

The step-by-step guide to bridging the IT skills gap from within:

Part 2

Shifting to a product-based model and positioning people for success



Welcome back, cloud innovators

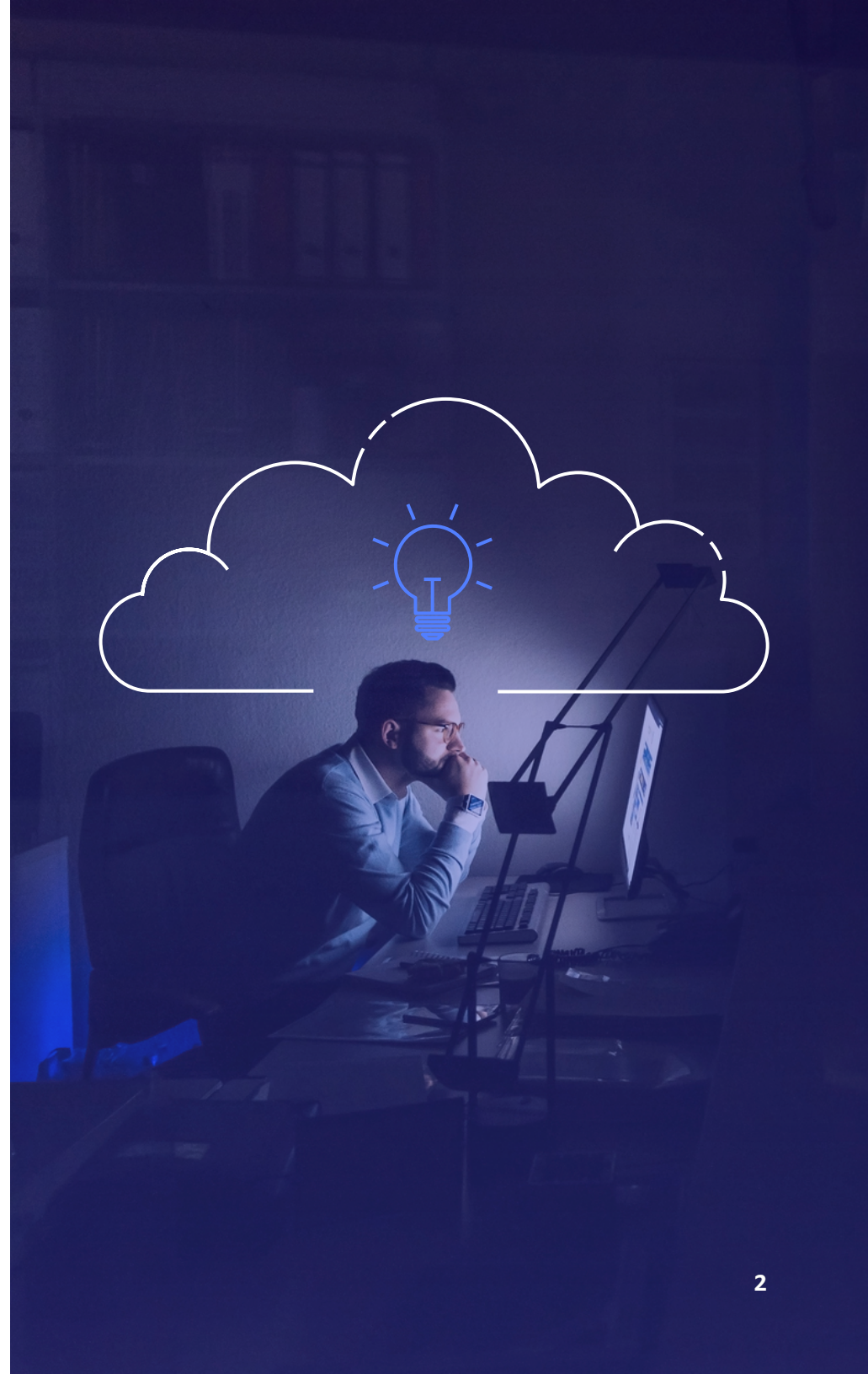
In Part 1 of this timely AWS eBook series, we detailed the issues involved in identifying IT skills gaps within your organization. In Part 2, we'll review the steps it takes to shift your operational model from the inefficiency of traditional, activity-based processes to a product-based model in the cloud.

