

IT Europa's High Growth 40 – Cloud analyses the UK's fastest-growing MSPs currently making gains in the cloud market to distil strategic similarities and put forward a framework for success in this ever-evolving but lucrative sector.

HIGH GROWTH 40 IN CLOUD



INSIGHTS THAT GIVE YOU AN EDGE

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INTRODUCTION

IT Europa's High Growth 40: Cloud analyses a cohort of financially thriving MSPs that cite cloud as the cornerstone of their impressive growth strategies.

The report leans on these companies in three ways. First, it utilises the expertise of those at the coalface to better understand the ever-changing cloud landscape. Secondly, it synthesises the strategies of those thriving in the market to find similarities and put forward a framework for success.

Finally, by extracting detailed financial data to serve as the evidential bedrock for the report, we hope to have created a valuable resource for companies, stakeholders and investors looking to create a compelling cloud offering.

We extend our greatest thanks to the organisations within the list that agreed to be interviewed, including ANS, Advania UK, Colt, Force36 and Nine23. It is their insights that have made the following report possible, and you can explore their ideas in more detail through separate profiles released in tandem with this report.

METHODOLOGY

IT Europa whittled its comprehensive pool of profiled companies down to those organisations with a significant cloud practice. This focused on, but was not limited to, those holding top-tier certifications, including AWS Premier Tier Services Partner, Azure Expert MSP Partner and Google Cloud Premier Partner.

For the remaining cohort, we assessed turnover growth from the latest available financial year. For companies with undisclosed turnover, we evaluated solvency ratios using Total Assets and Shareholder Funds to highlight those with the strongest financial stability. Ultimately, IT Europa ranked and distilled these insights into a list of the top 50 cloud-focused MSPs in the UK.

The resulting cohort boasts an impressive average revenue growth of 12.3% and solvency ratio of 59.4%. The average age of these companies is 20 years.

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MEET THE HIGH GROWTH 40: CLOUD

1. 848 GROUP
2. ACCENTURE
3. ADVANIA
4. ALSCIENT
5. ANS
6. BEXPRT
7. BLUETEL
8. BYTES TECHNOLOGY GROUP
9. CAPGEMINI
10. CGI
11. CLOUD FUNDAMENTAL
12. COGNIZANT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
13. COLT TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
14. COMPUTACENTER
15. CRAYON GROUP
16. D55
17. DEVOTEAM
18. DIGI2AL
19. ENDAVA
20. FORCE36
21. GREEN CUSTARD
22. HAPPIEST MINDS TECHNOLOGIES
23. ITRANSITION GROUP
24. KAINOS GROUP
25. KLOIA SOFTWARE AND CONSULTING
26. KO TECHNOLOGIES
27. MADE TECH GROUP
28. MOBILISE CLOUD SERVICES
29. NINE23
30. NORDCLOUD
31. ORYXALIGN
32. PYTHIAN UK
33. REVOLOGY BUSINESS SOLUTIONS UK
34. ROCK IT
35. SKOVVY IT
36. SKYPURPLE CLOUD
37. TELEFÓNICA TECH UK
38. THE SERVER LABS
39. VERSION1
40. VOXLOGIC



INSIGHT REPORT

RETHINKING CLOUD

Spend on cloud services by UK businesses increased 17% in the last year, from £9bn in 2023 to £10.5bn in 2024, according to an investigation by the UK's Competition and Markets Authority. For MSPs, being part of this market represents high-value migration projects, predictable income and a chance to become a trusted partner in their client's digital transformation – which opens myriad doors for future business opportunities.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the channel has cloud high up its growth agenda. The UK Government's 2024 research on MSPs found that, of 11,492 active providers, 60% offered cloud solutions according to their website, second only to IT Infrastructure Management, and 53% mentioned the provision of cloud services, third behind IT Support and Helpdesk, and Managed IT.

