Talk Think Do

Version 1.0 • 3rd April 2024

Service Definition – Azure Application Development

Lot 3 Cloud Support

Contents

Introduction

Company Overview

Talk Think Do is a specialist Microsoft Solution and Specialization Partner, with customers throughout the UK. We build and support mission-critical Microsoft Azure solutions for public and private sector customers across a variety of sectors including education, agriculture, charities, and transport.

We specialise in building and running mission-critical solutions using cloud-native technologies. Our focus on mission-critical systems naturally means that systems are large and more complex, often involving challenging requirements. We use container-based cloud native technologies, providing competitive advantage through speed of innovation, increased reliability, and security.

Value Proposition

Where off-the-shelf software applications are designed to meet a broad range of requirements and often lack the customisation needed, a bespoke application is built to your specific business requirements and workflow processes, saving time, and improving efficiency. Additionally, a bespoke build can integrate with your existing applications and data sources, while being adaptable to change, particularly where DevOps is employed.

Legacy applications can also pose a risk to organisations as many of them are not keeping pace with evolving compliance requirements and cyber security threats.

A cloud-native approach to application development provides the added benefits of scalable infrastructure to meet demand while minimising costs, and inherently follows green software engineering principals. New services like AI can be implemented and updated as required to improve functionality, accessibility, and efficiency.

Talk Think Do have significant experience in supporting clients through this journey and can provide an expert team, embedding the support processes and ensuring that you or your third-party teams are equipped for the ongoing management, to maximise the opportunity bespoke cloud-native applications represents.

What the Service Provides

Application development to meet your requirements using cloud-native services, DevOps, and modern data platforms and AI, with a delivery squad built to meet you goals and budget, driven by business value.

Social Value

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Fighting Climate Change – policy outcome: effective stewardship of the environment.

We recognise the urgency required to fight climate change and have made, and are committed to delivering, the SME Climate Change Commitment:

Recognising that climate change poses a threat to the economy, nature and society-at-large, our company commits to take action immediately in order to:

Halve our greenhouse gas emissions before 2030

Achieve net zero emissions before 2050

Disclose our progress on a yearly basis

In doing so, we are proud to be recognised by the United Nations Race to Zero campaign, and join governments, businesses, cities, regions, and universities around the world with the same mission.

Covid-19 Recovery – policy outcome: helping local communities to manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has accelerated the growth in demand for digital services. This has highlighted the significant, and growing, digital skills gap. We see a huge opportunity for home-grown talent to help fill this gap and contribute to the economy. We are working closely with local schools, as Enterprise Advisors, to help them deliver their careers programmes. We offer work experience and are involved in promoting work experience to other businesses.

We have a structured career path for our technical skills supporting staff at the start of their careers with training and support to help us grow digital talent. Through our engagement with younger people, we are actively working to encourage young people into the industry.

The pace of technical change is relentless, and we also recognise the difficulties that academic staff have in keeping their computing curriculums relevant, so we are also working to engage with local schools' computing faculties to support them with industry-relevant guidance.

Overview of the G-Cloud Service

Every customer and scenario will require a different application build, Talk Think Do has a series of steps to understand the current state and desired outcomes to design and implement a cloud-native application suited to that environment and add business value:

1. Discovery and Design

   It is important to understand your business goals and pain points:

   • Business specific requirements

   • Specific application goals

- Application compliance requirements

- Data governance and regulatory constraints

- Cloud-native and DevOps readiness

From the discovery stage Talk Think Do will provide a full outline of the proposed application design, design decisions, and functionality, for approval prior to build.

2. Azure Software Application Build

Upon sign-off of the design the application build will follow proven technical practices:

- Ensure that all assets, including configuration and developer documentation, are under source control

- Ability to work independently without orchestration from other teams and frequent integration testing

- Automated build and test processes enable working in small batches to reduce technical risk and increase throughput

- Visibility and tracking of work from request through to delivery, including the status of each work item

- Protect your data according to data privacy regulations and industry standards Handle all of your licensing requirements

We will build your software on Azure cloud-native application services —all while feeding back to you every step of the way.

3. Product Acceptance

Talk Think Do experts will support you with:

- The initial application release

- User acceptance testing

- Feedback reviews

- Technical security, solutions, and architecture reviews

4. Service Launch - Go-Live

We act as an extension of your team, providing expert maintenance and support throughout the launch. This includes 30 days of free post-launch care. Not every business will know all the features they want from the outset of their project. But thanks to our iterative approach, your software can continue to improve even post-launch.

