



GUIDE

# Getting buy-in from the C-Suite

Transform your business through digital adoption



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## Why do you need buy-in from the C-Suite?

Digital transformation has taken off over the last few years, with companies awakening to the myriad of opportunities it can offer. It involves the realignment of existing technology, or investment in new technology such as migrating to the Cloud, business models and processes, to drive value for customers and employees.

It allows companies to react to, and compete in, an ever-changing and increasingly cut-throat digital economy. Furthermore, companies can use it to target new growth markets, achieve new standards in regulatory compliance and meet the evolving needs and behaviours of their customer base.

But merely paying lip service to digital transformation is not the answer.

**C-Suite members receive a lot of information daily, so sending over links for a new software or presenting a digital transformation initiative on a top-level won't suffice to get their buy-in.**

It is all too common in these cases that there is a major disconnect because the people leading digital transformation initiatives do not speak business language and cannot articulate wider business benefits.

Each member of the C-Suite has experienced significant developments within their roles over the past few years. The pandemic accelerated unprecedented changes which saw traditional brick and mortar responsibilities grow into higher-value strategies and initiatives to weather the storms ahead to ensure business continuity.

So, like birds outgrowing the nest, it's only natural that continuing to use outdated or on-premise software can slow businesses and employees down and stunt potential growth by preventing them from spreading their wings.

**But remember, different decision makers have different priorities.**

Take the time to research and understand their roles and business needs so you can effectively address pain points and highlight the benefits of adopting Cloud technology alongside long-term business wins through digital transformation.

## Why should CFOs buy into digital transformation?

To remain competitive, CFOs today must interpret raw financial information and translate it into meaningful commentary and actions by using new technologies to automate and streamline financial reporting processes.

**A CFO wants to clearly see the numbers: “What will it cost, and what will it save me?” Instant visibility of cash flow, forecasting and reports in the Cloud all contribute toward continuous accounting.**

With CFOs becoming weary of the constant cost of licensing, annual maintenance and upgrades, one of the advantages of moving to the Cloud is the preservation of the budget while delivering what the business needs, when it needs it.

The Cloud is also scalable, which allows businesses to cope with changes in demand throughout the year. It keeps the CFO, team and budget in sync with every business cycle by adding or reducing resources as necessary. Scalability and cost-effectiveness make it possible for businesses to develop faster and more efficiently, allowing them to move forward with innovation quickly becoming a priority.



## Why should CFOs lead digital transformation?

As the guardians of much of the data needed for strategic planning and analysis, CFOs are well-positioned in evaluating technology investments and identifying new growth areas and opportunities for the business as a whole.

Therefore, taking the lead on digital transformation projects and getting the C-suite's buy-in is an opportunity for the modern CFO to demonstrate the value of leveraging new technologies, such as the Cloud, to automate and streamline manual processes to make way for higher value work across the business.

Managing digital transformation initiatives and getting buy-in from the C-suite will require CFOs to maintain a progressive outlook when forecasting in an environment where revenue streams and cost structures are fundamentally changing.

A good starting point here is to identify the business goals, corporate objectives, mission statements, core values, and headline targets of the organisation, and use this information to demonstrate how the Cloud can help to achieve them in the long-term.



# Preparing to get buy-in from the C-Suite

## 1. Do your research

The first step with getting buy-in from the C-Suite is to simply have all the information you need at hand. This can be achieved via thorough research of the technology in question, gaining details about its specifications, the purchasing process, and the provider's credentials.

But research should also cover your own company's situation. How is the company currently performing, and how successful are existing processes? This is essentially a data gathering exercise. You're more likely to put forward a compelling case if you can see the bigger picture. Plus, you are better equipped to handle objections, while coming across as more confident, coherent, and informed too.

**You should work out which individual will be most influential in terms of gaining approval for digital implementation, as you can then tailor your argument to focus more heavily on their needs.**

Fortunately, many tech providers publish an abundance of content, such as blogs, whitepapers, guides, testimonials, and reviews. You can use these resources to assist your cause.