However, the landscape is rapidly changing for these providers as businesses are rethinking their initial cloud investments or taking a more cautious approach to starting their cloud journey. Richard Swain, Commercial Director at Force36, said: "Clients are asking tougher questions about value, cost transparency and whether everything really needs to sit in public cloud. We've noticed a definitive shift towards more thoughtful setups."



Richard Swain,
Commercial Director,
Force36

Also riding the tides of change, Ant Holland, Head of Pre-Sales at ANS, noted that organisations are increasingly opting for a blend of SaaS, and public and private cloud in the form of hybrid solutions. "This is being driven by concerns around data sovereignty, security, and cost management," he said.

Therefore, in the new era of cloud MSPs need to adopt a new approach, leading with



flexibility, security and efficiency to ensure they are in the right place to meet a more educated customer base with diverse demands. Below is a deeper exploration of the shifting cloud landscape, set with recommendations for MSPs seeking to create trust and value amidst widespread cloud reconsideration.

THE RISE OF PRIVATE CLOUD

Recent years have seen a rising preference for private cloud, which now serves as an equal to its public counterpart. In Illuminas' 2025 Private Cloud Outlook, a survey of 200 UK senior IT leaders, 57% of respondents say deploying new workloads in private cloud is their top priority over the next three years, while 73% are considering workload movement from public to private cloud. One-third have already done so, and the remaining two-thirds should stand out as an opportunity for MSPs.

The reason for this preference shift is security and cost. Swain affirmed: "We're seeing increasing demand for private cloud infrastructure, particularly where customers want more control, tighter security, and more predictable costs."

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In the first instance, Illuminas found that 69% of leaders are “very” or “extremely” concerned about public cloud compliance, whilst conversely 96% trust private cloud for security and compliance needs.

Furthermore, nothing compels customers more than cost, and 95% of respondents reported at least some level of waste on public cloud spend. Remarkably, 47% believe more than 25% of their public cloud spend is wasted, creating significant optimisation opportunities. Stephen Jewell, CEO at Nine23, noted: “We have found one of the main factors driving re-platforming is bill shock and not knowing what the costs will really be as workloads increase, data volumes continue to grow, and user behaviours impact the actual costs. Particularly in the public sector, the predictability of such costs against annual budgets is a challenge.”

This trend also appears future-proofed as decision makers are expressing their preference to host cutting-edge technologies in private environments. Illuminas found that 68% prefer to run container and Kubernetes-based applications on private cloud or a mix of public and private, while 60% prefer private cloud for AI model training, tuning and inference.

THE AI AGENDA

Building on the growing trend of cost consciousness in cloud decision-making, businesses are increasingly leveraging AI within cloud environments to drive automation, efficiency, and new capabilities. This is an opportunity for MSPs, says Liz Brown, Director of the Enterprise Cloud Solutions Practice at Colt Technology Services. “Organisations can position themselves as enablers of scalable and secure transformation by getting this right,” she said.

According to Brown, this involves offering cloud environments tailored for AI workloads. MSPs should also develop and manage AI platforms that provide pre-built models for common use cases or customer model development, and train and build data pipelines and lakes across multi-cloud environments.

Here, public cloud retains a unique edge by offering on-demand access to the latest high-performance GPUs at a massive scale, something hard to match in private cloud or co-lo environments due to cost, supply and scalability limits.

Holland echoed the idea of MSPs being well placed as transformation partners due to the complexity of the task. He noted: “Our customer base and beyond is begging to realise the importance of making sure their data is correctly positioned, secured and governed, before they can generate real value from the perspective of AI. This has become the new top priority for most organisations we’re speaking to. We’re entrenched in a wide variety of projects to deliver work in this space at the moment.”

PROCUREMENT AND ADHERENCE

Porter highlighted that a robust sustainability agenda is critical for public sector contracts that require demonstrable Social Value commitments. For additional context, The UK government's Procurement Policy Note 06/21 (PPN06/21), which applies to businesses that bid for government contracts over £5m per year, requires suppliers to commit to net zero emissions by 2050. They must also provide a carbon reduction plan that includes baseline emissions, annual reporting and specific targets.