5. Ensuring you have ongoing support

   We will support you intensively during the transformation project, including project support and hypercare for a period of 30 days post go-live, both of which are included in the cost of the service. Depending upon your organisation you may look to support the application yourselves or we can offer our managed application support service. Either way we'll ensure that the transition from intensive project support to ongoing support is seamless.

6. Helping to deliver the benefits

   Much of the benefit of legacy application modernisation comes after the initial transformation is complete. We will work closely to ensure you obtain the maximum benefit from your new cloud native application into the future. This will be in the form of a post go-live assessment against the original project objectives, completed during the hypercare period. The assessment will track progress against objectives and include recommendations for future efficiencies and benefits realisation opportunities.

Associated Services

- Business Continuity Planning
- Disaster Recovery/Restoration Planning
- Managed Application Support (separate listing on g-cloud)
- Hosting management

Data Protection

Information Assurance

We have implemented an Integrated Security Management System (ISMS) that has been certified to ISO 27001:2019. We are also currently certified for both Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus.

Data Back-Up and Restoration

We are experts in providing data assurance using Microsoft Azure. We understand that each customer will have different requirements for high-availability and disaster recovery. We work with customers to define and agree specific requirements and recommend a solution based on best practice.
Specific requirements can be discussed prior to an order being placed and then documented in the Order Form as agreed between both parties.

Business continuity statement/plan

We are able to either provide a technical Business Continuity Plan (BCP) or input into a wider business BCP if required. This can be included within the scope of the order form and the relevant Management & Architecture support will be factored in.

Privacy by Design

We recognise that privacy by design is a legal requirement in the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), effective May 2018. The protection of citizens' data must be included from the start of the design process of a technology/service. There are a number of ways we help ensure compliance:

- Privacy is embedded into the development process by default and the design of our architecture and solutions - informed by the seven foundational Privacy by Design principles.
- We recognise that, when looking at modernising legacy systems, this legislation was not effective when the original system was implemented, and sufficient data protection was not always straightforward. We therefore conduct an assessment on the application and migration process to highlight any risks and remediation requirements.
- A key element of our modernisation plan will be to address any remediation requirements and recommend a compliant solution and transition plan.

Using the Service

Ordering and Invoicing

We provide two options for project initiation, depending on the scale of your project - either kicking off with a separate discovery phase to help us understand your requirements and help you to understand the cost and benefit of the changes, or for smaller well-defined projects, we can jump straight to the modernisation service project. Both of these activities start with an initial discussion with our Client Services Team who can be contacted on g-cloud@talkthinkdo.com. Please provide company name, contact details, application purpose and high-level objectives.

Following an initial review meeting, the Client Services Team will confirm the service level required and the cost. You will be asked to complete the G-Cloud Framework Order Form and the Call-off Contract. Your contact in the Client Services Team will be able to assist you in this process if required.

The G-Cloud service charge will be billed monthly in arrears with 30-day payment terms. Any late payment will incur a 1% fee per week of delayed payment.

Pricing Overview

All pricing is per our SFIA rate card. Engagements typically range from £20,000 excluding VAT for a simple refactoring project, where hosting is already set up, migration is not required and simple infrastructure refactoring is needed, through to £80,000+ for a complex modernisation project, including rehosting, substantial refactoring to ensure the application is fit for purpose, and re-platforming.

Talk Think Do's experience tells us the right blend and rate of resource levels required for Application Modernisation & Migration projects and costs are calculated based on the high-level requirements.

An example £19,740 project will include the relevant resources to undertake the 5 stages of a modernisation project, including: understanding your organisation; analysing your application; delivering modernisation; ensuring you have ongoing support through hypercare and helping to deliver the benefits. These resources would form a delivery team with 4 days of Solutions Architecture, 2 days of Management, 20 days for Development, and 6 days of testing.

 A larger £80,000 project including migration would involve 16 days of Solutions Architecture, 8 days of Management, 80 days for Development, and 24 days for testing.

Our client services team can be contacted at g-cloud@talkthinkdo.com and they can advise on the correct delivery team capacity to be stated on the order form, for smaller modernisation projects. Larger projects will require a discovery ahead of the modernisation service order, at the cost of £11,900 + vat, to inform the full modernisation order.

Availability of Trial Service

We do not offer a trial service

On-Boarding, Off-Boarding, Service Migration, Scope etc.