## 2. Address current problems

The next part is to ensure that key decision makers fully understand the shortcomings of existing systems. If you can give them a recent example of a problem that occurred, it helps them to visualise the struggles employees are facing daily. Perhaps also provide stats related to wasted time, money, and materials, as well as the general lack of efficiency.

**It's a good idea to get employees of all levels on your side early in the process, as the C-Suite may turn to these individuals when looking for a second opinion.**

If these workers can passionately explain the hindrances they are currently facing, it adds an element of emotion to the argument. And if it's evident the desire for digital transformation is widespread, this creates a sense of urgency too.

You should also highlight what could be possible, by perhaps demonstrating the capabilities of more sophisticated systems, or by showcasing the results being achieved by more forward-thinking businesses. Standing still can be as damaging as moving backwards, as competitors are constantly innovating, and technology is progressing rapidly.

### 3. Outline costs and return on investment

The next part is to ensure that key decision makers fully understand the shortcomings of existing systems. If you can give them a recent example of a problem that occurred, it helps them to visualise the struggles employees are facing daily. Perhaps also provide stats related to wasted time, money, and materials, as well as the general lack of efficiency.

As well as descriptive content, software providers will sometimes give prospective customers access to an ROI (return on investment) calculator too. This allows CFOs to get their hands on tangible data that they can present back to others.

**It can be a big boost to your chances if you can show solid evidence that the bottom line will be positively impacted, as this will be one of the biggest concerns for the wider C-Suite.**

Perhaps compare the investment with existing costs that will be eliminated when adopting the Cloud. Processes will be streamlined, leading to lower energy-related costs. And employees can be upskilled, while having more time to focus on high-value tasks, resulting in greater cost-effectiveness. Cloud providers often provide hosting, updates, and support as part of their service too, meaning there are fewer expensive surprises to contend with.

### 4. Align to your organisational goals

On top of the monetary gains, it is wise to highlight the more abstract (or somewhat invisible) benefits too, as some of these will be aligned with the core values of C-Suite members, as well as the core goals of the business. For example, many leaders want their company to be more innovative, which can be specifically achieved with technology adoption.

Being on the cutting edge of innovation allows businesses to be more adaptable and to enjoy greater survivability. They are also perceived to be more forward-thinking, which helps with keeping hold of talent and forging new partnerships.

**You should think about the specific targets your organisation has, as well as the overarching vision. If you can align the technology you are recommending with these goals, it can be very captivating for decision-makers, as they will be inclined to take actions that pull the business in this direction.**

Growth, compliance, and cybersecurity are often factors companies will prioritise. Fortunately, Cloud-based software assists with these concerns. However, if you can find a way to quantify the related benefits that will be gained, this will be even more compelling. For example, how much money will be saved by avoiding non-compliance fines and security breaches? And how much is revenue expected to grow?

## 5. Detail the implementation process

Another part of your plan should be to explain the implementation process in detail, as this removes ambiguity. If those in the C-Suite don't have full clarity, they may think there are some hidden risks with your proposal, or that there are some hidden responsibilities they will have to handle. Whereas, if they can see that switching is seamless, and that you've figured out who will be accountable for each element, they will be far more encouraged to give the go-ahead.

If you can show them the amount of time, money, and resources that will be required for implementing technology, it may allay their fears, if, for example, the disruption to productivity is less than they had imagined.

**Many software vendors provide a detailed breakdown of the implementation process and will sometimes tailor it specifically for each client. If you are able to map out timeframes and checkpoints, this can be extremely helpful for your proposal.**

It's also advisable to think about post-implementation, as decision makers will likely have questions about the maintenance as well as the training/support involved with any digital system. If you can answer questions around the amount of training needed, how much it will cost, and how new starters will be trained on the software, these are all useful facts to bring along.

