
BE EMPOWERED BY THE CLOUD

PART TWO:
TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR
CUSTOMER DATA

ACX IOM





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THE STATE OF DATA MANAGEMENT IN THE CLOUD

It's all happening in the public cloud. Or at least that's what the numbers lead us to believe.

Global end-user spending on public cloud services will **grow more than 20%** in 2022, and is likely to reach almost \$600 billion in 2023. And research from **DataIQ and Acxiom** reveals that more than half of organizations are currently accelerating their data migration to the cloud.

A senior researcher at Gartner even went so far as to declare:

“There is no business strategy without a cloud strategy.”

Milind Govekar,
Distinguished VP, Gartner

But if you're a brand managing your customer data, the situation might not be so clear cut.



Migrating data to the public cloud is a serious undertaking. While nimble digital-native organizations may be fully embracing data management in the cloud, many larger, more established brands are still cautiously eyeing the cost-benefit analysis. Brands in regulated industries or those that have invested heavily in private cloud infrastructure are likely to be particularly reticent.

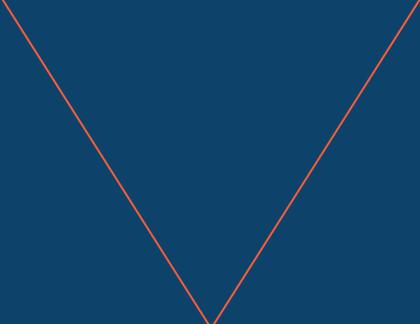
Kickstarting a brand's journey to the public cloud often requires a specific trigger. And, at a time when the privacy compliance burden is growing, that trigger may well be a desire to gain more control over customer data.

Even brands that are already doing some data management in the public cloud might find they can make better use of cloud-based tools available to take ownership of their data.

At Acxiom we believe in a cloud-first approach. So, we've put together a series of guides to highlight the power of the public cloud for marketers and outline the things cloud technology helps you to do that you realistically couldn't do before.

This is the second guide in the series and it explores how executing data management in the cloud puts you on the path to data sovereignty.

It enables your brand to take control of data and activate it across a variety of activities such as lead generation, customer acquisition, retention, and cross-selling, in a way that is secure and privacy-compliant.



THE PUBLIC CLOUD CONTROL PARADOX

We know what you're thinking. Doesn't moving data management to the public cloud give marketers less control of their data, not more?

It's a fair question. After all, reluctance to place data in the public cloud is often due to a fear of losing control. Or of increasing the risk of privacy or security breaches.

Your organization might perceive the cloud as a place with lesser controls, where it's difficult to secure data flows or safely partition data to avoid commingling. Even the phrase "public cloud" can make security and compliance teams nervous.

Ultimately most brands and organizations will end up migrating data management to the public cloud, simply because that's where innovation now takes place. To continue to deliver the joined-up experiences your customers expect you'll eventually need to be in the cloud.

So it's reassuring to discover moving to the public cloud is actually a paradoxically positive move for data control and sovereignty, not a compromise. Let's find out why.

FOUR WAYS THE CLOUD PUTS YOU IN CONTROL

So, how does the cloud enable you to take more control of your data and activate it in a privacy-compliant way that will help your brand achieve its business goals?

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- 2 You control what happens to your data**
- 3 You get to be more hands-on**
- 4 You can access the latest tech**

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You hardly need to move your data

Before the cloud, data management meant a lot of heavy lifting to transfer data between data centers. It wasn't that long ago that we were putting people on planes with magnetic tape reels in their carry-on luggage. Luckily, we've come a long way since then. But even in a digital pre-cloud world, there was little choice but to physically extract data, create files, encrypt them, securely transfer them, and upload them into external systems.

Any changes meant a rinse and repeat of this process. This was not only resource heavy but also resulted in multiple copies of data sets moving between businesses and stored by third parties.

Now, with the cloud, you can share your data without needing to move it outside of your environment. Rather than sending files, you can choose to expose certain tables, rows, or attributes to selected partners and allow them to work with the data where it sits.

Increasingly you can use a central zone, perhaps a data clean room, where partners or providers can access the data you want them to see and can work with it, without having to remove it from your environment and take it into their own.



CLEAN ROOMS FOR COLLABORATION

The latest iteration of data clean rooms are powered by the cloud and provide a valuable opportunity to join your customers' data with trusted partners for collaborative marketing opportunities.

An airline, for example, could share customer data with a hotel brand to enable an overlap analysis or feed a loyalty member co-marketing campaign.

In a cloud-based clean room, data can be safely shared between carefully chosen partners, while fully protecting each party's data assets and intellectual property.

Check out our data clean rooms point-of-view to find out more.

[Download the POV](#)

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You control what happens to your data

With customer data remaining within your brand's tech ecosystem, you have complete data sovereignty and can take ownership of what happens to it.

This is vital at a time when the onus is on brands to adhere to privacy regulations such as GDPR and CCPA. You must be able to quickly see who you are sharing data with, and when and how it is being shared, as well as ensuring you have the right permissions to use that data for marketing purposes. .

