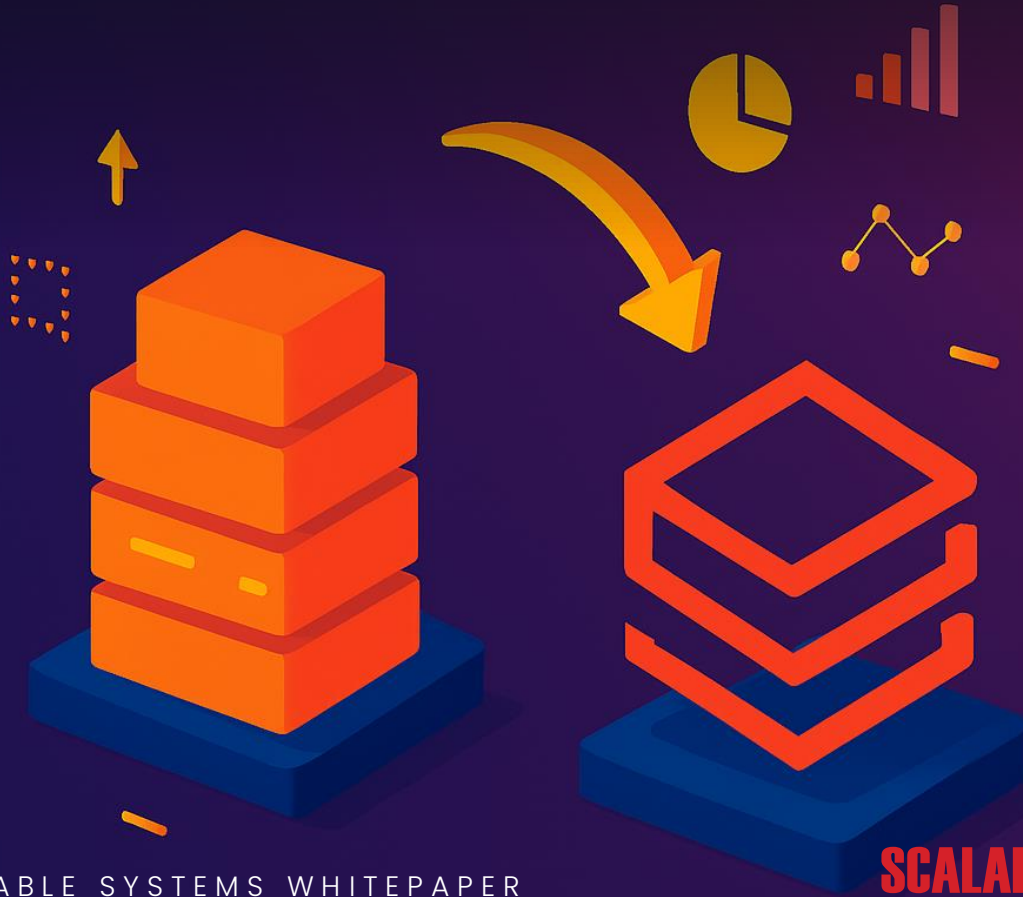


FROM LEGACY TO LAKEHOUSE:

A Comprehensive Guide To Databricks Migration



A SCALABLE SYSTEMS WHITEPAPER

SCALABLE
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Innovation



TABLE OF CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	02
INTRODUCTION.....	03
WHY MIGRATE TO DATABRICKS?	04
TRADITIONAL DATA PLATFORMS VS. DATABRICKS.....	05
COMMON DATA MIGRATION CHALLENGES.....	06
A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO DATABRICKS MIGRATION.....	07
STRATEGIC MIGRATION ROADMAP.....	08
THE SCALABLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO DATABRICKS MIGRATION.....	09
MODERNIZING LEGACY DATA PLATFORMS WITH DATABRICKS.....	10
WORKLOAD MIGRATION BEST PRACTICES.....	12
SECURITY & COMPLIANCE IN DATABRICKS MIGRATION.....	14
INTEGRATION WITH CLOUD & ENTERPRISE TOOLS.....	15
COST OPTIMIZATION & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....	15
MIGRATION USE CASES.....	16
CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS.....	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