## 6. Provide a range of options

If you only put one option forward when discussing Cloud adoption, some may feel the company is putting all its eggs in one basket, or that they're being shoehorned into a decision they're not comfortable with.

**Providing multiple options means there's a greater chance these decision makers will see a system that ticks all their boxes.**

It also makes it a much easier for those choosing. There's minimal effort required on their part, as there's less need for them to conduct their own research (if you have covered all the bases). This means they can simply choose the one they like most. You could also invite other employees to make recommendations, as they may have experienced good systems in the past, and they will be more likely to support the project if they feel they are part of the process.

You can still direct the C-Suite towards the choice you want them to make, by painting it as the best option. If they feel like they are making this decision by themselves, you have a better chance of gaining buy-in from them. All the options you suggest should be within your budget and possess 'must-have' functionality for the business's goals. You can then present the solutions on a comparison grid, showing the capabilities (or strengths/weaknesses) of each one.



## 7. Use the right language

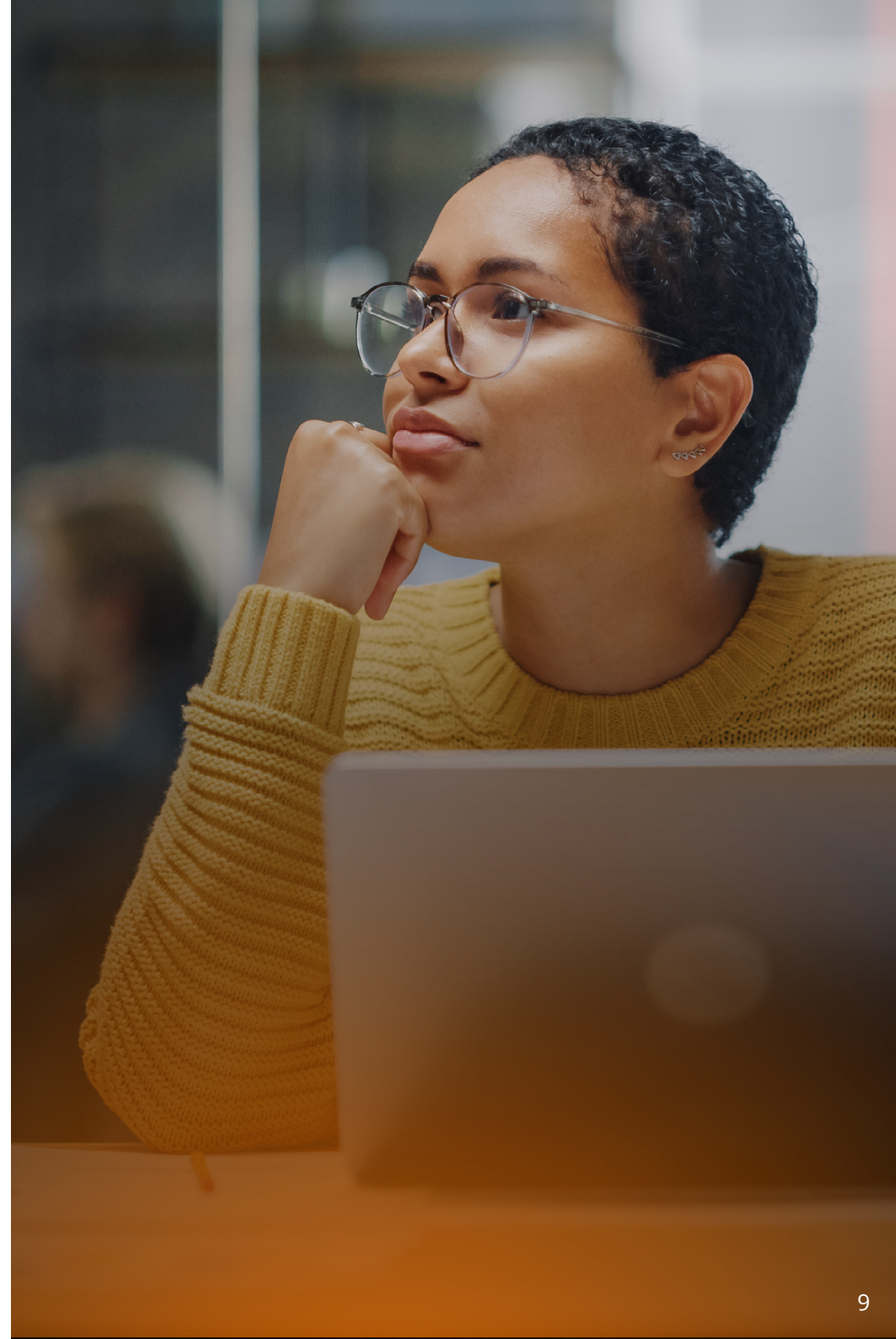
The final aspect to remember is to communicate in the right way. You should think about the audience when planning your 'sales pitch', as this will influence the type of information you include (and the format in which you present it). If you're getting buy-in from one person at a time, each pitch may have to be different. Some people will be more analytical and will be happy to consume long lists of numerical data, whereas others will perhaps be more responsive to graphs, images, videos, and other visual stimuli.