"We wouldn't have got contracts such as providing free IoT sensors to schools and community groups without proving our credentials," said Porter. Connexin was named the second fastest growing company at the 2024 Northern Tech Awards, up from 14th place in 2023, and secured several significant contracts including £58m from BDUK to deliver broadband to rural homes.

THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC CLOUD

None of this is to say that the public cloud market is on the way out. "I hardly think that public cloud growth will miss a beat," noted Geoff Kneen, CEO at Advania UK. "I expect that it will continue its path, as many of the new trends such as private AI and sovereign cloud, would have fallen into the hybrid bucket anyway and won't disrupt the workloads going to public cloud. At the end of the day, the market is still growing, and the use case is evident."

Ultimately, the demands within public cloud have shifted, with organisations valuing the ability to spread their workloads across multiple providers with a multi-cloud model. According to Flexera's 2025 State of the Cloud Report, 89% of enterprises have adopted multi-cloud strategies, with risk reduction and enhanced flexibility listed as the common reasons.



Brown said: "Multi-cloud is a fundamental part of our strategy." She detailed recommendations for MSPs looking to position themselves as trusted multi-cloud partners. "MSPs can navigate cost fears by delivering cross-cloud FinOps and cost optimisation, providing real-time cost visibility and forecasting and recommending cost-saving strategies," she said.

"To remove complexities, MSPs can also offer centralised management across multiple cloud platforms, optimising workload placement and ensuring consistent governance and security policies. Colt itself holds partnerships with AWS, Microsoft Azure and GCP.

Jewell added to Brown's view, noting that multi-cloud comes with a complexity that requires deep technical expertise and consultation with customers. He said: "We believe that a multi-cloud approach is the most effective approach for our customers; however, achieving true multi-cloud environments can be far more difficult than perceived. New cloud-native

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services are commonly built on microservices and cloud components of specific public cloud technologies; interoperability and portability are improving, but do not yet prevent some level of vendor lock-in.



Stephen Jewell,
CEO,
Nine23

"As with many things, good planning, design and structured foundations are essential to achieving the right outcomes and truly exploiting the benefits of cloud."

CONSULTANCY IS KING

Consultation must be the bedrock of any successful cloud strategy. This covers customers lacking the education to make informed decisions, and those who understand their requirements but need a trusted partner to execute their vision. Brown noted that Colt offers its own consulting services to help organisations determine the best cloud strategy based on their specific data and application needs, ensuring flexibility and choice. She said: "Our customers appreciate advisory and assessment services and understand that this will lead to them choosing the right cloud for each workload."

This is because success in cloud migration requires a focus on the journey and not the destination. Holland added: "Finding the right solution for a customer often takes time, and this may result in several different technical stopovers," he said. "We often find ourselves working with our customers, not just on an initial migration of resources into a cloud platform, which may only take a matter of weeks, but on a multiyear transformation programme which could see customers taking their software and data from on-premises, into hosted cloud solutions, onto Virtual Machines in Cloud, then into cloud native solutions."

HYBRID SOLUTIONS

Continuing down the path of flexibility, a hybrid cloud offering represents the way forward, according to our contributors. Brown noted that the company has moved from traditional hosting environments to hybrid cloud solutions to enable its customers to benefit from the flexibility of both models.

She said: "This evolution is driven by the need to balance the advantages of public cloud, such as scalability and cost-effectiveness, with concerns around security and data sovereignty, especially given the current geopolitical climate. Businesses are looking for ways to maintain flexibility while ensuring control over their data. Hybrid models are becoming common, whereby public cloud is used for experimentation and private cloud for production workloads that require sovereignty, resilience and cost control."

To verify this, Flexera's State of Cloud Report 2025 found that 54% of organisations are currently utilising a hybrid cloud environment. Kneen highlighted that this shift was inevitable. He said: "There is no doubt that the public cloud business case is still valid, and people have had to slowly realise that there would be a hybrid requirement on top of this because of latency or particular applications that wouldn't be served well through a public model."