The time has come to overcome the skills gap—quickly, economically, and holistically. The future of your workplace is counting on it. Continue exploring the guide.

“The key to delivering digital value at scale is having the right people. As well as the required skills, people must have the desire and aptitude to exploit existing and emerging technologies.”

—Gartner, Inc., 2018¹

¹<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2018-03-27-gartner-says-iaando-skills-gaps-will-cause-75-percent-of-organizations-to-experience-visible-business-disruptions-by-2020>



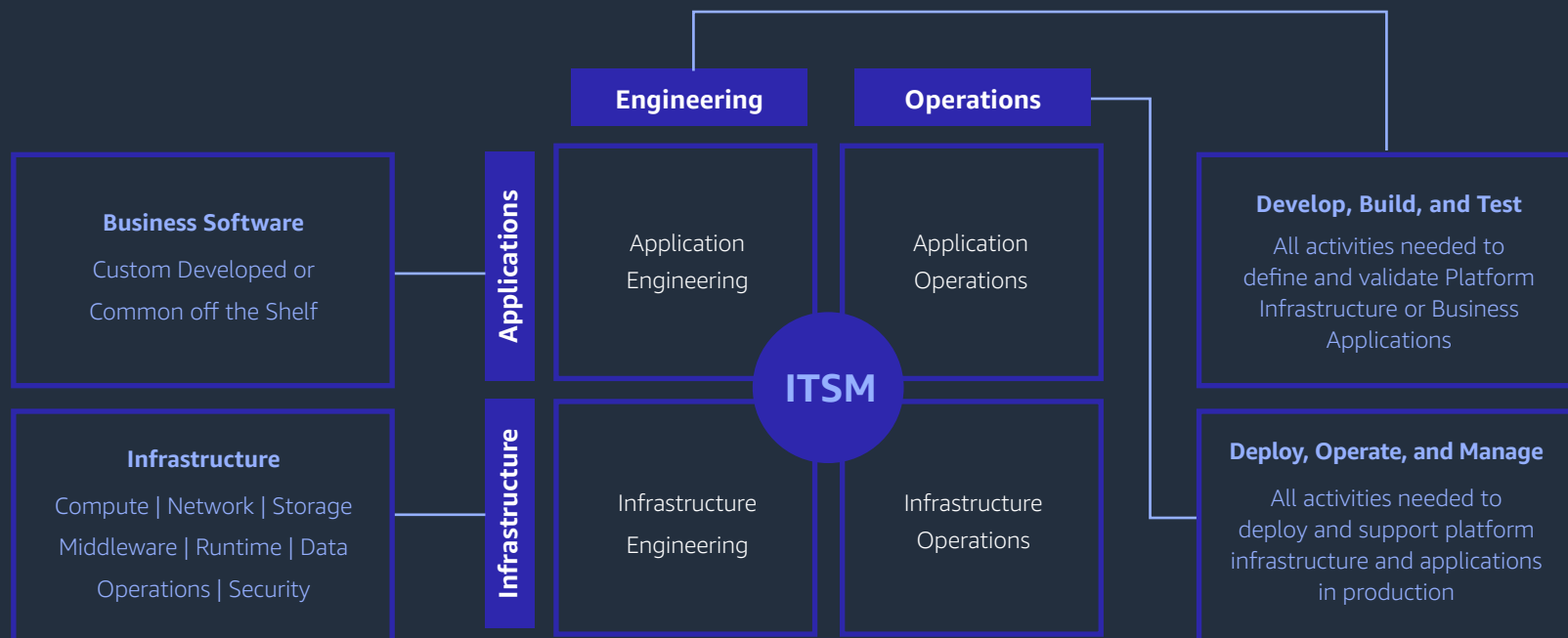
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Shifting to a new mindset—and a product-based operating model

Most organizations currently operate IT through an “activity-based” model. In this structure, most enterprises are not in alignment—with IT focused on deploying technology capabilities instead of ensuring desired business outcomes. In order to successfully close the skills gap, that mindset has to change.