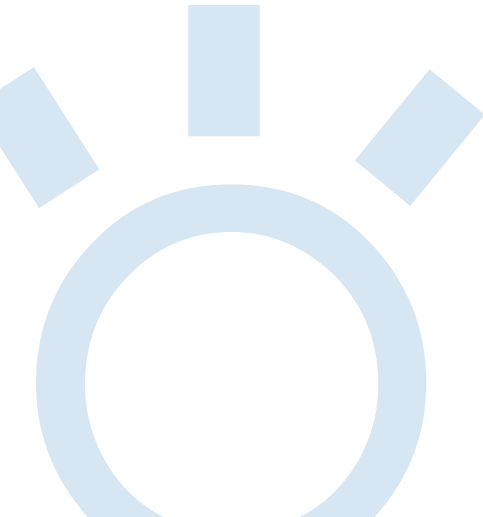
Data has evolved into the cornerstone of enterprise innovation, driving competitive advantage and strategic decision-making. Yet, many organizations struggle with fragmented architectures, escalating costs, and the complexities of managing disparate data sources. To overcome these challenges, enterprises are transitioning to modern cloud-native platforms, with Databricks leading the way in redefining data engineering, analytics, and AI workloads.

However, migration is not merely a technical shift—it demands careful orchestration to maintain data integrity, optimize performance, and ensure seamless integration with existing ecosystems. Businesses must address concerns around downtime, security compliance, and workload re-architecture to extract maximum value from Databricks.

This whitepaper offers a strategic blueprint for a successful migration, outlining:

- The imperatives for migrating to Databricks – How its unified lakehouse architecture enhances scalability, governance, and AI-readiness.
- Key challenges organizations face – Mitigating risks such as data duplication, system disruptions, and regulatory compliance.
- A structured migration framework – A phased approach covering assessment, execution, validation, and optimization.
- Industry-specific use cases – Demonstrating real-world benefits across financial services, healthcare, retail, and manufacturing.

With deep expertise in cloud data modernization, Scalable Systems ensures a seamless, risk-mitigated migration, leveraging automated ETL modernization, intelligent performance tuning, and advanced security frameworks. By partnering with Scalable Systems, enterprises can unlock the full potential of Databricks, driving innovation, operational efficiency, and AI-powered transformation at scale.



I INTRODUCTION

Enterprises today grapple with data silos, complex ETL processes, and the rising costs of legacy infrastructure, making it increasingly difficult to extract actionable insights. As data volumes expand and AI adoption accelerates, businesses require a scalable, high-performance platform that seamlessly integrates analytics, machine learning, and governance. Databricks emerges as the ideal solution, offering a unified lakehouse architecture that combines the flexibility of data lakes with the reliability of data warehouses. By consolidating structured and unstructured data, Databricks enables faster decision-making, cost efficiency, and AI-driven innovation.

Yet, migrating to Databricks is not just a technical transition—it demands a well-planned strategy to ensure data integrity, minimize downtime, and optimize performance. Organizations must navigate infrastructure compatibility, workload re-architecture, and compliance requirements to achieve a frictionless migration. This whitepaper provides a comprehensive roadmap, highlighting key migration drivers, common challenges, strategic best practices, and real-world use cases. It also explores how Scalable Systems accelerates the migration journey, ensuring a seamless, cost-effective, and risk-free transition to Databricks while maximizing long-term business value.



WHY MIGRATE TO DATABRICKS?

The Case for Databricks Migration

Modern enterprises are drowning in data but starving for insights. As organizations generate vast volumes of structured and unstructured data, traditional data platforms struggle to deliver speed, scalability, and AI-driven analytics. To remain competitive, businesses require a unified, cloud-native solution that can handle diverse workloads while optimizing costs. Databricks addresses these challenges head-on, offering a powerful, AI-powered platform designed for performance, flexibility, and governance.