Onboarding

Once contracts have been agreed, a Delivery Manager and associated team (as a minimum this will include Solution Architects, Software Developers and QA Analysts) will be assigned to the project. Either a waterfall (Prince 2) or Agile (DSDM) methodology will be adopted depending on the scale & scope of the delivery. A kickoff workshop will be scheduled to:

- introduce key personnel from both parties (client & supplier),
- review the project scope as per the call off contract and
- enable the Talk Think Do team to ascertain all the relevant information to produce a Project Initiation Document.

The initiation document will require approval from all key stakeholders and will contain:

- project objectives
- detailed scope

- high level/milestone plan
- post implementation hypercare plan
- stakeholder overview
- communication plan
- governance overview
- roles & responsibilities
- RAID (risks, assumptions, issues and dependencies)

If a pre-project discovery phase is required, a simplified Discovery Initiation Document will be produced following a kickoff workshop, containing:

- objectives
- high level scope
- high level plan

The discovery phase will enable the Talk Think Do team to gather all relevant information to support the full Project Initiation Document should the discovery proposal be accepted.

Offboarding

Following the successful delivery of an Application Modernisation & Migration Project, including a post go-live hypercare period where live support is provided via a customer portal and designated support team, we will undertake a post-implementation review and provide a Project Closure Document. If build is transitioning into Application Managed Support Services with us, the Project Closure Document will also be issued to the Talk Think Do Managed Services Team.

In the event of early termination, a closure workshop will be held with you to ensure the status of every element in scope is assessed, and the relevant action and owner is assigned. A Project Closure Document will be provided one week prior to the contract termination date.

Training

We know it's crucial for the relevant users to understand the changes that have been made to a legacy application, to ensure the modernisation is a success. We can provide demonstrations &/or training as required to nominated individuals within your organisation, using a 'train the trainer' approach. These training sessions can either be held in person or virtually. Ongoing training support will be available to answer queries throughout the duration of the hypercare period. Our 'train the trainer' demonstrations are included within the scope of the service.

Implementation Plan

Detailed implementation/go-live planning is vital for ensuring a seamless go-live. A detailed implementation plan can be provided on request, or alternatively we can support your in-house teams in identifying the relevant implementation activities and owners.

Service Management

The fundamental goal of Talk Think Do is to become a trusted partner for our clients, providing a reliable, transparent and expert service across innovation, modernisation and managed support. We do this by providing a designated Delivery Team, headed up by a Delivery Manager - your key contact. The team follows a proven delivery process for application modernisation, using widely recognised change methodologies, architecture frameworks and coding principles. These established practices are applied to the modernisation service plan created for your project. A communication structure will be agreed during the initiation phase, and documented in the Project Initiation Document, including the reporting content and frequency.

We operate a Managed Application Support service which is utilised during the hypercare period of application modernisation projects, providing a customer portal for incident escalation and a designated Incident Commander. This service can be transitioned for clients who opt to continue their relationship with us through ongoing support (accessed through a separate g-cloud service listing).

Information Security is at the core of what we do. We have an ISO27001: 2019 certified Information Security Management System in place to ensure the relevant procedures are followed to protect both ours and our client's data assets. We are also Cyber Essentials Plus certified, minimising risks of cyber security threats.

We follow the Enterprise Organisational System model, enabling us to focus on continual improvement of the service, alongside our standard audit schedule.

Service Constraints

In addition to the usual constraints of time, scope and budget, we also operate a support constraint during post implementation hypercare periods - providing 'in hours' support only between 9am-5.30pm.

Service Levels

Application Modernisation & Migration projects are subject to agreed timelines, scope and budgets. Contingency can be agreed during the initiation stage and any changes outside of given tolerances are not subject to service levels.

We will ensure adequate resources are made available to deliver application modernisation & migration projects, including agreed contingency. Contingency levels can be assessed against project budgets and agreed with the Client Services Team and documented on the G-Cloud Framework Order Form during the initiation stage. In the unlikely event that we are unable to deliver within this threshold, a service complaint can be escalated to the designated Talk Think Do Delivery Manager.

Outage and Maintenance Management

A risk assessment will be undertaken during the initiation phase to identify any potential issues that could impact the delivery or performance of the modernisation service. Risk mitigation measures will be taken to ensure the likelihood is either reduced to an acceptable level or removed entirely.