**It's important to speak the audience's language, in terms of what motivates them.**

In some circumstances it can be helpful to present your idea as a story, as people are generally more engaged when exposed to the story-telling technique. This can be achieved by outlining the background behind the company's need for digital transformation, what the current situation is, and where the journey is heading. This provides a clear beginning, middle, and end.

**You should also think about when is best to convey your ideas. Is there a time during the week when those in the C-Suite are less busy, in a better mood, or more open to innovative ideas?**

In terms of language, you should associate existing systems with negative language and new systems with positive language if possible. Another trick is to give your project a catchy name that is memorable while also perfectly capturing the essence of the idea. It then becomes easy for the idea to spread throughout the organisation.





## Getting buy-in from...

### Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for setting and directing company strategy, making major corporate decisions, guiding the organisation's vision and culture, and serving as the public face of the company. In today's rapidly changing business environment, CEOs must manage this hefty set of responsibilities.

In terms of business solutions, the CEO is concerned with achieving goals and meeting business demands. As a result, they will want to know that their objectives and objectives can be met and exceeded in the Cloud. CEOs are aware of their business budgets, so they will be interested in gaining a clear picture of cloud costs - both numerically and business-wide.

#### **Business-wide cost savings in the Cloud include**

- Implementing changes quickly
- Reducing time employees spend on manual tasks which can be automated
- Keeping your data secure and protected from cyber threats and hackers
- Solving business problems through efficiency, scalability, meeting sales demand, customer requirements, and more

In summary, successful digital transformation depends on your ability to articulate the case for change, communicate a forward-looking strategy to the C-Suite and to external stakeholders, and model a culture that supports and drives the transformation.

## Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

In the past, CTOs were the resident experts in the opportunities and limitations presented by new technologies and performed dual roles as CIO and CTO.

However, as technology continued to advance, there was a growing need to separate the CIO job into two roles to ensure a company's success. Hence, the development of the CTO as a separate position.

Today, the CTO holds the highest technology executive position in the C-Suite and use technology to enhance products and services that focus on external customers alongside developing policies and procedures. These responsibilities also extend to leading or being heavily involved in the decision-making process when it comes to digital transformation.

### Here are some areas to consider when looking to gain buy-in from the CTO

- What new digital strategies be formulated?
- Which areas can create value through linkages between new technologies and the rest of the business?
- Why should employees look to embrace new initiatives and technologies?
- How can we build a culture that supports technology-driven strategic imperatives?

The Cloud has many benefits for CTOs, including visibility across the entire business, reducing operational costs, and ensuring there is only one version of the truth. It helps solve the problem of departments working in isolation and improves collaboration, while also supporting key departments who need up-to-date data to make better, more timely decisions.





## Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Traditionally, the job of a CIO focused on purchasing hardware and software, overseeing implementation, maintenance, and security, and simply making sure everything worked. Today, however, the CIO is rapidly becoming a leader and strategist who drives business value, focuses on growth, monitors competitors, identifies problems and solutions, and chooses the right technologies.

**Embracing the Cloud gives CIOs the benefit of spending less while getting more, leaving the IT team to devote more time to strategic business initiatives.**

Cloud solutions can also help CIOs refocus their business objectives and plan new ones around Big Data analytics, and with the right IT team in place, this data can be read and translated into new strategic business plans.

Your digital transformation plan should also cover the barriers faced by CIOs if they wish to stick with their existing on-premise software. Adopting a Cloud software solution eliminates the mundane day-to-day management of systems which were once the traditional responsibility of the IT department.

With automated processes in place, it allows the IT team to focus their efforts on higher-value projects such as working on new business strategies including application rollouts and revised procedures, to name a few. With team efficiency improved, the CIO can then support business growth without making expensive and time-consuming changes to the current setup.



## Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)

CMOs have traditionally focused on planning, developing, implementing, and monitoring the overall marketing strategy for the business. At the time, this included market research, pricing decisions, advertising strategy, and public relations.

In today's world, CMOs must forecast future developments and adapt their strategies to cope with the increasing move away from mass marketing towards increasingly targeted and data-driven campaigns.

**Cloud technology enables CMOs to track KPIs in real time, automate reports, and accelerate internal decision-making.**

As communication platforms and online distribution channels proliferate at a rapid pace, CMOs are increasingly required to ensure consistent messaging across platforms.

Cloud computing can simplify the process of creating bespoke campaigns, testing ideas, running experiments, and evaluating their results for marketers. In this way, they can solve common problems rapidly, reducing risk and lowering the material cost of failure. This in turn encourages businesses and marketing departments to push the boundaries in a way that was simply not possible in the past.

**Here, the message is that a large amount of data available to marketers is only as effective as their ability to analyse and act on it in real time.**

CMOs that leverage the Cloud to understand data, know how to combine it from various sources, and can share that knowledge with their peers will be recognized as critical to the growth and success of the organisation.

## Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)

In the past, the main responsibilities of the CHRO were associated with the distribution of admin tasks, people management, and strategies concerning the wider business.

**In the wake of the pandemic, HR professionals were highlighted as champions for employee engagement, wellbeing, retention and the management of future talent.**

Although technology and digital expertise isn't a primary focus, today's forward-looking CHROs should consider the Cloud to improve employee engagement, keep their people happy, and make use of HR data in their talent management strategy.

For CHROs, managing the internal talent pipeline in the face of technological advancements will be a major challenge in the coming years, especially as they become a collaborator in culture transformations and change initiatives to foster innovation and agility. Having said that, to achieve buy-in from the CHRO, you must develop a comprehensive digital transformation plan that explains to what extent employees will be trained, as well as how the migration process will unfold.

The modern workforce is constantly evolving, which means that the systems HR rely on must be as adaptive as possible to meet their needs.

**One of the driving reasons behind the switch from on-site HR systems to Cloud-based for CHROs is the need for a system that exists as an ever-evolving digital architecture.**

Digital transformation can also benefit certain HR functions, especially when partnered with the finance function, as this can improve workflow for areas such as payroll and expenses, thereby reducing the gap between HR and Finance.

## Board of Directors

Traditional board functions include oversight of regulatory and compliance issues, monitoring financial statements, advising on company strategy, hiring and firing the CEO, and nominating new directors.

Today, the board's responsibilities encompass holding management accountable for a larger range of goals and targets, including long-term innovation and investment in technology - not just limited to short-term financial performance measurement.

