

How to create a Cloud Centre of Expertise

A Quick Guide from Weolcan

weolcan.
Architects for the Digital Enterprise



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Dear cloud explorer,

As a champion of cloud migration, you have an important task. A cloud transition done right is not a destination but a means to become a digital enterprise. And such a digital enterprise requires an organisation-wide turnaround. Teams need to learn to deal with cloud technology in a safe and cost-efficient way, new processes need to be implemented and a different kind of knowledge and expertise is required.

But don't worry. You won't have to take care of that alone.

We recommend you set up a 'Cloud Centre of Expertise' (CCoE) to take the reins of the cloud migration. This is a competence centre that distributes the necessary knowledge and expertise about the organisation and forms the fixed point of contact for both the business and the development teams.

It's the mission of the CCoE to have the organisation stand on its own two feet in the new situation. Once this is achieved, the CCoE can be dissolved.

For the mission to succeed, it's important the CCoE itself has the right knowledge and tools. In this Quick Guide, we introduce a roadmap to put together a CCoE that suits your situation. That way everyone gets on board, the knowledge level improves and cloud becomes your ticket to the digital enterprise.

Good luck!

Team Weolcan





The role of the CCoE

Organisations who migrate their applications to the cloud usually have the same end goal: becoming a digital enterprise. In a digital enterprise, many basic processes are automated, so the organisation can accelerate innovation. Cloud plays a big role here, because a cloud provider offers ready-made building blocks and manages them for you. What you get in return is endless space and computing power to work on the applications that give your organisation a competitive advantage.

Unfortunately, a cloud migration doesn't automatically turn you into a digital enterprise. Digital enterprises are characterised not by their applications running in the cloud, but by their successful use of technology, processes and people within the cloud. And that is precisely what makes the CCoE important.

The mission of the Cloud Centre of Expertise is threefold:

1. Ensuring that the technology is implemented
2. Ensuring that processes are adjusted or added
3. Ensuring organisation-wide new cloud situation

The highway to the digital enterprise

When we explain the role of the CCoE, we usually use the metaphor of the highway. On the poster below, you can see the ultimate goal on the right: the digital enterprise.

On the left, you can see that a good cloud strategy is a checkpoint towards the highway leading to that ultimate goal. Without a solid cloud strategy, you take the wrong exit which means you'll probably end upin the cloud furnace (which is not where you want to be, ever).
Once the journey is underway, teams (and associated applications) follow their own "lane". Some applications might be redeveloped as cloud-native applications, while others are instantly migrated or get some adjustments first. Some other applications might actually get deactivated completely. That, too, takes time and energy.



In the highway metaphor, the CCoE members are closely involved in various applications and teams while simultaneously keeping an overview of the situation from above. This means they can quickly identify when and where problems occur and ensure that the organisation is actually moving towards the digital enterprise.

At the bottom right, you can see the internal stakeholders. Typical examples are the CIO, the CFO and the CISO. These are the people responsible for overarching issues such as time to market, costs and security. During the cloud transition, they form the Cloud Stakeholder Group, which is kept up to date by the CCoE. Through a personalised dashboard, stakeholders have insight into the course of the migration and ask the right questions making adjustments where necessary.

Because the CCoE also interacts with various teams other than the Cloud Stakeholder Group, the team is present in all layers of the organisation. This commitment is the greatest strength of the CCoE.

The CCoE Roadmap

Setting up your own CCoE can be done in the four steps shown below. They will be covered in the coming chapters. In the coming chapters, you will read how to take these steps:

1. Explore the workload of the future CCoE
2. Determine the composition of the team and its place in the organisation
3. Identify the Cloud Stakeholder Group
4. Create a training and education plan





STEP 1:

Explore the workload of the future CCoE

A lot has to be done in a cloud migration. Not only technology and processes are redesigned in the cloud; people are also given new roles and responsibilities. It is up to the CCoE to manage those changes.