By migrating to Databricks, enterprises can unlock:

- **UNIFIED LAKEHOUSE ARCHITECTURE**
Seamlessly integrate structured and unstructured data for a single source of truth.
- **AUTO-SCALING & PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION**
Dynamically allocate resources to minimize costs without compromising speed.
- **AI/ML INTEGRATION WITH MLFLOW**
Enable scalable machine learning and automated model management.
- **ADVANCED GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE**
Ensure robust security with role-based access control (RBAC), encryption, and audit trails.
- **REAL-TIME & BATCH PROCESSING**
Accelerate data-to-insight cycles with streaming analytics and efficient batch workloads.

I TRADITIONAL DATA PLATFORMS VS. DATABRICKS

Legacy data systems often come with high maintenance costs, rigid architectures, and performance bottlenecks that slow down innovation. Compared to these traditional platforms, Databricks offers significant advantages in terms of efficiency, scalability, and AI readiness:

Feature	Traditional Data Platforms	Databricks
Performance & Cost	High TCO due to inefficient compute and storage usage.	Lower TCO with optimized, cloud-based resource allocation.
Scalability	Fixed infrastructure with limited elasticity.	Auto-scaling clusters that adjust to workload demands.
AI/ML Readiness	Requires third-party integrations for ML capabilities.	Built-in MLflow for streamlined AI/ML operations.
Security & Compliance	Fragmented governance controls and security risks.	Enterprise-grade compliance with end-to-end encryption and RBAC.

Migrating to Databricks is not just an upgrade—it is a strategic shift towards a more intelligent, cost-efficient, and future-ready data ecosystem.

COMMON DATA MIGRATION CHALLENGES

Migrating enterprise data platforms is a high-stakes initiative that requires careful planning and execution. While the benefits of moving to Databricks are substantial, organizations often encounter significant hurdles during migration. Addressing these challenges proactively ensures a smooth, secure, and disruption-free transition.

- **DATA INTEGRITY RISKS**

Ensuring data accuracy, consistency, and completeness is a critical aspect of migration. Data loss, duplication, or corruption can occur due to improper mapping, schema mismatches, or failed transfers. Without robust validation mechanisms, organizations risk compromised analytics, faulty AI models, and unreliable business insights.

- **DOWNTIME & BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS**

Unplanned outages during migration can impact business operations, leading to productivity losses and service disruptions. Enterprises relying on real-time analytics and transactional data pipelines must ensure a zero-downtime strategy to maintain business continuity. A well-structured phased migration approach helps mitigate this risk.

- **SECURITY & COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

Data migration involves moving sensitive enterprise data across environments, increasing exposure to potential breaches and regulatory non-compliance. Industries governed by GDPR, HIPAA, SOC 2, and other regulations must ensure end-to-end encryption, robust access controls, and audit trails to maintain compliance throughout the migration process.

- **COMPLEX INTEGRATIONS**

Legacy systems often have deeply embedded ETL pipelines, third-party applications, and custom workflows that need to be seamlessly integrated into the new Databricks environment. Without careful planning, interoperability issues can slow down migration, requiring extensive re-engineering of existing processes.



Successfully overcoming these challenges requires a strategic, well-executed migration plan that minimizes risks, safeguards data integrity, and ensures a seamless transition to Databricks without operational setbacks.

A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO DATABRICKS MIGRATION

Migrating to Databricks requires a systematic and strategic approach to minimize risks, ensure data integrity, and optimize performance. A well-defined migration framework enables enterprises to transition seamlessly while maintaining business continuity and compliance.

KEY MIGRATION PHASES

▪ ASSESSMENT & PLANNING

A successful migration begins with thorough assessment and planning. This phase involves defining the scope, timeline, and total cost of ownership (TCO) while identifying potential risks and dependencies. A detailed migration roadmap ensures alignment with business objectives and technical requirements.

▪ ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

To fully leverage Databricks, enterprises must optimize infrastructure, security, and data workflows. This step involves designing a scalable, high-performance architecture, ensuring seamless integration with existing cloud platforms, and establishing security policies such as role-based access control (RBAC) and encryption standards.