In a cloud environment you can determine which data is shared with which partner, what kind of processing can be done against it, and what kind of queries can be run. With the right dashboard you can ensure every interaction is time-stamped so you can see who is doing what with the data and when.

When the task is complete you can simply disable sharing permissions or change the tables or attributes that are shared. This process is quick and seamless, as well as incredibly beneficial for maintaining ethical and compliant data use



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You get to be more hands-on

As a marketer, data management isn't necessarily something you've been actively involved in.

Data management forms part of the technology backbone for most of the solutions you use, and allows you to get the most out of those tools, but the stuff that happens under the hood (such as data rationalization) is usually handled by IT or perhaps a third-party provider.

Now, with the cloud, we're seeing a trend of marketing teams getting more involved with data management, particularly in the retail and CPG industries. In this world of instant gratification (where we're all just a little more tech savvy than we used to be), marketers want to access data sets, run queries, pull reports, and generate dashboards without waiting for data scientists or database management teams to find time in their already overfilled schedules.



CUSTOMER SUCCESS: AUTO DATA GOES TO THE CLOUD

A well known auto brand wanted to migrate from its Oracle BlueKai data management platform (DMP) to a public cloud environment. As its IT department had internally replatformed to AWS, that seemed the obvious cloud provider to choose.

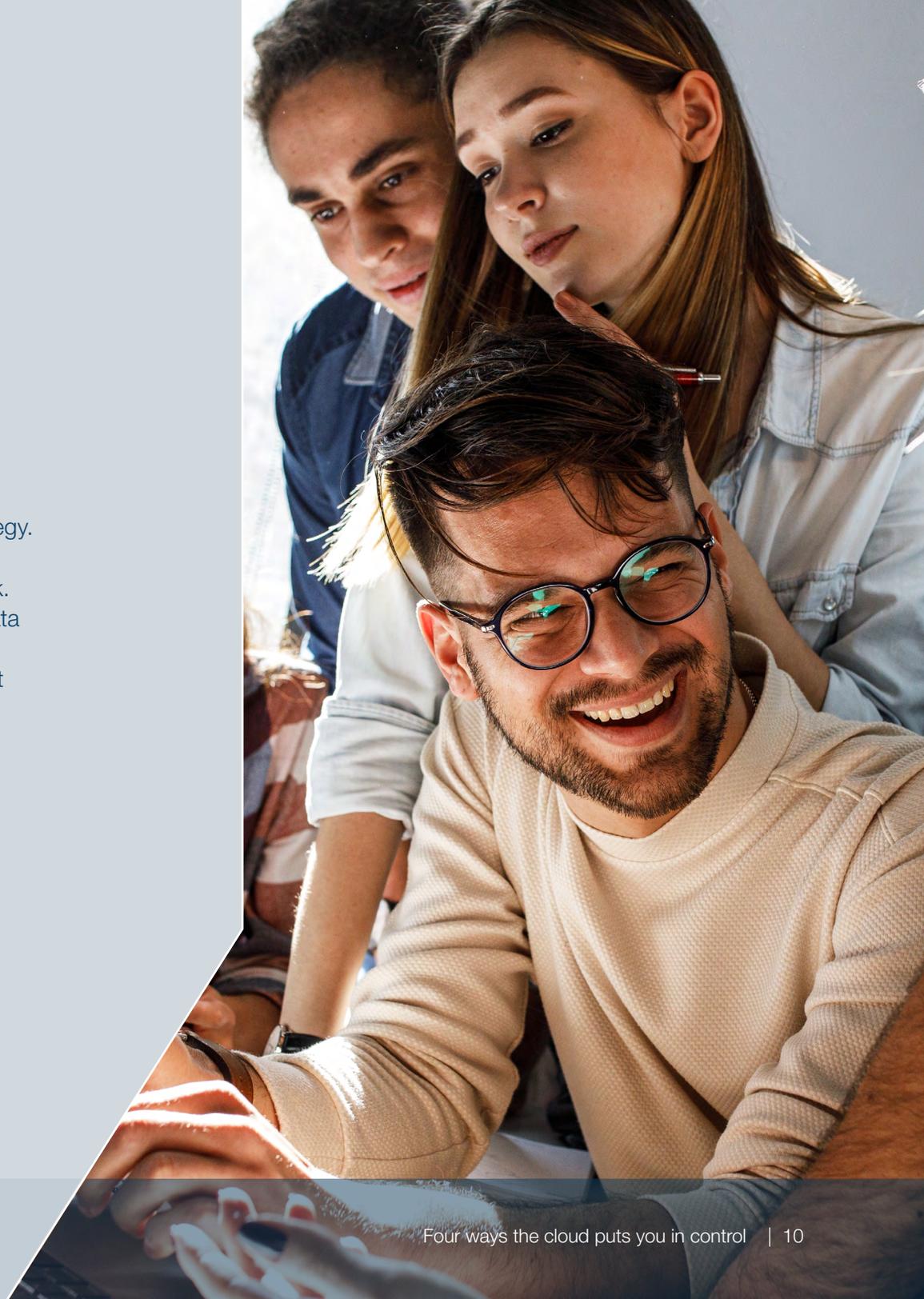
Axiom built a solution within AWS that enables the brand to segment more than 100 million individuals at the pseudonymous level, creating audiences to activate across digital channels.

