Choosing Cloud Partners is not an Arm's Length Decision



This post is by our guest blogger John Dunnet, FBCS, Director – Transformation Practice  of evoco.co.uk a provider of fixed price business transformation and former CTO of Gartner. Evoco.co.uk are a provider of advisory and project services with resources details of whom may be seen [here](http://www.managedserviceexpert.com/managed-services-software/evoco-co-uk-fixed-price-project-mgt-business-transformation-detail).

# Summary

Assessing which organization should become a cloud partner can sometimes be a leap of faith. Understanding the ‘degrees of separation’ model is a good way to increase the likely success of a choosing a partner.

# Introduction

We are often asked, ‘Can you use your Journey 2 method with an off shore model?’ to which the answer is of course ‘Yes’! But I always like to qualify that statement.
Whenever a new variable is introduced into an organisation the ability to perform to the same standards of is made harder, especially in the forming/storming stage of a relationship. The factors that increase the difficulty we describe as ‘degrees of separation’. When two or more organisations start working together the relationship is made more complex by the number of degrees of separation involved.

# Degrees of Separation

Degrees of separation can be categorised into the following groups:

## Culture

If two organisations are culturally different: for example a government body and a start-up, or whose constituents are from different cultures (e.g. the US and India).

## Time Zone

If organisations are in significantly different time zones reducing the number of contact hours in a standard day – or forcing one or both organisations to work ‘out of hours’.

## Distance

Physical separation. The longer the distance the less likely people are able to travel to sort out issues quickly if required.

## Language

Having different first languages, or the age-old joke of two countries being separated by a common language.

## Number of different entities involved

The number of different organisations involved in a task. If there are more than two parties are involved then, groups, power dynamics and political rivalries can distract from the objectives. As the number of degrees of separation increase the difficult of delivery to the ratio:

Difficulty = Complexity of Task number of degrees of separation

So for example a UK based organisation outsourcing software development to India would have culture; time zone, distance and language as degrees of separation, which scores 4 making the initial relationship to the power 4 harder than if we were doing development with an in-house team.

Difficulty = Complexity4

If we look at a near shore solution in a European country in the same time zone for a UK based company, we have language and distance as our degrees of separation which scores 2 and therefore the relationship is made harder to the power 2.

Difficulty = Complexity2

In this instance if the financial considerations were the same the near shore solution would be preferred.
The degrees of separation analysis is a key output in the Journey 2 approach, and underpins decision making on what services, or business functions and organisation would consider outsourcing, and where.

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