CLOUDBOLT

VMWARE TRANSITION GUIDE

The 10 traps waiting for you in your VMware exit strategy

A field guide for infrastructure leaders navigating the Broadcom disruption

The New Year's resolution you're still working on

Let me guess: **getting off Broadcom was on your list last year**. Maybe the year before. How's that going? If you're like most infrastructure leaders we talk to, you've made some progress. You've evaluated alternatives. You've run pilots. You've built business cases. You might have even started moving workloads.

And then you hit the traps.

Not the obvious ones—everyone knows hypervisor selection is hard. We're talking about the invisible traps. The ones that appear mid-migration when it's too late to pivot. The ones nobody warns you about because the vendors selling you "easy migration tools" don't want you thinking about them.

Here are the 10 traps we're seeing in the field. If you recognize yourself in three or more of these, you're not alone—and you're probably further behind than you think.

CATEGORY 1: Strategic traps (CIO-level)

Trap #1:
"Lift and shift" doesn't exist

Every vendor pitches the same dream: "Just migrate your VMs to our platform. Simple. Fast. Done."

Here's the reality: The only true "lift and shift" option is Azure VMware Solution or AWS VMware Cloud—which keeps you on VMware licensing. Congratulations, you just moved your Broadcom problem to a different invoice.

Everything else—Proxmox, Nutanix, OpenShift—requires refactoring. Not "some light adjustments." Actual re-architecture work. The kind that takes months per application and requires your app teams (who are already underwater) to become experts in a platform they've never touched.

Ask yourself:

When your vendor promises "seamless migration," are they counting the application refactoring work? Or are they pretending it doesn't exist?

Trap #2:
Broadcom is watching

The moment you start moving workloads off VMware, your Broadcom rep knows. Usage drops. License consumption shifts. Your account manager gets an alert.

And when renewal comes? Your leverage is gone.

You thought diversifying would give you negotiating power. Instead, Broadcom sees you trying to leave and decides to squeeze every dollar out of you on the way out. That 2-year agreement with a 12-month uplift clause? They're coming for you in year two.

The uncomfortable truth:

Broadcom did the math before they raised prices 10x. They knew they'd lose 40% of customers. They don't need you to stay—they need to extract maximum margin while you're still captive.

Trap #3:
This is a 3-5 year journey, not 12 months

Anyone promising you can migrate off VMware in 6-12 months is either lying or has never actually done it.

Why? Because this isn't just a technology swap. It's an operating model transformation. It's retraining teams. It's rebuilding integrations. It's managing dual platforms while executing the migration itself.

Most organizations we work with are planning 3-5 years. Not because they're slow. Because that's what it actually takes to do it without breaking production.

Plan accordingly:

If your business case assumes 18 months, you're setting yourself up for failure—and a very uncomfortable board meeting when you're two years in and still running hybrid.

CATEGORY 2: Technical traps (architect-level)

Trap #4:
Your dependencies don't travel with you

NSX load balancers. Veeam backups. vRealize monitoring. Aria automation workflows. None of these have 1:1 equivalents in Proxmox or Nutanix or OpenShift. Some have partial alternatives. Some have nothing.

You'll discover this mid-migration. Your architect will come to you and say, "We can't move this application cluster because the NSX configuration doesn't translate to Nutanix's network virtualization."

Congratulations—you just found out you're not replacing one thing. You're replacing 12 things. Storage. Networking. Backup. Disaster recovery. Monitoring. Orchestration. And each one is its own 6-month project.

Reality check:

Does Veeam work the same way on your target platform? Do your load balancer configs translate? Have you asked? Or are you planning to "figure it out later"?

Trap #5:
Application architecture is invisible

Your IT team knows which servers belong to which business unit. They don't know which databases connect to which load balancers connect to which DNS records.

The app teams know. But they're not resourced for a multi-year migration project. They're busy building features and keeping the lights on.

So when you try to move a "simple" three-tier application, you discover it has dependencies on 47 other components, half of which are undocumented and the other half are "temporary workarounds" from 2012 that became permanent.

