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Service Definition - Application Development Discovery

Lot 3 Cloud Support

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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, health and wellness, 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

Talk Think Do supports customers through the full Azure application development process which begins with the discovery workshop. The workshop is designed to understand your existing environments and objectives, review your on-premises and cloud technical landscape, architecture, and applications to build an actionable plan to achieve your goals and provide a scalable, future proof cloud-native Azure solution.

Social Value

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

Each customer application is different. Talk Think Do has a series of steps to application development to adopt a cloud-native approach:

1. Workshops

Run by our Microsoft certified subject matter experts with your teams to understand the current position of the organisation and desired state. We start by understanding your challenges, technical landscape and opportunities that a bespoke application could bring:

- General business goals and objectives, to align to business not technical outcomes
- Understand growth ambitions, where a bespoke application can align to that to provide that point of difference
- Timescales, something as simple as a budget cycle to a compelling event – product launch, market expansion, or product retirement with a deadline
- In house Azure and DevOps skills – strengths and gaps
- Approach to Agile working – current DevOps approach and tooling
- Appetite and suitability for AI adoption

2. Commercial considerations

Understanding not just budget but also where there may be benefits available that might partially offset development costs:

- Commercial options to suit your business, working to a budget and structuring the project to meet that and associated timelines
- Support service level options to create a suitable balance between maintenance and cost
- IP Ownership
- Advice on possible R&D tax benefits

3. Output

The discovery process allows Talk Think Do to fully define your Azure cloud-native application and delivery plan minimising risks and ensuring the right information provided to make the correct commercial decisions.:

- Azure solution overview, application services and architecture
- Project timescales, with assumptions on customer availability
- Project costs determined by the information provided and solution design
- Potential risks relating to technology integration, adoption and timelines
- Dependencies for success including access to key project personnel, information and, connected legacy systems

From this workshop whether you are new to Azure or just cloud-native development Talk Think Do will support you through the end-to-end process.

Associated Services

- Cloud Native Application Build
- 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

As experts in utilising Microsoft Azure, we provide robust data assurance services tailored to the unique needs of each customer. Understanding the criticality of high-availability and disaster recovery, we engage with clients to precisely define their requirements.

- Consultation and Customisation: We work collaboratively with clients during the initial consultation and throughout the project lifecycle to align our data back-up and restoration strategies with their specific needs.
- Best Practice Solutions: Recommendations for data back-up and disaster recovery solutions are based on industry best practices and the powerful capabilities of Microsoft Azure.
- Documentation and Agreement: Specific requirements are thoroughly discussed before any order placement and are subsequently documented in the Order Form, ensuring clear agreement and mutual understanding between all parties.

This approach ensures that data protection measures are comprehensive, clearly defined, and integral to the application development process.

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 the importance of Privacy by Design, a fundamental requirement under the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), effective since May 2018. From the outset of any project, including the discovery phase of application development, we ensure that the protection of citizen data is a core aspect of our service design.

- **Incorporation of GDPR Principles:** Our approach integrates the seven foundational Privacy by Design principles, ensuring that privacy is an integral part of the development process right from the start.
- **Assessment and Compliance Review:** During the discovery phase, we conduct thorough assessments of the existing systems, especially if they were developed before the effective date of GDPR. This helps identify any potential compliance gaps or legacy issues that may not align with current data protection standards.
- **Remediation and Planning:** Based on our findings, we develop a detailed plan addressing any remediation needs. We provide recommendations for GDPR-compliant solutions and outline transition strategies to ensure that any modernisation or development efforts fully integrate necessary privacy measures.

This proactive approach during the discovery phase sets the foundation for a compliant and secure development process, reflecting our commitment to upholding the highest standards of data protection from the initial stages of any project.

Using the Service

Ordering and Invoicing

Discoveries scope and scale will be determined through a consultation with our Client Services Team.

Engagement Process:

- **Initial Contact:** To begin, contact our Client Services Team at g-cloud@talkthinkdo.com. Please include your company name, contact details, application purpose, and high-level objectives in your initial inquiry.
- **Review Meeting:** Following your inquiry, we will arrange an initial review meeting to discuss your project in detail. This meeting is crucial for understanding your specific needs and for us to provide an accurate estimation of the service level and costs involved.
- **Service Confirmation and Documentation:** After the review, you will be asked to complete the G-Cloud Framework Order Form and the Call-off Contract to officially start the discovery service. Our Client Services Team will guide you through this process, ensuring all your queries are addressed, and providing assistance where needed.

This structured approach ensures that we align our discovery service with your business objectives, providing a clear path from initial contact to service kick-off.

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. Application Development Discovery starts from £9,460+VAT, providing 5 days of Solution Architecture, 3 days of Project Management and planning, 2 days of Analysis and 2 days of Engineering consultancy.

Talk Think Do's experience tells us the right blend and rate of resource levels required for discovery phases and costs are calculated following an initial consultation meeting.

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 standard project discovery.

Availability of Trial Service

We do not offer a trial service

On-Boarding, Off-Boarding

Onboarding

Once the discovery phase contracts are finalised, we will assign a specialised team to oversee this initial stage. Typically, this team includes a Delivery Manager, Solution Architects, and possibly additional specialists depending on your project's specific needs.

For the discovery phase, we focus on flexibility and adaptability in our approach, selecting the most suitable methodology to effectively gather and analyse requirements.

Kick-off Workshop Goals:

- **Team Introductions:** Facilitate introductions between key personnel from both the client and Talk Think Do sides to establish communication channels and build a collaborative relationship.
- **Scope Review:** Discuss and confirm the project scope as outlined in the contract to ensure all parties have a unified understanding of the expected outcomes.
- **Information Gathering:** Enable the Talk Think Do team to collect all pertinent information necessary to create a comprehensive Project Initiation Document. This document will guide the subsequent phases of the project, ensuring that all project requirements are thoroughly documented and agreed upon.

This structured onboarding process for the discovery phase is designed to set a solid foundation for the project, ensuring clarity and alignment right from the outset.

Offboarding

Following the successful completion of the discovery workshops the client will be provided with a fully costed proposal as detailed in Output.

Training

While traditional training is more relevant post-development, during the discovery phase, we offer workshops or orientation sessions to help stakeholders understand the discovery process, tools, and methodologies. This preparation is crucial for ensuring that all participants are aligned and ready for the discovery activities.

Implementation Plan

While detailed implementation planning is typically reserved for post-discovery phases, during discovery, we focus on defining the project scope and developing a preliminary roadmap that outlines potential implementation strategies and key milestones.

Service Management

During the discovery phase, we provide a designated Delivery Team, led by a Delivery Manager, who acts as your point of contact. This phase involves defining communication structures and documenting these, along with roles and responsibilities in the Discovery Initiation Document. This ensures that every aspect of the discovery phase is managed transparently and effectively.

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 Development Discovery 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 discovery projects. 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.

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 Discovery 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 complete the discovery, the client must have/provide: a nominated individual from the business.

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

Outcomes/Deliverables

The service will deliver:

- Discovery Output Document
- Project Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Objectives/Benefits Assessment
- Fully costed proposal

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

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 Matt Hammond, 01202 375647,
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