Swain added: "We're seeing strong demand for hybrid models, blending our cloud with services or infrastructure the customer already has."

What matters most is flexibility, and we give customers options, whether they want to keep everything in one place or spread across multiple environments. There's no one-size-fits-all approach."

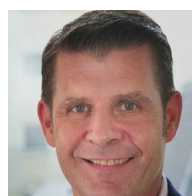
He hopes that by addressing these demands, Force36, currently generating over £1m of annual revenues, can grow by over 50% in the next two years.



Holland concurred with the value of flexibility. He said: "A hybrid cloud model means we can support our customers on their journey transitioning to cloud while enabling them to pick best of breed technologies and the right mix of public and private cloud services to suit their business use cases," he added. The £120m revenue company expects further double-digit growth on its cloud platforms in 2026.

SEEKING SOVEREIGNTY

Regulatory pressures, geopolitical concerns and cyber resilience are all driving enterprises to increasingly prioritise data sovereignty. Geoff Kneen, CEO of Advania UK, noted: "The sovereign cloud approach is increasingly significant because of increasing threats of war and de-stability. People want to be self-sufficient."



Geoff Kneen
CEO,
Advania UK

According to Brown, this presents both challenges and opportunities for MSPs. She said: "Offerings need to be adapted to meet local data residency, processing and privacy laws, and the rise of sovereign AI is creating demand for in-country AI infrastructure where MSPs can play a key role in deploying and managing these environments."

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THE MSPS THAT CAN DELIVER FLEXIBLE, SCALABLE, AND COMPLIANT SOVEREIGN SOLUTIONS WILL BECOME STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR ENTERPRISES NAVIGATING COMPLEX MULTI-CLOUD AND REGULATORY LANDSCAPES.

To achieve this, she recommends that MSPs prioritise building sovereign-ready architectures when designing cloud environments, invest in automation to ensure agility and control in dynamic environments, build strategic partnerships to deliver regionally compliant trusted services, and put together consulting and advisory capabilities to help customers navigate their journeys.

This is an especially important trend in highly regulated sectors, and Nine23 is at the forefront of this change, delivering Private, Sovereign cloud services to organisations including HM Treasury, UK Police Forces, The Security Industry Association, the Financial Conduct Authority and defence suppliers working with the UK's Ministry of Defence.

Jewell noted: "In the high assurance sectors we operate, there is an increasing awareness in data sovereignty, not residency, with some recent cases identified in the media such as Police Scotland challenging Microsoft, and EU challenges to public cloud providers."

To combat this, Jewell moved Nine23 towards true UK sovereignty across its entire technology stack, from physical hosting and network connectivity to managed service delivery. He said: "Our solutions are built to meet the most stringent regulatory compliance requirements and are fully aligned with NCSC/DSIT guidance and Secure by Design principles."

To deliver this, Nine23 has a strategic partnership agreement with Pulsant and Nutanix which enables it to deliver a set of

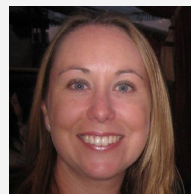
solutions on the provider's fully UK sovereign, accredited, compliant stack.

SECURITY BAKED IN

Rising cyber threats and sovereignty concerns are causing organisations to prioritise robust security protocols in their cloud infrastructures.

Brown argues that MSPs are uniquely positioned to capitalise on this move and provides a more nuanced view of what this should look like. She makes the following two key recommendations.

"Provide modular scalable security solutions including managed firewalls, intrusion detection and endpoint protection, as well as Zero Trust architectures across hybrid and multi-cloud environments. Guide clients through complex regulatory landscapes by offering automated compliance monitoring for standards like GDPR, HIPAA and ISO 27001."



Liz Brown

Director of the Enterprise Cloud Solutions Practice, Colt Technology Services

It is interesting to note that whilst cloud security is a major concern in surveys, for example, Fortinet found 95% of companies are concerned, with 32% being on the extreme end of the scale, there have been no confirmed major breaches of public cloud provider's core infrastructure.