▪ MIGRATION EXECUTION

This is the core phase, where ETL modernization, data transformation, and workload migration take place. The approach can vary between a big bang migration or an incremental trickle migration depending on business needs. Automated tools help validate schema mapping, manage dependencies, and ensure a smooth data transfer.

▪ TESTING & VALIDATION

Ensuring data integrity, consistency, and performance benchmarks is crucial post-migration. Comprehensive data reconciliation, query performance testing, and security validation confirm that Databricks meets business and regulatory requirements. Any discrepancies are addressed before the full-scale deployment.

▪ OPTIMIZATION & SCALING

Once migration is complete, enterprises must focus on governance, cost optimization, and automation. Implementing performance monitoring, resource auto-scaling, and AI-driven analytics helps organizations maximize Databricks' capabilities while keeping costs under control.

STRATEGIC MIGRATION ROADMAP

A phased approach reduces risk and ensures smooth execution.

- **DISCOVERY & INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT**

Analyze the current data ecosystem, dependencies, and performance bottlenecks to define migration requirements.

- **RISK MITIGATION PLANNING**

Identify potential challenges, implement fail-safes, and establish rollback strategies to minimize downtime.

- **PILOT MIGRATION & PERFORMANCE TESTING**

Begin with a small-scale migration of representative datasets to validate data accuracy, query performance, and system compatibility.

- **FULL-SCALE MIGRATION & CONTINUOUS OPTIMIZATION**

Gradually scale the migration while implementing governance frameworks, monitoring system health, and fine-tuning resource utilization.



By following this structured, step-by-step approach, enterprises can modernize their data architecture with Databricks while ensuring a seamless, secure, and cost-effective migration.

THE SCALABLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO DATABRICKS MIGRATION

Scalable Systems follows a proven, structured methodology to ensure a seamless, risk-free, and cost-optimized migration to Databricks. Our approach prioritizes data integrity, performance optimization, and business continuity, enabling organizations to unlock the full potential of a unified, AI-driven data platform.

01. ASSESSMENT & PLANNING

The foundation of a successful migration lies in thorough assessment and strategic planning. This phase includes:

- Evaluating the existing data landscape, dependencies, and business objectives to align migration goals with enterprise needs.
- Identifying potential risks, security challenges, and compliance requirements, followed by developing a robust migration strategy and risk mitigation plan.
- Estimating total cost of ownership (TCO) and ensuring that the migration is financially viable while delivering long-term benefits.

02. DATA PREPARATION & OPTIMIZATION

Before initiating migration, Scalable Systems focuses on data readiness and optimization to ensure seamless integration with Databricks. This involves:

- Data cleansing, transformation, and schema mapping to enhance data quality and compatibility.
- Optimizing ETL workflows, indexing strategies, and performance tuning to accelerate queries and ensure efficient data processing.
- Implementing security frameworks such as role-based access control (RBAC), encryption policies, and compliance mechanisms to safeguard sensitive data.

03.

**MIGRATION
EXECUTION**

Before initiating migration, Scalable Systems focuses on data readiness and optimization to ensure seamless integration with Databricks. This involves:

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04.

**POST-MIGRATION VALIDATION
& OPTIMIZATION**

Once the data has been migrated, ongoing validation and optimization ensure that organizations maximize the benefits of Databricks. This includes:

- Comprehensive performance monitoring to fine-tune clusters, auto-scaling configurations, and resource allocation.
- Governance and compliance enforcement to maintain data security, regulatory adherence, and access control policies.
- Training and enablement for business users, ensuring they can fully leverage Databricks' AI/ML capabilities, real-time analytics, and data-driven insights.



By following this structured, phased approach, Scalable Systems ensures a smooth, disruption-free migration to Databricks, empowering enterprises with a high-performance, cost-efficient, and AI-ready data ecosystem.

MODERNIZING LEGACY DATA PLATFORMS WITH **DATABRICKS**

Legacy data platforms often struggle to keep pace with the demands of real-time analytics, AI-driven insights, and cloud scalability. Migrating to Databricks enables organizations to modernize their data ecosystems, enhancing performance, cost efficiency, and compliance.