Financial Recompense Model for not Meeting Service Levels

We are happy to agree appropriate Service Credit arrangements tailored to individual customer projects and the specific details of the service. This will be discussed and agreed during the initiation stage.

Provision of the service

Customer Responsibilities

You will be responsible for providing a nominated individual (Client Lead/Service Manager) as a contact point for the Talk Think Do Delivery Team. They will be required to:
- coordinate business approvals
- issue resolutions and escalations
- provide relevant access to enable talk Think Do to carry out our contractual obligations
- management of the wider customer project, including any business readiness activity
- working in partnership with Talk Think Do Delivery Team, in the resolution of system issues where there is joint element of responsibility e.g. integration issues; provide information in a timely manner

Technical Requirements and Client-Side Requirements

In order for Talk Think Do to provide the Application Modernisation & Migration service, the client must have/provide: a nominated individual from the business; application hosting via Microsoft Azure; predominant tech stack of ASP .Net Core; access to MS Azure Portal & existing legacy system.

Further requirements may be identified during initiation calls and should be documented on the Order Form.

Outcomes/Deliverables

The service will deliver:

- Discovery Initiation Document (if applicable)
- Discovery Output (if applicable)
- Project Initiation Document
- Project Plan
- Business Continuity Plan (if applicable)
- Disaster Recovery/Restoration Plan (is applicable)
- Implementation Plan
- Demonstrations (if applicable)
- Completed Modernisation/Migration
- Objectives/Benefits Assessment
- Project Closure Document

After-sales Account Management

We pride ourselves on the relationships we have built with our clients, through providing an honest, transparent and expert service. Alongside the capable hands of the Delivery Team, the Operations & Client Services Teams will continue to be involved in managing client relationships. In addition to the regular reporting structure defined at a project/service outset, we are happy to attend client steering meetings to provide input/guidance on technical strategy. We can continue to work with you to proactively maintain a roadmap for the service that reflects the latest opportunities, risks and needs.

Termination Process

Contracts can be terminated giving 30 days notice to the Talk Think Do Client Services Team. A project Closure Document will be generated during offboarding.

Our experience

Case Studies

Client

Explore Learning is a leading private tutoring provider with centres across the UK. Talk Think Do helped Explore Learning embrace application modernisation, re-platforming key lines of business applications into cloud-native solutions.

Problem

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Explore Learning didn't have an in-house software development capability and were dependent on software as a service (SaaS) providers for key business systems. Their SaaS membership solution, managing billing, customer data and access control, was not an exact fit for their unique requirements and was causing several time-consuming workarounds.

The membership solution was a closed system and, while Explore Learning had great ambitions to expand their digital offering, the lack of integration capability was preventing any meaningful digital service.

Solution

Talk Think Do architected a Microsoft Azure cloud native solution that would be designed around Explore Learning's unique requirements, would give them full access to their data and would give them the option to own the intellectual property rights.

We initially undertook a discovery phase to understand the current scope and functionality of the SaaS solution and to analyse the state of the data. Our business analysts then worked with key users and stakeholders to understand current pain points and workarounds. We then moved onto an alpha phase that demonstrated an in-place cloud-native replacement and low-risk data migration approach.

This was followed by a beta phase which enabled a live pilot in a small number of centres. This enabled user feedback and learning that fed into a minimum viable product (MVP) scope that then formed the live phase deployment.

Data migration was automated and allowed for seamless dual running of various centres, where live cutover was simply a matter of a centre starting to use the new system when they were ready.

While the pilot was running, we provided PowerBI to the finance team which gave them significantly more insight into centre operations than had been possible before and, with very little training, immediately enabled them to develop their own analysis and reporting.

We then worked with an agile delivery process to develop the solution with new features and optimise the existing features based on real world feedback. We worked with the finance team to build automated billing and payment systems that replaced the previous semi-manual processes.

Results

Now fully rolled out, the system is actively managed and supported by us. With Explore Learning really feeling the benefit, we have an ongoing agile delivery process developing the membership system and are actively engaged in evolving more key systems to enhance customer engagement.

The flexibility and quality of the solution, built on a strategic Azure cloud-native approach, mean that Explore Learning is unbound by physical learning centres and can now offer more

flexible solutions to a whole new client base. Since Explore Learning now owns the membership code, they have business resilience and a unique solution in the marketplace.

Clients

Contact Details

For any queries, please contact David Gunnell, Client Services Director, 01202 138421, david.gunnell@talkthinkdo.com