All breaches have come from tenant misconfigurations or mistakes such as the Microsoft Azure global network outage in January 2023, the AWS Lambda and API Gateway disruption in June 2023, and the Google Cloud Frankfurt region power failure in October 2024. This is another reason that a hybrid strategy with failover from Public to Private is an increasingly sought after option for mission critical workloads.

INSIGHT REPORT

FUELLING A CLOUD FUTURE

Although all the data clearly shows growing demand for all forms of cloud, Jane Matthews, MD of MSP Team Builder Wildcat Careers warns : “Most MSPs have responded to cloud demand by adopting cloud-first strategies. But here’s the catch: strategy without skills is just marketing. And most MSPs are learning the hard way that hybrid infrastructure comes with hybrid headaches.”

Consider this in the context of IDC predictions, which estimate that 90% of organisations will experience an IT skills shortage by 2026. It would suggest that skills will be a significant stumbling block for MSPs seeking to scale in the cloud space as this requires very specific skill sets.

For example, Jewell, whose organisation works intimately with public sector organisations and must hit stringent frameworks for compliance, noted: “Finding individuals with or that can achieve Security Clearance can be difficult, particularly when competing with commercial organisations that do not require the same levels of vetting. Furthermore, finding talent with hybrid skills (i.e. knowledge of infrastructure) is increasingly difficult as more individuals are focused entirely on public cloud services.” Swain points to issues sourcing experienced engineers, especially ones with data centre knowledge.

Therefore, solutions may require some creativity or atypical recruitment strategies. Holland confessed: “Sourcing specialised talent has posed challenges.” However, ANS’s cloud workforce includes six Microsoft MVPs and one Regional Director and continues to grow. This has been achieved by a two-pronged approach, according to Holland.

The company has nurtured its in-house team and collaborated with educational institutions to develop future professionals. It’s Academy, which offers Ofsted ‘outstanding’ accredited apprenticeships, has seen 334 graduates since 2013, 85% of whom have moved into promoted



positions with a 79% distinction rate. To retain staff, ANS has invested in training programmes, certifications, and fostering an environment of continuous learning for its workforce.



Ant Holland,
Head of Pre-Sales,
ANS

Swain echoed the need for investing in soft skills and not hard skills. He added:

“It’s about finding people with the right attitude and training them up, we’ve had great results taking that route.”

This is also an approach being taken by Nine23, according to Jewell, who also acknowledged future difficulties. “Our approach is to train and develop good infrastructure engineers in cloud services, but retention could be a challenge in the future if the demand for cloud skills continues to increase,” they said.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

It is worth considering where organisations should aim their focus moving forward, and the SMB sector is where we see the greatest opportunity for growth. It appears that the enterprise market is reaching saturation. More than 94% of organizations with over 1,000 employees have a significant portion of their workloads in the cloud, according to a RightScale survey of 800 organisations. Therefore net-new opportunities and set to become less likely with churn the predominant growth driver in the enterprise market.

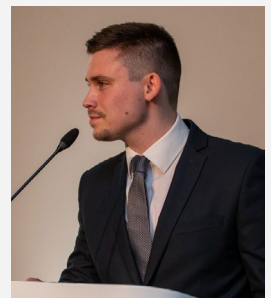
Conversely, we are on the verge of a watershed cloud spend change in the SME market. Currently 44% of traditional small businesses use cloud infrastructure or hosting services, according to TechRepublic, which leaves a significant gap for migration. That migration is imminent, and McCary Group expects SMEs to allocate more than half of their technology budgets to cloud services in 2025. Furthermore, IDC predicts SMBs will increase their cloud spend by 31% to support further

adoption. This is compared to 37% increase over a previous two-year period.

Therefore, our final recommendations to beat out commoditisation, are to leverage the MSP's inherent strengths of customer service and trusted-advisor status and build a portfolio that has flexibility, security and efficiency at its heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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