ASSESSING EXISTING SYSTEMS FOR MIGRATION READINESS

A thorough assessment of the existing data infrastructure is critical to ensure a smooth and successful transition. This involves:

- Identifying bottlenecks in legacy data warehouses and ETL pipelines, such as performance limitations, scalability issues, and high maintenance costs.
- Evaluating data models, schema structures, and workflows to determine compatibility with Databricks' Lakehouse architecture.
- Ensuring compliance with industry regulations such as GDPR, HIPAA, and SOC 2, integrating security measures like data encryption, access controls, and audit trails into the migration plan.
- Calculating Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and estimating ROI, analyzing potential savings in storage, compute costs, and operational efficiency.

ETL MODERNIZATION & DATA TRANSFORMATION

Modernizing Extract, Transform, Load (ETL) processes is a crucial aspect of legacy platform migration. Scalable Systems enables seamless ETL modernization with:

- Automated ETL pipeline migration, reducing manual effort while ensuring minimal downtime and business continuity.
- Schema mapping and data transformation strategies that align legacy formats with Databricks' open, scalable data architecture.
- Incremental and full data migration options, allowing organizations to migrate in phases or execute a complete transition, depending on business needs.
- Real-time data replication to maintain consistency, ensuring that mission-critical applications continue to operate without disruptions during migration.

By modernizing legacy data platforms, enterprises unlock greater scalability, flexibility, and analytical power, paving the way for AI-driven innovation and real-time business intelligence with Databricks.

WORKLOAD MIGRATION BEST PRACTICES

Migrating workloads to Databricks requires a structured and strategic approach to ensure minimal disruptions, maximum efficiency, and long-term cost savings. By optimizing workloads and leveraging automation, organizations can accelerate migration while maintaining data integrity and performance.

OPTIMIZING WORKLOADS FOR DATABRICKS

Successful workload migration starts with careful planning and prioritization:

- Identifying and classifying workloads based on complexity, dependencies, and business impact to establish a phased migration strategy.
- Re-architecting existing workloads for cloud efficiency by leveraging Databricks' Lakehouse architecture to reduce operational costs and enhance performance.
- Implementing a phased migration approach to prevent disruptions, allowing for controlled testing and incremental validation.
- Adopting a security- and governance-first approach to maintain compliance, enforce access controls, and protect sensitive data throughout the migration process.

ACCELERATING MIGRATION WITH AUTOMATION TESTING

- Automation plays a key role in expediting workload migration while ensuring accuracy and consistency:
- Automated schema mapping and data transformation eliminate manual effort and reduce errors, streamlining data compatibility with Databricks.
- AI-driven data quality checks enhance accuracy by identifying anomalies, inconsistencies, and missing data before migration.
- Continuous testing frameworks validate data integrity, system performance, and security configurations to ensure a seamless transition.

PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION POST-MIGRATION

After migration, performance tuning is essential to maximize the benefits of Databricks' cloud-native architecture. Optimizing query execution, leveraging intelligent caching, and implementing real-time monitoring ensure long-term efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

- Auto-scaling clusters dynamically adjust compute resources based on workload demands, ensuring cost-efficient scalability.
- Optimized query execution and caching improve response times, reducing latency for analytics and AI workloads.
- Delta Lake implementation enables seamless data consistency, versioning, and ACID transactions, ensuring reliable data governance.
- Automated performance monitoring provides real-time insights into resource utilization, query efficiency, and cost control, helping organizations fine-tune their Databricks environment for maximum ROI.

By following these best practices, enterprises can ensure a smooth workload migration while achieving long-term performance, security, and operational excellence in Databricks.



Auto-scaling clusters to match workload demands



Optimized query execution & caching for faster performance



Delta Lake implementation for seamless data consistency



Automated performance monitoring and cost control

SECURITY & COMPLIANCE IN DATABRICKS MIGRATION

Migrating to Databricks requires a strong focus on security and regulatory compliance to protect sensitive data and maintain industry standards. A well-architected security framework ensures data integrity, confidentiality, and governance throughout the migration process.