To prepare CCoE members for this task, we recommend creating a backlog of all cloud migration components. This gives the team a structured overview of to-do's and then it's a matter of ticking them off:



Ensuring implementation of the cloud strategy and maintaining alignment with, for example, the business strategy, IT strategy, sourcing strategy and other strategic programmes in the organisation.



Involving the business with the cloud migration and helping with the adoption of new cloud solutions that improve the business value.



Facilitating the organisational design that the one enables successful use of the cloud and on the other hand achieves required cloud knowledge and capabilities.



Run the cloud ensuring the desired functioning of applications, the operational management of cloud environments and supporting in making optimisations.



Ensuring the basic setup of the cloud environment in areas such as access control, connectivity and integration, taking into account the organisation's needs and requirements.



Introducing a "Cloud Way of Working" culture focused on innovation, where responsibility is taken, learning is fast and business & IT actively collaborate with each other.

STEP 2:

Determine the composition of the CCoE

A CCoE can look different in every company. These differences have everything to do with the application landscape and who is responsible for what. Roughly speaking, we distinguish between organisations that develop software themselves and those that outsource almost everything.

If you develop your own software, you need different (and often more) roles in the CCoE. You also need a Cloud Engineer and a Cloud Developer for this. Will you replace many applications with SaaS products and partner with one supplier? If so, then having a Cloud Architect and a Cloud Consultant will go a long way.

Timing also affects the composition of the CCoE. In the simple “Lift & Shift” of applications, cost optimisation is very important, and you’ll need a Cloud Analyst. On the contrary, the Cloud Architect is closely involved when refactoring applications.

Will you be part of the CCoE?

To answer an important question in advance: as a cloud migration initiator, you don’t need to become part of the CCoE yourself. Instead, take on the role of advisor. This involves making preparations so that the CCoE can do its job.

For example, you handle the recruitment and selection of the CCoE team members, take care of the necessary decision-making and budgets, inform the organisation about the purpose of the CCoE and reach out to internal stakeholders. More about that in step 3.



Roles within the CCoE

Below we discuss the roles we often see in the CCoE. Determine which you need by using the workload in step 1. Is there a lack of knowledge and experience? Then see if you can (temporarily) involve external experts. In that case, use the method of “demonstrate-participate-do it yourself”. This way, the external expert injects additional knowledge into your organisation that stays within the walls when that person leaves again.





The product owner (and leader of the CCoE) sets priorities, bears responsibility for the CCoE’s vision and builds the bridge to internal stakeholders.



The cloud architect designs the platform and translates the requirements from the business into technical solutions.



The cloud consultant helps teams choose from different cloud solutions and their implementation. In doing so, the Cloud Consultant also works on the design of processes and the “soft side” of cloud migration. Think of cloud adoption, training and education.



The cloud security specialist ensures that the new cloud situation complies with laws and regulations, internal security frameworks and organisational policies in terms of technology, processes and people.



The cloud analyst analyses cloud platform meta-data and makes recommendations for both technical and financial optimisations.



The cloud administrator builds the basic setup and works with DevOps teams to automate and constantly improve services.



The scrum master ensures that agile processes are implemented and collaboration within and between teams runs smoothly.

The CCoE's place in the organisation

Once you have assembled the CCoE, you can start thinking about the team's place in your organisational chart. Will the CCoE have an advisory role or will the team have a more guiding role, for example in compliance and security? And will members work as a virtual team, or will they be fully allocated to their new roles? Also think about how you will introduce the CCoE. After all, team members are also just colleagues and their new roles can create tension in the workplace. Suddenly, someone is a member of a new team and relationships change. It's up to you as the champion to launch the CCoE and, together with the members, explain to the rest of the organisation why the CCoE has been created and what the team members will do. The Product Owner and the Cloud Consultant also play an important role here.

As far as freeing up CCoE members goes: help them find a solution to the tasks that remain when they start in their new roles. After all, they are (temporarily) no longer responsible for those tasks. Help them clear out their calendars, remove repetitive appointments and find replacements who can take over important tasks.



