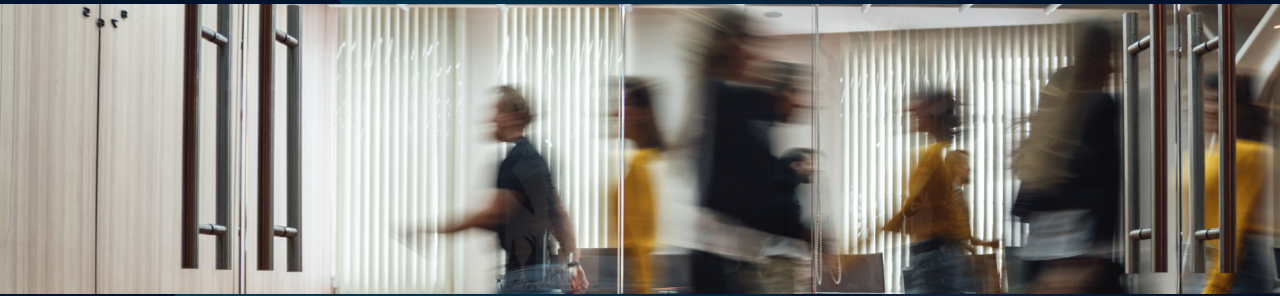
In-house solutions require frequent back-ups and regular testing of disaster recovery procedures. Cloud solutions have this covered with vast IT infrastructure capabilities to support them.



# Cloud delivers powerful data management

Migrating systems and data to the cloud or implementing new functions directly in the cloud will help remove data silos and increase agility for the business. The cloud enables organisations to build up and manage vast volumes of data at low cost. Structured and unstructured data can be brought together making it possible to rapidly interrogate and mine data

with a new generation of sophisticated analytic tools to spot new connections, trends, compliance issues and opportunities. As siloes are removed a holistic view of the customer can be seen with deep benefits for improved customer experiences, personalised marketing, up-sell and cross-sell opportunities, and product and service enhancements.



## The benefits of moving to the Cloud

### **CEO & Board - Organisation-wide Informed Decision Making**

Using the power of the cloud to turn data into intelligence will help to future-proof your organisation. It will banish data silos, support data sharing and organisational learning. Data

insights can fast-track product and service development to meet evolving customer and market demands, by supporting informed decision making. Predictive analytics and AI technology provide insights to identify future trends to maximise business opportunities. Data intelligence within

your organisation provides a platform for business expansion and growth into new markets. Informed decision making and leading to informed actions helps to gain competitive advantage.



### **CFO & COO – Support Compliance with One Version of the Truth**

The burden of compliance and data regulation is increasing. Being able to bring together data from across your organisation, such as aligning financial and transactional data combined with customer and business data will deliver a complete, single version of the truth. The ability to gain greater visibility of sales pipeline information leads to more accurate forecasts, safe in the knowledge that the organisation is compliant with internal policies and external regulations in all relevant jurisdictions. The ability to manage data responsibly and securely, provides data integrity and a robust audit trail.



### **CMO & CSO – Accelerate sales velocity by aligning Sales and Marketing data**

Fast-tracking growth and increasing sales velocity requires a focus on providing excellent customer



experience and insights to accelerate the customer journey. Aligning marketing and sales data, removing silos, providing transparency and enabling the interrogation of data enables sales and marketing to align KPIs and visualise them. A single version of the truth for each customer supports personalised, proactive communications, supporting customer advocacy and retention. Deep analysis of accurate, blended data helps to uncover customer trends on which to base the development of the next generation of products and services, that anticipate customer needs and result in an enhanced customer experience.

Xpedition has the experience and tools to guide and help organisations how to harness powerful cloud-based



analytics and reporting, making data insights accessible to every area of the business. Xpedition helps organisations to put strong data governance processes in place that structure and automate data management to support compliance and security requirements.



### **CTO & CIO - The operational benefits of moving to Microsoft Azure**

Lack of resource and in-house skills, when coupled with the cost of maintaining, patching and repairing legacy systems are all compelling reasons to move to a more secure cloud-based infrastructure. Once the decision has been made to transition some or all systems and data to the cloud, the right partner can assist with prioritising investment effectively and building your digital roadmap.