**In today's world, the need for a digitally savvy board isn't just about taking advantage of future opportunities; it is also about mitigating new sources of risk.**

Take the time to map out what digital transformation initiatives you want to present and look to simplify highly technical terms so that everyone is on the same page. Following on from this, clearly outline the Cloud migration process, identify key areas for business growth and highlight the benefits where applicable.

Boards with tech-sophisticated directors will be better able to advise on technological investments, select the right CEO for future needs, and manage their own learning and refreshment by recruiting new directors or arranging training sessions, as required, for the board members.

# Find your permanent software residency with Advanced

Advanced is one of the UK's largest providers of business software and services with a £220m turnover, employing 2,000 people and serving 20,000 customers.

We use our experience and expertise in digital transformation to help you on your journey through the Cloud. We are here to work in partnership with you, advise you and offer you choices in the way in which you move to the Cloud so your organisation can grow, innovate and prosper. Ultimately, we help businesses transition to the Cloud in the right time and in the right way.

"We considered large and small providers from the UK and US . . . In the end, we chose Advanced out of all of them for demonstrable sector expertise and a track record of successful delivery."

**Chris Webb, Supporter Relationship Management  
Project Manager, Woodland Trust**




## Why Advanced?

**If we were to sum up Advanced in one word, it would be 'possibility':**

- We're not going anywhere - join forces with an organisation that has long-term viability
- We hold a reputable track record of supporting organisations in their digital transformation journey via our PACE programme
- A move to the Cloud means you are always on latest versions and remain compliant

It is possible for organisations to embrace the digital era confidently - even if you have critical legacy applications to integrate. The Cloud can help deliver true and positive changes now, and in the future.

Whether it's supporting you in delivering ground-breaking new products for your customers, vital services for your clients or life-changing care for your patients, we can help you shine in your field of expertise.



“With Advanced Financials we can flash financial results to the CEO and COO in simple dashboards. They can see ongoing performance against budget in a user friendly way which streamlines processes and reduces anxiety for us.”

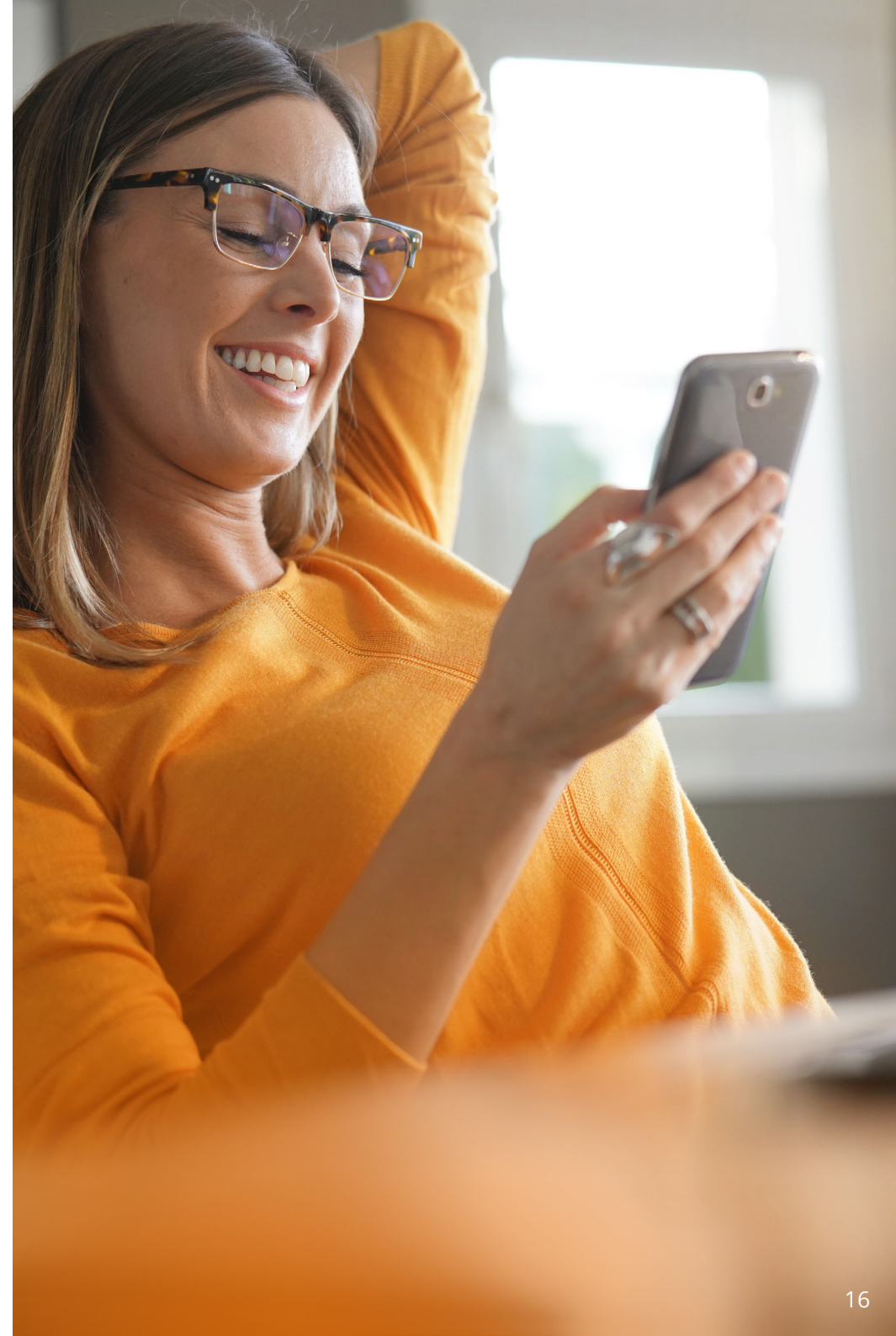
*Julia Shaw, Head of Finance at Nugent Care.*