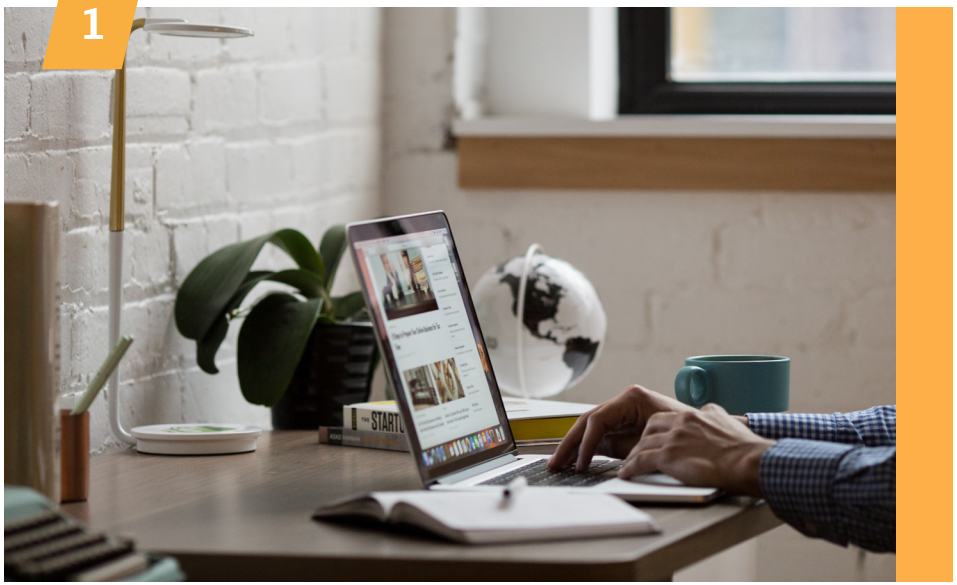


STEP 3:

Identify the stakeholder group

The CCoE will work closely with internal cloud migration stakeholders (members of the Cloud Stakeholder Group discussed earlier). They each have their own responsibilities and should therefore receive information relevant to their role. Moreover, all stakeholders also make an important contribution to the cloud migration.

It is up to you to make the connection between stakeholders and the CCoE. After all, as the cloud migration champion, you are a familiar face to both. By introducing the CCoE to stakeholders, you improve the odds of them accepting the CCoE and understanding the team's intent.



The CIO

The CIO is responsible for the IT-related issues of the organisation and the pace of innovation.

Things the CIO would like to know:

- Are all applications in their correct form in Cloud?
- Are the DevOps teams working together in an optimal way?
- Is data used to continuously improve products and services?
- Do we provide the right platforms in order to be able to innovate?

The CFO

The CFO ensures that the new cloud situation yields more than the migration cost, and that the new way of working ensures higher quality and therefore more revenue.

Things the CFO would like to know:

- Is the cloud migration going according to plan in terms of budget?
- When does the CCoE expect the cloud migration to be financially break-even?
- What is the profit per team and per application?



The CEO

The CEO is responsible for the direction and growth of the organisation, but also for shareholder confidence (if there are any).

Things the CEO would like to know:

- Does the cloud strategy strengthen the organisation's competitiveness?
- Does the cloud strategy improve customer satisfaction?
- Is the cloud strategy in line with the set direction?
- Where can improvements be made budget-wise?





