



Your Guide to Choosing a Google Cloud Partner

There's Google Cloud - and
then there's Google Cloud
with a partner

Pythian



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Introduction

Things are changing quickly in the world of hybrid and multi-cloud, and Google Cloud is increasingly in the mix as a primary public cloud solution provider. There is major pressure on organizations to keep data secure, ensure compliance, embrace digital transformation, manage costs and get more value out of their IT spend. Companies without dedicated internal expertise—or bandwidth—are turning to managed service partners to help plan, execute and manage this evolution. This handbook outlines the various issues and opportunities that should be understood by anyone who is looking to choose a partner.

Things can get complicated. Seeing the big picture - and being able to plan properly - requires insight and experience around a variety of on-premise, legacy, and public and private cloud options and components. It means understanding how data is being used, and uncovering new ways to gain insights to drive more value from your IT investment.

Almost every organization, big or small, has workloads in the cloud, and many have hybrid or multi-cloud environments—whether that’s a mix of on-premise, private and public cloud, and/or a mix of hyperscale clouds like Google Cloud Platform, Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure.

And this is becoming the norm: According to Flexera’s [2021 State of the Cloud Report](#), 92 percent of enterprises have a multi-cloud strategy and use an average of 2.6 public clouds. Many are accelerating their time to market by using multiple clouds, but this approach presents challenges in terms of optimizing cloud performance, budget and security.

There’s also a move away from basic lift-and-shift migrations as organizations increasingly look for unique customizations to digitally transform their business. According to Forrester, for example, [container adoption](#) is expected to hit 50 percent in 2022 as enterprises refactor or re-platform their workloads to take a more cloud-native approach.

As Google Cloud adoption increases, the resultant multi-cloud complexity necessitates deep technical, financial and architectural expertise around each of the major public cloud providers, including which clouds are best suited for specific workloads and which workloads should move as needed between environments to optimize cost, load and scalability. It also requires knowledge of the security and compliance rules governing your organization or your industry. These decisions will have far-reaching effects in terms of security, performance and the overall needs of the business.

The way you plan and manage your data will have far-reaching implications for your business that need to be considered and understood.

Multi-cloud? Think Google Cloud.

As one of the top three hyperscale cloud providers, Google Cloud is uniquely positioned for multi-cloud. Google Cloud is known for its open, [secure cloud infrastructure](#) and the flexibility to migrate, build and optimize apps across multi-cloud environments while minimizing vendor lock-in. Google Cloud has also increased its focus on hybrid and multi-cloud workloads through [Anthos](#), which allows you to manage workloads on Google Cloud Platform and Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE), as well as workloads on AWS and Azure.

Google Cloud also differentiates itself in [big data analytics](#), [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) and [machine learning \(ML\)](#) services, as well as container support. And Google has taken an industry vertical focus with Google Cloud, with solutions targeted at retail, healthcare, financial services, manufacturing, and media and entertainment. Here are some of the key benefits of Google Cloud:

Advanced Analytics, AI and ML	Google's BigQuery is a multi-cloud data warehouse that turns big data into business insights. And TensorFlow is an open-source platform for machine learning, making it easier to leverage AI in the cloud.
Better for open source	Google is a major contributor to the open source ecosystem, developing game-changing technologies like Kubernetes—an open-source platform for managing containerized workloads and services.
Mature security posture	BeyondCorp is Google's Zero Trust model that builds on a decade of experience at Google. Google Cloud encrypts data in transit and at rest, and access transparency and approval extends visibility and control.
Serverless flexibility	Google Cloud offers a serverless computing infrastructure that eliminates infrastructure management and simplifies the developer experience.



Starting the search for a Google Cloud partner

So you're thinking about including Google Cloud in your hybrid or multi-cloud strategy. To work with Google Cloud, you'll need to work with a Google Cloud partner. But how do you find the right one?

As part of your initial assessment, you'll need to define a strategy to move workloads across your hybrid and/or multi-cloud environment to reduce costs, ease management and create a platform for digital transformation. Doing this internally requires having the right skill sets across Google Cloud, as well as any other cloud platforms you're using. And you need to ensure you've thought of all the potential gaps—and the potential opportunities.

A successful move to the cloud requires sufficient personnel, resources and time. Your IT personnel might effectively become cloud providers, and this evolution may require upgrades in their training. Your web services will also have to be properly connected to your in-house operations (not always a straightforward task), so make sure you've reserved enough time for setup, customization and testing.

Once you've moved your data into Google Cloud—or, for that matter, any cloud—how will you extract the most value out of it? Project management, skill requirements, data governance and data security services are all legitimate areas that should be evaluated by experts with a deep understanding of cloud and data technology.

The right partner can help with an assessment of your environment, as well as migration, optimization and even long-term management of the overall solution. Google Cloud has an extensive global partner network, so you can collaborate with a partner that has the right industry background to unlock your next level of business growth.

But when all partners are claiming to be 'the best, the most experienced, with the most experts,' how do you go deeper to identify the ones that will work with you to devise the right plans—and support you on them—as part of an integrated strategy for your business?