### **Chief Data Officer**

Cloud empowers you to build business value, influence decision-making and create a data-driven culture in your business. While cloud-powered innovations such as AI and machine learning mean you can drive competitive advantage by accelerating innovation and showcasing the art of the possible. At Xpedition, we empower organisations to thrive through innovative thinking and transformative technologies that enable long-term success. We are experts at empowering organisations to leverage the far-reaching capabilities of Azure to achieve success for your organisation. Microsoft Azure is a best-in-class Cloud platform that incorporates an impressive array of data management, governance and analytics tools including:

- Azure Purview
- Azure Data Lake
- Power BI
- Azure Synapse Analytics





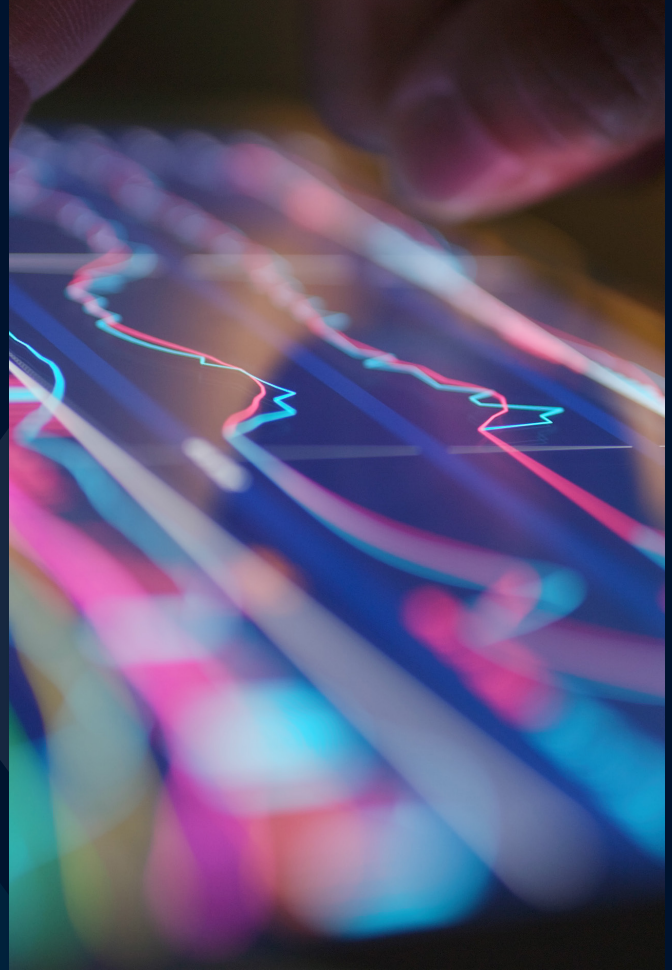
Microsoft Purview enables an organisation to map all its data, no matter where that data resides. It provides an end-to-end view of the whole data estate and automates the discovery and cataloguing of data, while protecting against compliance risks.



Azure Data Lake supports big data analytics in the cloud. It provides unlimited storage for structured, semi-structured or unstructured data. It can be used to store any type of data of any size so that organisations can bring together all their data from whatever source to gain deep insights, spot anomalies, and identify trends and cycles.



Microsoft Power BI provides access to enhanced data visualisation and analytics tools. It enables organisations to analyse data with greater speed, efficiency and insight. Data is transformed into



interactive, simple-to-understand charts and graphs. Power BI will help identify emerging trends and focus your analysis on the things that are truly critical to meeting your business objective.



Azure Synapse Analytics provides limitless analytics by bringing together data integration, enterprise data warehousing and big data analytics. It delivers a unified experience to ingest, explore, prepare, transform, manage and serve data for business intelligence and machine learning needs. Azure Synapse Analytics makes data warehousing, big data, data integration and AI available to organisations of all sizes via the cloud.



# A Partner you can Trust

**20**

**YEARS AS A  
MICROSOFT  
GOLD PARTNER**

**630+**

**YEARS OF  
PRODUCT  
EXPERIENCE**

**800**

**PROJECTS**

**75+**

**DATA  
PROFESSIONALS**

**Microsoft  
Gold Data  
Analytics and  
Microsoft Gold  
Data Platform  
certifications**



**Microsoft  
Partner**

Gold Data Platform  
Gold Data Analytics  
Gold Cloud Platform  
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning  
Gold Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions

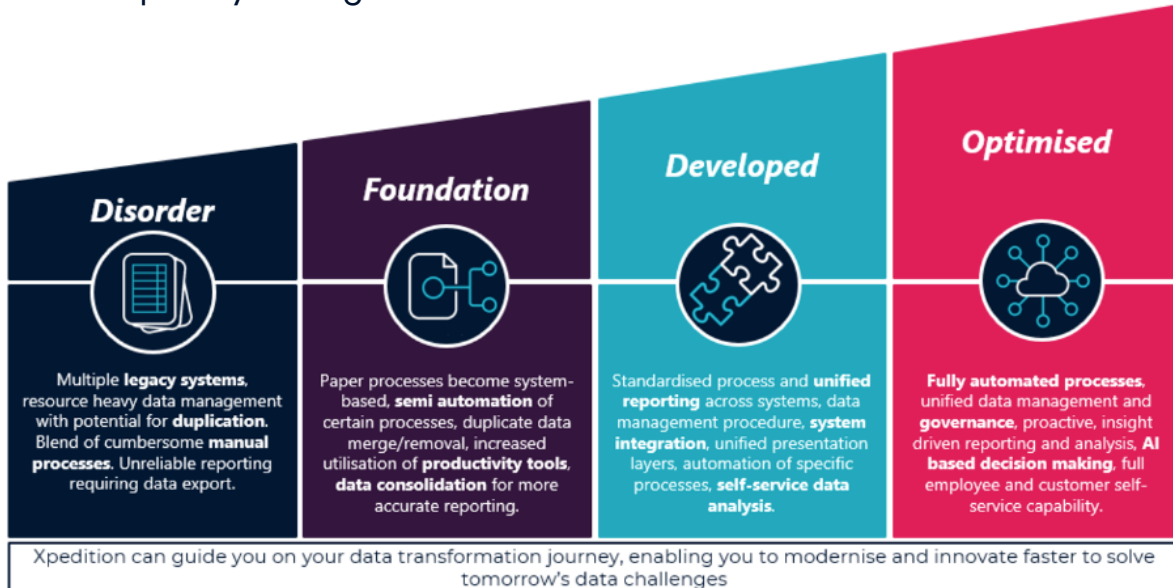
*“We believe cloud can be transformational for any business across any industry. Microsoft Azure enables businesses to harness the power of the cloud for an enhanced customer experience, whilst simplifying operations through the unified management of resources. By working with an experienced Gold partner such as Xpedition you can accelerate your move to the cloud through their expert guidance, accelerators and proven methodologies.*”

**Amit Sinha**

Chief Technology Officer – Private Equity, Microsoft

Xpedition's Data & Insights Practice has developed a range of models, tools and services to help you exploit your data assets to the full. Our Data Maturity Model will be the starting point to map your current situation, whatever point your organisation is

at, we can help you on your data journey, empowering your business to derive the greatest benefits possible from your data assets:



Together we can guide your organisation on a data transformation journey to enable you to modernise and innovate faster. Based on our project and Microsoft Azure expertise we have developed a range of specialised services that will help you gain rapid returns:

### [Cloud Analytics and Rapid Insights](#)

Our subject matter experts will help you turn data into intelligence to future-proof your organisation. Utilising Microsoft Azure, our business intelligence specialists will turn your raw data into business ready inputs, so you can perform faster analysis

and gain key insights that help inform critical decisions.

### [Assistance to migrate your data to Microsoft Azure](#)

We'll help you increase security, scalability and control by migrating your legacy systems and moving your data workloads to the Microsoft Cloud.

### [5 Day Microsoft Power BI Starter Pack](#)

Microsoft Power BI is the cloud-based business intelligence application that transforms your company's data into interactive, informative graphs and charts, to



help you to identify significant trends and focus your attention on the things that are critical to your business success.

### **Data Solutions Starter Pack**

Xpedition Data Solution Pack powered by Azure Synapse Analytics, provides clients with a modern and performant Azure data proof of value, which allows organisations to embark on a modern data journey with a strong solution for business data and decision-making processes.



When choosing a partner to help drive value from your data assets we think that it's important that the organisation has strong ethics and values. At Xpedition we:

- Deliver with Passion
- Act with Integrity
- Strive for Constant Innovation

We'll work with you as partners to maximise the value of your data assets to provide competitive advantage; create peace of mind; drive cost reductions over time; minimise data siloes; and deliver faster, more accurate decision making.

With our agile proven delivery, Xpedition is the right partner to help you get the most from your data and the cloud.



## Next steps

Visit our website for more information and contact us to arrange a Discovery Session where our data specialists will analyse your current situation and identify a path forward to help you move to the cloud and increase the ROI on your data assets.

[www.xpedition.co.uk](http://www.xpedition.co.uk)

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### Sources/Further Reading:

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