The HR Manager

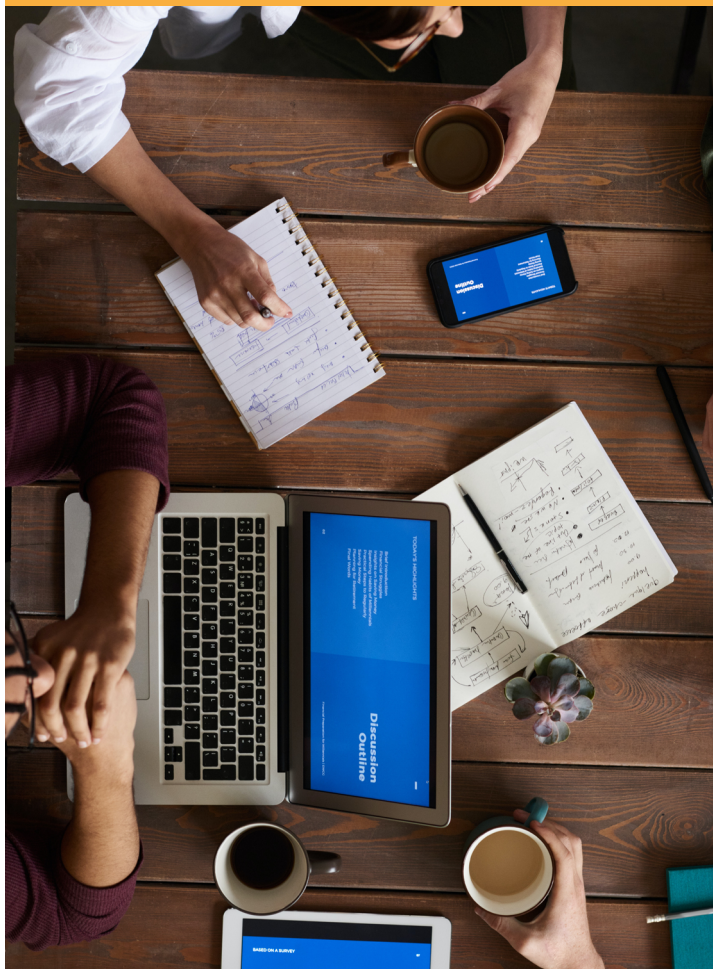
The HR manager is responsible for the proper deployment of people. During a cloud migration, roles and functions change, and retraining is often required.

Things the HR Manager would like to know:

- What does the new cloud situation require from the people in the organisation, both in terms of soft skills and hard skills?
- Who may need to change positions or roles and what do they need in order to do so?
- Is it necessary to hire new people, and what should these people bring to the table?

STEP 4:

Set up a training and education plan



Once you have assembled the CCoE and established contact with the Cloud Stakeholder Group, it is time to prepare the CCoE members for their new roles. Although you have undoubtedly selected experienced and skilled people, a cloud migration requires new skills and knowledge. The CCoE is going to disseminate these skills and knowledge throughout the organisation, so it also needs to be prepared itself. Training and education are therefore indispensable for a well-functioning CCoE!

Therefore, determine for each team member what this person needs for the role they will take. Should there be a course, a more comprehensive training programme or an online environment with seminars, videos and informative articles? This is a task for which you can put the HR manager to good use. The HR manager knows how to set up learning paths and how to motivate people to engage in training or upskilling. Establish a personal training plan for each CCoE team member and regularly discuss it together.

In addition to training and education, make sure you stimulate the CCoE. It can be a big step to become part of a new team that not only needs a lot of knowledge, but also becomes a role model to the rest of the organisation. So make it attractive to be a CCoE team member! Develop a compensation and rewards programme, in which team members, for example, get an Alexa for their home (as a random example!). Make it clear that the CCoE is a two-way street: the team is direly needed for the cloud migration to succeed, but it also comes with benefits for the team members themselves.

In Conclusion

Once you have gone through the above steps and your plan is approved, your Cloud Centre of Expertise is a reality and the chapter of “Cloud Governance” can begin. For how long will the CCoE exist? That depends on the progress.

As the organisation’s cloud maturity and independence grow, the CCoE can eventually be phased out. If the journey involves some more obstacles, we recommend keeping the CCoE in place for longer. It also happens that new cloud projects continue to emerge, causing the CCoE to be needed for longer.

A third reason for maintaining the CCoE is a high rate of innovation by the cloud provider. This creates a knowledge gap that needs to be closed by the CCoE.

For now, we wish you the best of luck in setting up your own CCoE!