Developing the deepest proficiency in cloud services and technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence enable partners like Pythian to deliver significant, long-term value for customers.

- DERRICK THOMPSON,
Global Head of Partner
Differentiation, Google Cloud



An ecosystem of Google Cloud Partners

From day one, Google has been a partner-focused business. Beyond increasing adoption of Google Cloud, Google wants to ensure that organizations are successful in the cloud. For that, partners play a vital role. And to meet the growing demand for cloud, Google Cloud recently announced it's moving to a partner-led and partner-delivered approach for professional services needed by customers.

The partner side of the business is really transitioning to a services-led business. If you look at the cloud landscape today, it's drastically different than it was even three years ago, when a significant portion of the opportunity out in the market was quite literally taking web environments on servers and moving them into the cloud. Fast forward to 2022, and the types of cloud complexities out there require a partner with a very high level of expertise.

Google Cloud invests in partners to help support successful outcomes, particularly in areas that require skilled expertise such as Kubernetes, data analytics, AI and other emerging tech. On the flip side, a good partner will invest in getting the right talent and collaborate with Google Cloud directly to remain at the cutting edge of advancements.

Each partner brings particular experience and focus to the table, and it's critical to go deeper - beyond marketing messaging - to probe for the right fit for your business.

So, what exactly is a Google Cloud Partner anyway?

There are three requirements to becoming a Google Cloud Partner: performance, spend and certifications. But to become a premier Google Cloud Partner, you must be in the top three percent of participating companies within a given country, determined annually.

To help Google Cloud Partners stay at the top of their game, Google offers exclusive access to training sessions, solution accelerators, industry research, beta programs, product updates and Google support, among other perks, so they're armed with the latest and greatest insights from Google.

Google also has a designation system for their training programs:

Certification	Partners with teams of certified individuals have Google-validated technical knowledge and advanced skills in specific areas. Look for Professional certifications, where individuals have 3+ years of industry experience and 1+ years on Google Cloud.
Expertise	Partners with the Expertise designation have demonstrated proficiency and customer success through experience in a specific industry, workload or product.
Specialization	Specialization is the highest technical designation a partner can earn. Partners who have achieved a Specialization in a solution area have an established Google Cloud services practice, consistent customer success and proven technical capabilities vetted by Google and a third-party assessor.

As the first recipient of Google Cloud's new Data Management Specialization award, Pythian is recognized for helping enterprises transform through complex data migration and management services. The foundation for Pythian's Google Cloud data modernization, migration and management practice is built upon deep expertise across a wide range of database technologies, including Oracle, MySQL, PostgreSQL, Cassandra, MongoDB and Microsoft SQL Server, as well as experience collaborating with Google Cloud on CloudSQL and Bare Metal Solution offerings.

Looking at more than just a Google Cloud designation

While having specialization designations and being on top of training courses is important when selecting a Google Cloud Partner, there are other considerations you should take into account when choosing a partner:

All about growth. Businesses are under pressure to demonstrate growth, but growth requires scalability, flexibility and an environment that will support agile innovation. Look for a partner that can help you manage legacy systems, accomplish your growth goals and support new projects.



Pythian's [InfraOps Essentials for Google Cloud](#) provides a simplified, flexible set of core cloud monitoring, alerting and response services so your workloads are available and performant 24x7.

Value over cost. Cutting cost is generally not the key goal of cloud migrations anymore. Instead, IT directors want to maximize value from available IT spend. Look for a partner that will bring added value to your project. At the same time, a Google Cloud Partner can help you explore opportunities for funding from Google to help offset the costs.



Pythian's [FinOps Cost Management & Optimization](#) provides tools, visibility and seasoned guidance to help organizations manage their cloud infrastructure spend—without sacrificing performance or efficiency.

Unlock the true potential of your data. If your data is just sitting on a server, it's not doing anything for your business. Getting smart with data analysis can help you unlock hidden potential or mitigate unforeseen issues.



With Pythian and Google Cloud, you'll get a customized [cloud-native enterprise data platform](#), data science or EDP support.



Your reputation is at stake. If your data isn't secure, a breach or attack could irrevocably damage your brand's reputation. Ask potential partners how they provide a robust data security framework, secure connectivity and access management—and if they have experience in regulatory compliance.

Owning complexity. Data environments are becoming increasingly complex with a mixture of on-premise and cloud, with different processes, systems and people involved. Question any partner who makes it sound too easy. Sometimes the right thing to do isn't the easiest, but a good partner can provide the right level of guidance and support to mitigate concerns with the level of complexity.

Empower your people. A good partner will work with your team and empower them to become stakeholders. They will want to connect with your team in a way that provides the most benefit to your business. That could be a lighter touch, or a more involved one, but it needs to be based on what's best for the business.

Talent, talent, talent. Even before the Great Resignation, there was intense competition for talent—and now even more so. Some partners imply they have talent depth that may or may not be there. For a partner to truly nurture and grow top talent, it takes investment and energy to sift through prospects and land on the select few that can operate at a high level.