The way forward—to a post-skills-gap future—requires shifting how your business thinks about and operates IT, moving from “activity-based” to “product-based.” The product-based operating model enables permanent teams to stay focused on powering customer-centric innovation and modernization. This leads to shorter delivery cycles, which reduces risks for the organization caused by long development windows.

This is because most Enterprises operate in an “activity-based” model

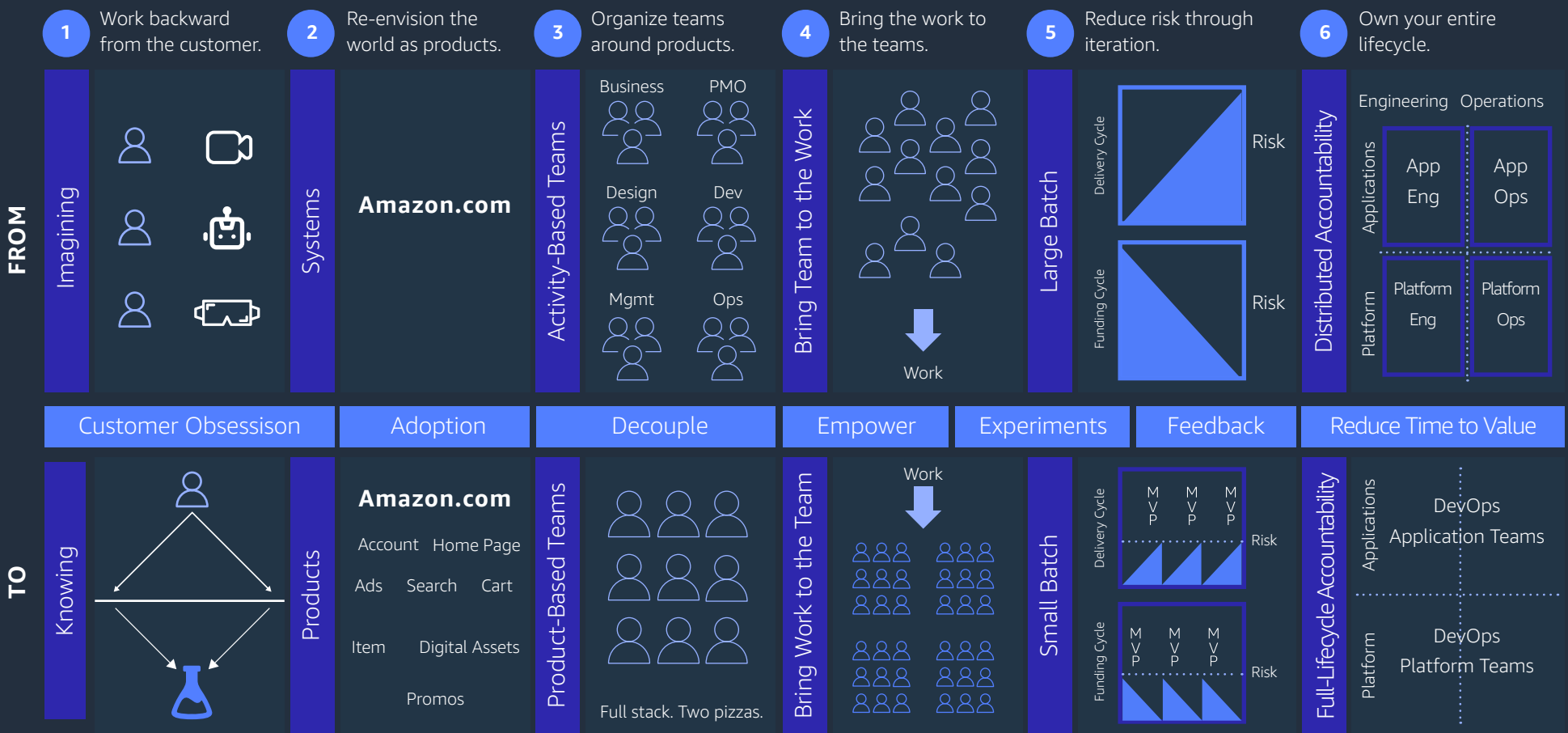


The product-based model starts with customers rather than ending with them, capturing their feedback, and then working backward to address their needs. Unlike older models that push efficiency above all else, the product-focused approach encourages experimentation in small batches of both delivery and funding.

Instead of rushing to “make it as quickly and cheaply as possible,” IT is tasked to try something—keeping what works, scrapping what doesn’t, applying the learnings, and trying again. While there may be initial dips in productivity at first, this more deliberate model helps reduce developmental waste while leading to greater innovation, smarter decision-making, better products, and, ultimately, happier customers.

Building a product-based flywheel aligns the Business & IT on common goals

Six key changes are required.



Diversity breeds innovation

A final note on the product-based model: It requires a diversity of talent and experience. Experimentation won't yield results when teams are comprised entirely of like-minded, same-skilled individuals. The more diverse your team, the more ideas you'll get—whether that diversity comes from role, skills, background, culture, personality, etc.

The Bersin / Deloitte talent management study confirms that the companies highest on its diversity and inclusion maturity scale—"companies that look at leadership and inclusion as a hallmark of their talent strategy"—are 1.8 times more likely to be change-ready and 1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their markets².

And, according to a report in the Harvard Business Review, companies having what it calls "2-D diversity" out-innovate and outperform less diverse competitors, being 45% more likely to grow their market share and 70% more likely to capture new markets³.

Transitioning to a product-based model moves organizations closer to bridging the skills gap—but it's all just theoretical if the individual members within your organization don't change the way they work. Once you've got the right model, you need to give your people the tools, resources, and abilities they need to succeed within it.

²<https://joshbersin.com/2015/12/why-diversity-and-inclusion-will-be-a-top-priority-for-2016/>