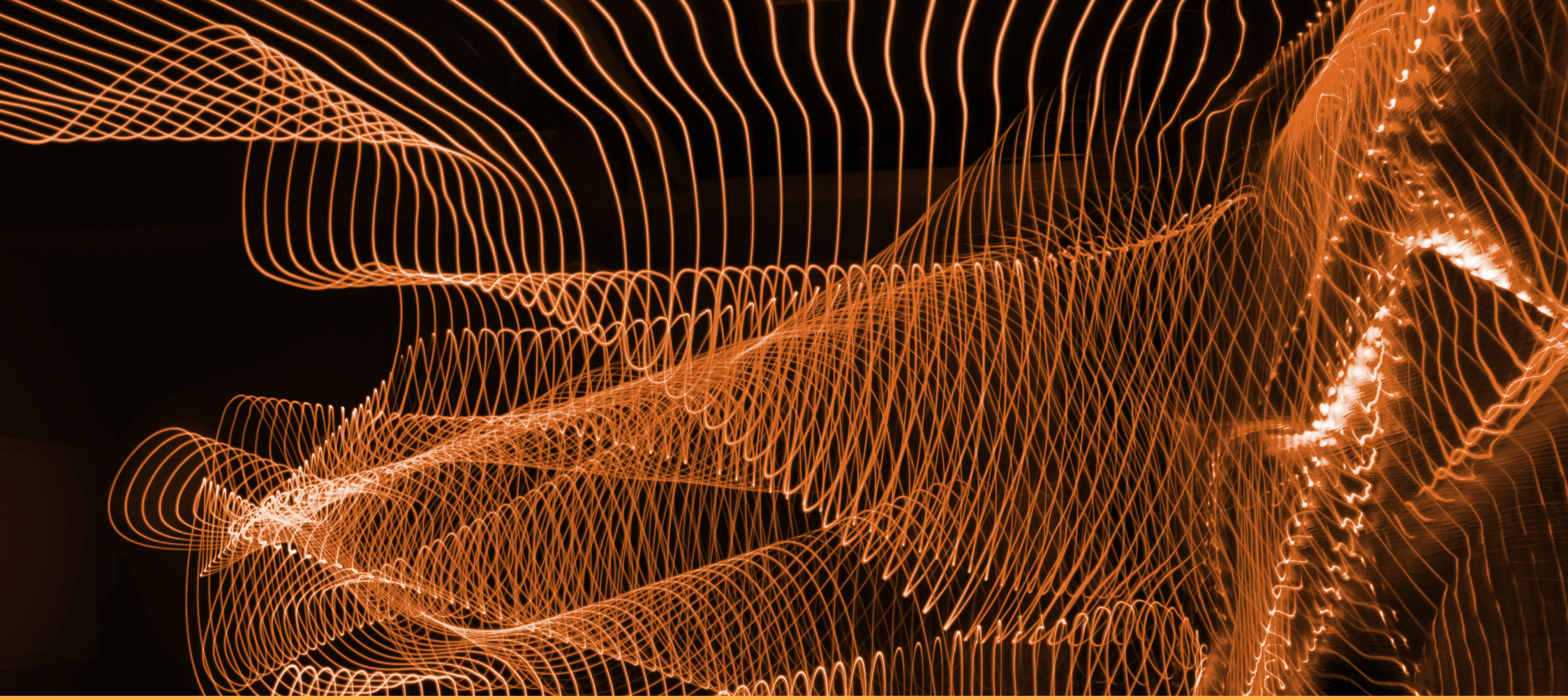
About Weolcan

Weolcan supports companies in the transition to digital enterprise. We use our Cloud Strategy method for the run-up to the cloud migration. After that, we offer support in the area of Cloud Governance. In the “technology, processes and people” trinity, we focus mainly on people. Because only when everyone knows what needs to be done will a digital transformation lead to a digital enterprise.

We stand out as an independent and experienced party. Clients especially appreciate the thoroughness of our analyses and the concrete plan they are given. Our “no-nonsense” approach is also a commonly heard reason for working with us.

Could you use help with Cloud Governance, setting up your Cloud Centre of Expertise or do you have a question? Our experts are ready to help you.





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