

Canadian Market Insight from  *Market Dynamics*

Brought to you by 

December 15, 2009

---

---

---

# Video Transcript: Optimizing Cloud Solutions

*An ROI Innovation Report*

---

---

---

From the Cloud Computing Innovation  
Series

# Video Transcript: Optimizing Cloud Solutions

## *An ROI Innovation Report*

*This document contains an edited transcription of a video roundtable session from December, 2009. Participants include Mark Kovarski, Senior Business Technology Consultant for Bank of Montreal; Rene Marquis, IT Director for the Laval School Board; and Doug Jones, Business Unit Executive, Cloud Computing for IBM Canada. The session was moderated by Michael O'Neil, Chief Content Officer for IT in Canada.*

**Michael O'Neil:** Welcome to the final segment of the Benefits of Cloud Computing series. I'm Michael O'Neil, Chief Content Officer of the IT in Canada Network.

In this segment, I'd like to move past the previous four issues that we've covered, to focus on a discussion of post-implementation optimization.

Often, when we deploy technology the real benefit comes from continuing to improve and optimize and streamline our processes after we've deployed a solution.

Mark let's start with you. You have a cloud solution that you have been operating for awhile. What do you think that you need to do next to start to really capitalize and expand on and amplify the benefits that you have managed to capture today?

**Mark Kovarski:** I think as mentioned before, from a technology perspective we are evolving quite maturely in that space, but we are focusing right now on the processing side and specifically, the business and IT alignment ITIL version 3, for example, is an area of focus that's drawing us forward now.

**Michael:** And you guys would use that that standardized framework for connecting business processes and technology.

**Mark:** Correct.

**Michael:** Doug, do you see other customers using this as part of their cloud?

**Doug Jones:** Oh absolutely. Taking those ITIL manuals that are on the shelf collecting dust, got to get those off the shelf. This is an opportunity to standardize services that are good or bad for business. Do it in a way that it's consistent, it's automated, the quality goes up, the service goes up. And it really comes back to ITIL.

**Michael:** Rene, I want to ask you if there are other ways in which after a cloud solution has been implemented, we can continue to derive new benefit from that solution by evolving business processes. Have you seen opportunities for that within Laval's implementation?

**Rene Marquis:** Sure we have. What we want to do now is we want to develop and create new pieces of software solutions for teachers, now that all the teachers have access to a app tool in all the classrooms. Now we can provide them with different tools to help them within their daily tasks in the class itself, such as a journal lead, and people with different issues involved in taking the time, for example, to email, create a community of different teachers or students/and students in different subjects.

So you see, the email cloud presents a great challenge, a great opportunity, I suppose I should say, to provide teachers and the students with [access to] different areas of subject matter.

**Michael:** I think that's a great point. Mark, we just heard Rene go into some detail about the ability to use the cloud and its ability in turn to rapidly enable new applications to do industry specific innovation in areas where maybe technology hasn't been applied business processes in the past.

You come from a completely different industry in the banking industry – a very highly automated industry – do you see opportunities for new solutions to be evolved based on the existing cloud infrastructure that will help you to optimize the cloud and deliver new benefits from it?

**Mark:** Absolutely we do, and as we look at our applications and going to a probably a software as service-based model – in particular, as I mentioned, on the desktop side, it gives us greater ability to provide our users with the requirements that they need, today and in the future, which we weren't able to do before.

**Michael:** And at a bank, you must have thousands of proprietary applications that you need to manage and version and update to those thousands and thousands of users.

**Mark:** Yes, absolutely. The thinking is that if we can simplify the environment in many ways and perhaps offload some of the applications in a SaaS model while keeping core applications in-house, again we see ROI, the numbers yield pretty good results.

**Michael:** So that is a great example of why I love to do sessions like this because I get to learn from what it is that's being said as well. And I think we've heard two great examples of vertical specific business capabilities representing the expansion path and the optimization path operating on a robust and capable infrastructure.

Based on your broad experience can you point to other areas in which these kinds of capabilities evolve to improve the long term benefit and ROI of a cloud solution?

**Doug:** Well, quite often, the cloud enters an environment because IT requires it for their own use. Once it's in place and the business understands what can be done with it, it now untaps innovation.

So now it's a question of: what other business innovative things can we do to bring new services to clients, to enable new business functions that perhaps we didn't do before. And for small clients, they now have the ability to buy computing power that previously was unaffordable.

**Michael:** And I think that's a great point – that although we are joined by two large panelists, the cloud applies at least equally to the needs of small organizations as well.

**Doug:** In some cases, more so. To a general business sort of client, now they're able to buy computing power resources and enable business models that they could never have done in the past. The business case would never have supported it.

**Michael:** Thanks. Let's wrap up with this session, and our entire cloud series, with a question: if you were asked, what are the best ways to optimize a cloud solution to enhance downstream ROI by your peers, or by other people in the Canadian environment – large and small, as we just discussed – who are looking to find ways to derive better benefit from IT, what would you tell them?

**Rene:** Our solution is already being used in different areas...Just to give you an example, I had people from the commercial sectors coming to visit us. About a month ago I had three Japanese coming out of the educational system, they wanted to see how we use technology within the schools. I've been to different places in the US as well. So there's quite a lot of interest within the education sector at least, to look at the [cloud] solution as a potential gain to provide for the students.

**Michael:** So Rene, let me ask you: What one piece of advice would you have for a peer who's looking to understand the best downstream benefit that comes from a cloud solution. So once it's been deployed against your current needs, how do you evolve it to get better downstream return on investment from that? What one bit of advice would you provide there?

**Rene:** The major benefit we see is really standardized equipment and software throughout the school board. This is a major- having different sets of equipment and different pieces of different software around makes it truly difficult for us to support our customer well. So, with thin clients, it's much easier for us to provide the customers with a reliable thin client, available each day for a week, so that the students have access to technology within a classroom.

**Michael:** Thanks. Mark, I'll pass it around to you and ask you: If you were asked by one of your peers: What are the best ways to optimize a cloud solution to enhance downstream return on investment, what would you tell our viewers and readers?

**Mark:** I would say focus on the bigger picture, actually. Again, the process, people, technology as a whole – and continuously measure and benchmark. You can't improve upon something that you can't measure. That's going to be key as you go on this journey

**Michael:** Thanks. Doug, you get the last word. What do you tell people when they say: I've invested...I'm buying Cloud, I understand the business reasons for it. I have deployed cloud in my business, now I want to understand how to reap increasingly more benefit over time.

**Doug:** Take the time to actually to go back, and to define the services that are most important to the client and be able to standardize those services, and deploy them in a consistent manner back to the business and the end users.

This is something that CIOs have been trying wrestle with for years – trying to drive increased standardization and simplify their environment. This is the opportunity that allows that to happen.

**Michael:** I think that a perfect point to leave off on – that with cloud, we accelerate this ongoing process in IT of standardizing, of reducing the cycles needed to maintain the infrastructure, deploying technology against the real business needs of our organizations.

This has been ROI Innovation recording. I'm your host, Michael O'Neil. We have been privileged to be joined by Mark Kovarski, Senior Business Technology Consultant from Bank of Montreal, by Doug Jones, Business Unit Executive, Cloud Computing IBM Canada, and by Rene Marquis, IT director from the Laval School Board.

On behalf of all our readers and viewers, thank you so much.