The question nobody asks:

Who's going to map all of this? And do they have time to do it while also keeping your business running?

Trap #6:
Post-migration updates are a second migration

You moved the VMs. Great. Now update the IP addresses. The DNS records. The SSL certificates. The monitoring agents. The backup policies. The disaster recovery runbooks.

Every workload has a tail of changes that nobody budgets for. And if you skip them? Congratulations, you just migrated a server that can't be backed up, can't be monitored, and can't fail over to DR.

Nobody tells you this:

The migration is 40% of the work. The post-migration cleanup is 60%.

CATEGORY 3: Operational traps (ITOps/help-desk level)

Trap #7:
Your help desk doesn't know where anything lives

Mid-migration, a ticket comes in: "Server down. Production impact. Fix now."

Your L1 tech looks at the ticket. Is that server on VMware or Nutanix? Do they have credentials for both? Are the escalation paths the same? Do the monitoring alerts come from the same system?

The answer is no:

And that production outage just got 3x longer because your help desk is playing "guess which platform this lives on."

Trap #8:
Your SOPs are VMware-native

Every escalation path. Every monitoring alert. Every backup verification script. Every disaster recovery runbook.

Built for VMware. Optimized for VMware. Written in VMware-speak.

Now you're on Nutanix. Or Proxmox . Or OpenShift. And your team is looking at you saying, "None of our runbooks work anymore."

Why not just rebuild?

Rebuilding your operational playbooks takes longer than the migration itself, because it's not just documentation—it's institutional knowledge, tribal wisdom, and 15 years of learned behaviors.

CATEGORY 4: Organizational traps (change management-level)

Trap #9:
Your teams are bifurcated indefinitely

For years—not months—your people will be supporting two environments simultaneously. VMware AND the new platform. While also executing the migration.

That's three jobs. Same headcount.

How long can your team sustain that before burnout? Before attrition? Before the best people leave for companies that aren't asking them to work 60-hour weeks for 3 years?

The organization reality

You're not just migrating infrastructure. You're asking your team to maintain the old world, learn the new world, and build the bridge between them—all at once.

Trap #10:
Your partners aren't certified

Your systems integrator knows VMware. They've been supporting your VMware environment for a decade.

Do they know Nutanix AHV? Proxmox? OpenShift virtualization?

Probably not. Which means you're either retraining them (parallel workstream, unbudgeted), or replacing them (RFP process, transition period, knowledge transfer).

The partnership trap:

The vendors you trust don't know the platforms you're moving to. And the vendors who know those platforms don't know your environment.

So what do you do?

Most vendors will tell you to pick a destination and commit. “Come to Nutanix.” “Come to AWS.” “Come to OpenShift.” We’re going to tell you something different:

Stop thinking “hypervisor-first.”

The organizations succeeding at VMware diversification aren’t the ones who picked the perfect alternative. They’re the ones who built optionality.

They started with a cloud management platform (CMP) that sits above VMware, Nutanix, Proxmox, AWS, Azure, and everything else. They use it to experiment. To test workloads on different platforms. To move in slices, not all at once. To change their minds without blowing up operations.

They kept Broadcom at arm’s length while they figured out what actually works.

Because here’s the truth: You’re not getting off VMware in 12 months. But you can start building leverage in 12 weeks.

What’s next

If you recognized yourself in three or more of these traps, you’re not alone. And you’re probably realizing that your current approach needs adjustment.

If you’d like talk to someone who’s seen this movie before:

Book a conversation with our team

We’re not going to pitch you on a hypervisor. We’re going to walk you through how companies like Cigna and Nationwide are navigating this—gradually, safely, and without blowing up their operations.

About this guide

This document is based on field research with Fortune 1000 infrastructure leaders actively navigating VMware transitions following the Broadcom acquisition. The traps outlined here represent real challenges encountered by organizations 12-36 months into their diversification effort.

CLOUDBOLT