

Moving toward LessOps with VMware-to-cloud migrations



As enterprises seek to do more with less, VMware migrations offer a practical path to making progress on modernization goals with limited resources.

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Today's IT leaders face competing mandates to do more ("make us an 'AI-first' enterprise – yesterday") with less ("no new hires for at least the next six months").

VMware has become a focal point of these dueling directives. It remains central to enterprise IT, with [80% of organizations](#) using VMware infrastructure products. But shifting licensing models are prompting teams to reconsider how they manage and scale these workloads, often on tighter budgets.

For many organizations, the path forward involves adopting a LessOps model, an operational strategy that makes hybrid environments manageable without increasing headcount. This operational philosophy minimizes human intervention through extensive automation and self-service capabilities while maintaining governance and compliance.

In practice, VMware-to-cloud migrations create a "two birds, one stone" opportunity. They present a practical moment to codify the automation and governance practices LessOps depends on – laying the groundwork for a leaner, more resilient IT operating model.

"NoOps is a nice idea, but rarely practical within the diverse technology landscapes of enterprises."

Sriramkumar Kumaresan, Global Head of Cloud Infrastructure and Security, Cognizant

LessOps: NoOps' more pragmatic cousin [NoOps](#), a vision of IT infrastructure that runs entirely without human intervention, has long captivated technologists. But Sriramkumar Kumaresan, the global head of cloud infrastructure and security at Cognizant, points out that a pure NoOps ideal "is a nice idea, but rarely practical within the diverse technology landscapes of enterprises," he says.

For one thing, complex enterprise environments contain too many edge cases and legacy dependencies to run entirely hands-off. For another, regulatory

requirements and the human judgment needed for exception-handling [limit how far full automation can go](#).

Today's operating environment is "uniquely compelling" for LessOps to gain traction, notes Kumaresan, with multiple forces including economic uncertainty, talent scarcity, and cloud maturity at play.

To summarize this perfect storm: Organizations face mounting pressure to reduce infrastructure spending while still investing in AI capabilities. [Fierce competition for cloud engineering talent](#) and AI/ML ops specialists leaves many enterprises with ambitious modernization targets but too few hands to execute them.

At the same time, governance expectations have expanded beyond annual audits to [continuous compliance](#) across certain financial and security domains – an undertaking that is expensive and difficult to manage at scale without automation support.

“As enterprises prepare for the next wave of transformation, LessOps offers a pragmatic and scalable approach to modernize.”

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Perhaps the bright spot in this otherwise complex landscape is the maturity of the cloud itself. Cloud providers such as AWS now offer robust APIs, managed services, and orchestration frameworks that can integrate with existing VMware environments – making it feasible to automate across both on-premises and cloud infrastructure.

VMware migrations as transformation catalysts

Key enablers of a LessOps model include infrastructure as code (IaC), which makes environments reproducible and auditable; self-healing systems that detect and correct common errors; and interoperable automation platforms that span multiple vendors and environments. “The way we think about LessOps at Cognizant is a ‘maximum tools, minimum people’ model that enables organizations to manage complex cloud environments with fewer resources,” says Kumaresan.

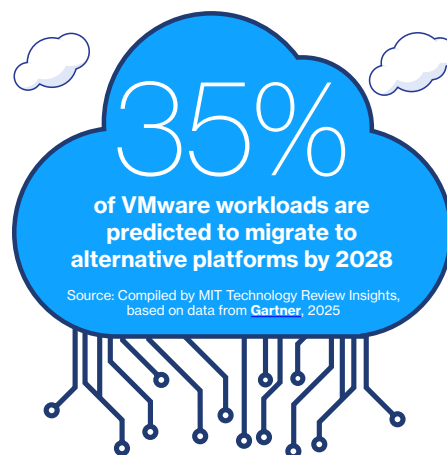
The same principles that underpin LessOps can be applied during migration. A LessOps-aligned migration transforms what might otherwise be a routine lift-and-shift into an opportunity to streamline and automate. It replaces ad hoc, ticket-based management with structured, codified processes. Rather than replicating on-premises complexity in the cloud, enterprises can refactor legacy dependencies and rightsize workloads as they move.

What’s more, automation and observability are baked in from the start. Continuous integration and deployment (CI/CD) pipelines allow updates to flow through testing and production with minimal manual effort. Unified monitoring and event correlation tools surface issues early, reducing mean time to resolution and improving reliability across the stack.

Migrating also often leads to greater visibility into cost and performance. Once workloads run in the cloud, teams can track consumption patterns at the service level

and apply predictive analytics to anticipate demand. Moreover, there are financial levers that companies looking to migrate can pull during the migration itself: [accelerators](#) can offset (or in some cases eliminate) upfront expenses, and [VMware-specific credits](#) are often available to organizations that commit to migrating a defined number of VMs within a set timeframe.

Finally, this operational model shifts ownership closer to the teams that use and manage these tools daily. Self-service portals and policy-driven provisioning let developers deploy approved environments in minutes rather than waiting days for manual approvals.



LessOps in action

A wide range of industries are already seeing measurable gains from LessOps adoption. “In banking, LessOps means real-time compliance and automated governance. In health care, it powers HIPAA-compliant automation and containerization of legacy apps. Retailers use it for zero-downtime deployments and AI-driven demand response,” says Kumaresan, noting that across all these different sectors, organizations are seeking the same outcome: “agility without chaos.”

Kumaresan points to multiple examples where modernization projects have embedded LessOps principles from the outset. One

biotechnology client modernized its VMware environment by migrating roughly 2,300 servers to the cloud through a phased approach that balanced speed with stability. A pilot phase was completed within six months, followed by six carefully planned migration waves that minimized disruption to the business. By building automation and observability into the process, the team ensured a seamless handoff to operations and sustained efficiency gains post-migration.

Kumaresan also recalls a global financial institution that migrated its mission-critical trading platform to the cloud – an industry first at that scale – to meet stringent regulatory requirements while improving scalability and responsiveness. With automated CI/CD pipelines and elastic infrastructure, transaction volumes grew from tens of thousands to millions per day, all while maintaining timely compliance approvals without a ballooning operations team.

Building tomorrow’s IT operating model

Such examples showcase how modernization efforts can set the stage for LessOps environments over time. As automation matures and governance becomes more continuous, enterprises begin to realize tangible benefits: “Across our client base, we’ve seen measurable outcomes, including two to three times faster time to market, 25% to 30% reduction in mean time to resolution (MTTR), up to a 90% increase in environment availability, and 15% to 20% reduction in operational expenses,” says Kumaresan.

The shift from traditional IT to LessOps won’t happen overnight. But for organizations willing to embrace this evolution, the payoff may provide a much-needed release valve at a moment when IT leaders are under extraordinary pressure.

“As enterprises prepare for the next wave of transformation, LessOps offers a pragmatic and scalable approach to modernize,” says Kumaresan. “By embracing automation and reducing complexity, organizations can position themselves for long-term success.”