The migration puts the best solution in the brand's hands, including the latest AI and machine learning (ML) tool to unlock the potential of its data. It provides an efficient mechanism for the marketing team to manage its massive data environment and deliver optimal results.

The cloud brings all the toolsets and technologies your team needs to get hands on with data management, reduce the time to market, and generally be scrappier with your marketing strategy.

But don't worry, your team won't be overloaded with extra work. The latest artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools can automate data management, allowing marketers to bring together data quickly and efficiently and let the tech do the heavy lifting while they put the marketing value on top.

Which brings us conveniently onto point four, accessing the latest tech.



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You can access the latest tech

One of the huge benefits of doing anything in the public cloud is the ability to connect with a vast ecosystem of technology you wouldn't otherwise have access to.

You can use existing solutions to tackle problems you would previously need to spend time solving yourself, and you can easily switch between applications, testing to see what works for you without a significant investment.

Of course, many of these tools and solutions are the ones that will keep your data secure and privacy-compliant, making it just as safe to do data management in the public cloud as in any other environment. In fact it is often safer, as these tools will continually evolve in line with data regulations and the threat landscape to ensure you always benefit from the latest developments and stay one step ahead.

But in addition to security solutions there will also be a wide range of other tools and technologies you can use to make your data work harder for your brand. These technologies are created and updated by developers and architects who have experience across multiple industries and use cases, meaning you get the benefit of their extensive expertise.

These tools could be used to:

- Enrich and enhance first-party data
- Obtain a holistic customer view
- Find new look-alike customers
- Suppress unmarketable prospects
- Complete records with missing information
- Perform regular data audits





As marketing technology stacks grow more complex, the number of tools to consider also increases and their ability to play friendly in the cloud is an important part of the evaluation.

Customer-data platforms (CDPs), for example, typically sit on top of the cloud or leverage cloud-based tech at their core, so this needs to be factored into the selection process.

While many tools are available in multiple cloud environments, each public cloud provider has advantages for certain business types or sectors. Ideally you'll work with a cloud-agnostic data management provider so you can choose the best cloud environment for your brand's unique needs.

On that note, we've put together three questions you should ask your data management provider about its cloud strategy, whether you're already on your cloud migration journey or you're still thinking about getting started.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DATA MANAGEMENT PROVIDER

How do you handle data governance?

Understanding how your provider guarantees the security of your data, as well as compliance with privacy regulations, is vital if you are moving data management to the cloud.

Cloud providers offer a certain level of control, but your brand is still ultimately responsible for your data, so you need a provider that takes ethical data use seriously and can layer in additional privacy and security capabilities.

Find out how your provider will provision your cloud environment and data flows in a way that avoids commingling and delivers the highest levels of privacy and security. And ask whether the provider maintains real-time monitoring for vulnerabilities, as well as regularly pressure testing controls beyond simply what is required by regulations to ensure data security and compliance.



Are you cloud agnostic?

Data management providers are often intrinsically linked to one cloud environment, but that might not be the best fit for your brand's needs. Different clouds have different strengths and are more suited to some use cases than others, so find out whether your data management provider will enable you to build on the strengths of whichever cloud you decide to use, rather than compelling you to use a certain environment.

An agnostic data management provider will have a suite of native applications that it can deploy across the ecosystem, whether you choose to use AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, or an environment like Snowflake that sits on top of all three. A provider should view the cloud as simply the latest addition to its toolbox, and something that can be used in a variety of ways to build the best possible solution for your brand.

What's on your roadmap?

Migrating data management to the cloud isn't a one-and-done activity. One of the benefits of being in the cloud is making use of the latest technologies and developments.

Find out how your provider is using AI and how that will change moving forward. Check how its user interface is evolving to control access to data sets for operational needs. Ask what its disaster recovery plans are now, and how these will evolve alongside privacy and security capabilities.

READY TO GET STARTED?

If you're ready to take control of your customer data, why not explore Acxiom's data management solutions? From customer data platform (CDP) solutions to data clean rooms, our cloud-first products and services help you deliver the connected and relevant experiences your customers expect.

[Tell me more](#)



ABOUT ACXIOM

Acxiom provides data-driven solutions that enable the world's best marketers to better understand their customers to create better experiences and business growth. A leader in customer data management, identity, and the ethical use of data for more than 50 years, Acxiom now helps thousands of clients and partners around the globe work together to create millions of better customer experiences, every day.

Acxiom also offers a full suite of strategy consulting, predictive and marketing analytics, and marketing measurement offerings to support all facets of the data-driven prospect and customer journey. We help brands evolve their data strategy, understand marketing impact, and better know their prospects and customers and predict behaviors.

Visit [acxiom.com](https://www.acxiom.com) or email info@acxiom.com to get started.



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