³<https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>



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Positioning your people for success

You have to do more than wish for a fully skilled workforce. You have to make it happen with training. According to IDC, training enables organizations to accelerate cloud adoption, achieve business objectives sooner, and overcome concerns related to cloud adoption. The research shows that comprehensively trained organizations are 80% faster to adopt the cloud, 2.7 times more likely to realize that the cloud can help jump-start innovation, 3.8 times more likely to meet cloud ROI requirements, and 4.4 times more likely to overcome operational and performance concerns⁴.

Training also saves time and money. You'll avoid the high costs of hiring new staff to fill cloud-related roles, and it can even help your organization retain employees longer.

Though it is a vital step, it is important to understand that training can't bridge the skills gap in a vacuum. Training will ensure technical aptitude, but it alone can't position your teams for success. It's but one factor in moving toward a product-based operating model—make sure you treat it as such.

Build the cloud talent you need from the people you already have

Cloud Role	Icon	Typically Sourced from:	Cloud Role	Icon	Typically Sourced from:
Cloud Enterprise Architect Cloud Operations Architect Cloud Security Architect		Enterprise Architect Operations Architect Security Architect	Product Owner		Relationship Managers Portfolio Managers Senior Business Analyst
Cloud Infrastructure Engineer		Compute Engineer Storage Engineer Network Engineer Middleware Engineer App Platform Engineer	Agile Scrum Master		Project Manager Product Manager
Cloud Operations Engineer Cloud SysOps Admin		Build/Release Engineer Capacity Planner Incident Management	Cloud Data Engineer Cloud AI/ML Engineer Cloud Data Scientist		Data Platform Engineer Database Admin Data Architect
Cloud Security Engineer Cloud SecOps Admin		Security Engineer IAM Engineer Policy & Compliance	Cloud Solutions Architect Cloud Software Engineer		Enterprise Architect Solutions Architect Application Developer

⁴<https://d1.awsstatic.com/analyst-reports/Train%20to%20Accelerate%20Your%20Cloud%20Strategy.pdf>

How AWS can help

In Part One, we identified *the* essential question as, “*What’s the most economical and efficient way to turn our qualified amateurs into practiced experts?*” We promised you an answer, and now it’s time to deliver—the most economical and efficient way to address the skills gap is through AWS and its partner network. Let’s explore some of the services and solutions we provide.