Intellectual honesty and years of experience. A partner with years of experience in cloud migrations has gone through all potential scenarios of a project and will be able to guide you in the right direction. A good partner will shoot straight, won't cut corners and won't sell you on a particular approach just to land business. A good partner earns long-term relationships by suggesting and doing what is right—not to blindly drive consumption, but to drive successful business outcomes for the client.

References. Most reputable cloud partners will have case studies to share. Take some time to read them. How much detail do they offer? What kind of clients do they involve? Ask if you can actually speak with people who have been involved with projects. Reach out to your network and talk to people who've worked with the partners you're considering. This will help you ascertain if there's a gap between their marketing message and the reality of what's delivered.

Looking for case studies of companies in your industry that have made the switch to Google Cloud? We've got you covered with a [library of success stories](#).

Finding the right partner

Almost every partner in Google Cloud's directory says the same thing—but not every partner can handle complex workloads or multi-cloud integrations. Slick websites and marketing messages abound with big promises, but it's important to go deeper and ask harder questions. Choose your partner wisely so your transition runs smoothly.

A good partner will have made serious investments in the Google Cloud ecosystem. They'll have a hybrid or multi-cloud worldview (and capability) and are at home handling complex challenges. They can collaborate with your team, offer robust professional service capabilities and support post-migration as part of an active partnership. And they'll be fully aligned with your strategic goals.

So, before you make a choice, ask yourself if the partner has:

- A multi-cloud approach with advice and solutions that don't involve Google Cloud?
- A deep understanding of cloud migration, management and optimization stemming from years of experience?
- Extensive security programs that include data encryption, access control and monitoring?
- The ability to unlock data insights from advanced analytics solutions?
- The ability to optimize your investment in cloud moving forward?
- Cultural alignment with your team?

Take time to learn more about your prospective cloud partner's worldview, experience, philosophy and capabilities. Understand how the decisions and actions you take today will lead into future choices that will determine how much freedom and flexibility you'll have to remain agile and competitive.

How Pythian fits into the Google Cloud partner ecosystem

As a premier Google Cloud Managed Service Provider (MSP) and Specialization Partner, Pythian provides end-to-end consulting for all Google Cloud solutions, with 25 years of experience in data, analytics and the cloud. For example, Google Cloud combined with Pythian's Advanced Analytics Services—based on our experience in data validation, data modeling, visualizations, big data services, IoT and machine learning—can help you get better ROI on your data faster.

A four-time Google Cloud award-winner, Pythian has achieved multiple specializations—Google's highest technical designation—including Cloud Migration, Data Analytics, Machine Learning, Infrastructure Data Management and Work Transformation - Enterprise. And, as a certified [Google Cloud MSP](#), we've delivered thousands of professional and managed services projects in the hybrid and multi-cloud world.

These services include:

- Creating flexible and scalable analytics data platforms in Google Cloud
- Cost and performance optimization
- Large-scale automated virtual machine migrations to the cloud
- Architectural design, data modeling, cluster design, backups and disaster recovery
- 24x7 monitoring and response
- Performance tuning, patches and upgrades
- Access to Pythian's 300+ technical experts

We leverage Pythian's services on an ongoing basis to ensure that we are continually evaluating and optimizing our cloud utilization, spending and architecture. Pythian's understanding of Unilog's business and systems allows us to be agile while reducing our total operating costs, which is a big win.

- **SUCHIT BACHALLI**,
CEO of [Unilog](#)





It doesn't matter whether you're on a cloud journey or an infrastructure journey or a data journey, which has always been at the heart of Pythian's business. We have a mix of expertise across all platforms, across all verticals, across all sizes of organizations, that can get you there faster. After all, we've been doing this for more than 25 years.

- VANESSA SIMMONS,
Senior Vice President of Business
Development at Pythian

Pythian has the capabilities of a global systems integrator but the flexibility of a boutique consultancy, which puts us in a unique position in the Google Cloud partner ecosystem. While we have a strong focus on professional services, if you're just starting out with Google Cloud we can grow with you by monitoring and supporting your Google Cloud environment on a daily basis—and, when you're ready, we can help you find innovative solutions to meet your business goals. With expertise and certification across all major cloud platforms, including Google Cloud, AWS, Azure, SAP and Oracle Cloud, we can also help you bridge clouds as part of a multi-cloud strategy.



Visit the [Google Cloud Partner Page](#) for more information on how Pythian helps its customers confidently leverage Google Cloud. Or, reach out to a [Pythian Google Cloud Expert for a consultation](#) on planning your next steps.



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 twitter.com/Pythian

 Contact us at +1-866-798-4426 or info@pythian.com

ABOUT PYTHIAN

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT services company that helps organizations transform how they compete and win by helping them turn data into valuable insights, predictions and products. From cloud automation to machine learning, Pythian designs, implements and supports customized solutions to the toughest data challenges.

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