## With Advanced, you can do it at your PACE

Taking advantage of our [PACE programme](#) makes moving to the Cloud simple and allows you to take things at your own speed without the need for complex pricing models or confusing implementation strategies.

You can count on our experts to help you tailor your route to the future, so Cloud migration can improve, streamline and secure your work rather than distract from it.



# What are the benefits of the PACE programme?



## Pace yourself

Our Start, Flex or Ultra plans help make graduation from on-premise to Cloud service seamless. Our standardised plans will help to guide you along your journey, at your own pace. In addition, custom options are available for companies that request them.



## Onboarding and customer success

With our onboarding training, we'll help you get up and running as fast as possible using your Cloud technology. Our Customer Success Managers (CSM) provide valuable reminders as well as insights into best practices for optimising productivity, efficiency and profitability.



## Subscription structure

Structure your payments in manageable monthly instalments that you can cancel any time instead of making one lump sum payment. With complete transparency and no hidden fees or upgrade costs, we want to give you additional confidence that our service is right for you.



## No expensive maintenance

The upfront costs of hardware, as well as the people needed to maintain and manage on-premise solutions, can be high. With our Cloud technology solutions, maintenance and management worries are a thing of the past, since updates and fixes can be carried out remotely. This means you are always up to date, so your business can continue doing what it does best.



## Digitally transform your business with Advanced

### Advanced Financials

Advanced Financials provides rich, robust financial management functionality through a simple interface.

By using financial data at the core of their systems, businesses can make better decisions and guide their strategy.

Automate manual tasks and gain real-time business insights through continuous accounting in the Cloud. Bring to life the vision of giving your finance teams time back to focus on business strategy and performance.

Get in touch

### MyWorkplace®

We built MyWorkplace® to make work easier for everyone – all the way from CEOs to managers and apprentices.

One single sign-on gives your teams access to all the


software applications they need. When they need them.

In one place. Raise a PO. Book annual leave. Request travel.

Buy stationery. All at the click of a button.

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