AWS Training can help your organization build cloud skills across a range of training topics, modalities, and class levels. We have released more than 100 free digital training courses for all levels of users. Digital courses are generally 10 minutes long and designed to help individuals build foundational knowledge for dozens of AWS services and solutions. You can encourage your team to explore **Cloud Practitioner Essentials**, for example, for an overview of cloud concepts and AWS services, security, architecture, pricing, and support. You can also search our catalog for digital training on the newest AWS services.

If you are looking to go beyond the fundamentals, we also offer live classroom training, which provides one to three days of intensive instruction with an AWS trainer. If you are interested in classroom training, we can work directly with your organization on an education strategy. We’ll evaluate your needs and build a customized learning path—so your team can learn the skills they need to accomplish your specific business goals.

Want us to bring the knowledge to you? Our private on-site training gives your team the opportunity to learn in your own location from instructors who are familiar with your AWS use cases. And we also offer a “virtual classroom” version of our on-site training for private engagements. This option gives your organization more flexibility, reducing travel expenses, and helping to strengthen your teams’ skills across the globe.

Leveraging your ecosystem

You may be leading your organization's cloud journey, but you don't have to do it alone. Talk to your peers, attend cloud-related events, and discover how other companies have evolved with the cloud. The technology has grown rapidly, and many born-in-the-cloud businesses have already found success. There is a wealth of insights online, illustrating what real companies have accomplished. Don't ever hesitate to leverage their learnings.

Packed with practical educational resources, the [AWS Partner Network](#) is a great way to explore the cloud ecosystem. Whether you're looking for a tool to help you with a specific need or an implementation partner to help you with a large migration, there's a wide variety of partners to choose from. Of course, you can always look to your AWS account manager to help you find the right partner for your cloud journey.

Another valuable option for ecosystem support is [AWS Professional Services](#). This proven offering has already helped hundreds of executives

identify the roles and skills needed to execute a successful cloud strategy. We do this by assessing an organization's current readiness and helping its teams bridge the cloud skills and experience gap. Through these engagements, AWS Professional Services has developed the [AWS Cloud Adoption Framework](#), which is made freely available to organizations that wish to use it as a resource to help move their organizations toward a cloud operating model.

Creating a diversely innovative workspace

In the previous section, we showed how diversity within teams leads to greater innovation and new ideas. But these diverse teams can't properly function unless your organization is providing them with a safe, highly inclusive workspace, where they feel comfortable sharing ideas and working productively alongside their peers.

So how do you know if you've created a diversity-friendly workspace? Don't be afraid to ask your employees whether they feel the environment is comfortable and diverse. Take

feedback seriously, and use it to identify and improve areas of weakness while emphasizing and augmenting your positions of strength. You can communicate with employees about this directly or through an anonymous survey (to encourage honesty and calm fears of retribution). It's important to make sure that company-related activities outside work hours are also as inclusive as possible. For example, you might avoid scheduling outings during religious holy days, find ways to include non-drinkers at company parties, and consider reimbursing single parents for babysitting costs on employee nights out.





Next in Part 3: Empowering teams and setting your business apart

Now that you have a better idea about the importance of training your employees to bridge the skills gap, you'll need to help them put their ideas and capabilities together to form teams well-suited to the process. In the final part of this AWS eBook Series, we'll show you how to empower teamwork to overcome the skills gap once and for all.

So don't stop—in addition to our insights, the final installment of this AWS eBook Series features Jonathan Allen's "12 Steps to Get from Zero to Hundreds of AWS-Certified Engineers."

[Read Part 3 now »](#)