STRENGTHENING DATA PROTECTION WITH ENCRYPTION & ACCESS CONTROLS

- Implementing end-to-end encryption secures data both at rest and in transit, preventing unauthorized access and data breaches.
- Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) and fine-grained security policies restrict data access to authorized users, ensuring least-privilege principles are enforced.
- Secure authentication mechanisms, such as multi-factor authentication (MFA) and integration with identity providers, further enhance access control.

ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH INDUSTRY REGULATIONS

- Databricks provides built-in governance capabilities to align with key regulatory frameworks, including GDPR, HIPAA, SOC 2, and CCPA.
- Automated audit logging and monitoring enable organizations to track data access, modifications, and security events for compliance reporting.
- Data masking and anonymization techniques help protect personally identifiable information (PII) while maintaining analytical capabilities.

PROACTIVE THREAT DETECTION & RISK MITIGATION

- AI-driven anomaly detection continuously monitors data patterns and user behavior to identify potential security threats before they escalate.
- Automated compliance checks ensure that security policies remain up to date and aligned with evolving regulatory requirements.
- Incident response frameworks allow for rapid threat mitigation, minimizing the risk of data loss or system vulnerabilities.

INTEGRATION WITH CLOUD & ENTERPRISE TOOLS

Seamless integration is key to maximizing the value of Databricks in enterprise environments. With its open architecture and extensive support for cloud and analytics tools, Databricks enables organizations to unify their data ecosystem without disrupting existing workflows.

MULTI-CLOUD COMPATIBILITY FOR FLEXIBILITY & REDUNDANCY

- Databricks supports deployment across AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud, allowing businesses to leverage multi-cloud strategies for redundancy, failover, and cost optimization.
- Cross-cloud data sharing ensures interoperability, enabling enterprises to manage distributed workloads efficiently.

CONNECTING DATABRICKS WITH BI & ANALYTICS PLATFORMS

- Native integrations with Tableau, Power BI, Looker, and other visualization tools enable real-time insights and decision-making.
- Databricks' SQL Analytics provides a high-performance environment for business intelligence workloads, eliminating the need for external data warehouses.

ENTERPRISE-GRADE APIS & SERVERLESS DEPLOYMENTS

- Robust APIs simplify connectivity with CRM, ERP, and other enterprise applications, ensuring smooth data flow across the ecosystem.
- Kubernetes-based and serverless deployments provide agility, optimizing resource usage while ensuring scalability and resilience.

By integrating seamlessly with existing enterprise tools and cloud environments, Databricks enhances efficiency, accelerates analytics, and fosters a connected data infrastructure.

COST OPTIMIZATION & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Optimizing costs is a critical aspect of cloud-based data platforms. Databricks offers several built-in mechanisms to control expenses while maintaining high performance and scalability.

OPTIMIZED CLUSTER MANAGEMENT FOR COST EFFICIENCY

- Dynamic cluster auto-scaling ensures that resources adjust based on workload demand, reducing idle compute costs.
- Spot instance usage on AWS and preemptible VMs on GCP help lower expenses for transient workloads without impacting performance.
- Reserved instance purchasing provides predictable pricing for long-term workloads, reducing overall expenditure.

STORAGE OPTIMIZATION & BUDGET CONTROL

- Intelligent storage tiering enables organizations to balance performance and cost by moving less frequently accessed data to lower-cost storage.
- Real-time cost monitoring dashboards offer visibility into resource usage, helping teams stay within budget and avoid unexpected overages.
- Automated alerts notify stakeholders of unusual cost spikes, ensuring proactive budget management.

MIGRATION USE CASES

Enterprises across industries are migrating to Databricks to unlock greater efficiency, scalability, and advanced analytics capabilities. Whether transitioning from traditional data warehouses or modern cloud platforms, Databricks provides a unified and cost-effective environment for AI-driven insights and big data processing.

COMMON MIGRATION PATHS

Organizations migrate to Databricks from various data platforms to improve performance, reduce costs, and integrate AI/ML workflows. Some of the most common migration paths include:

- **Snowflake to Databricks** – Organizations looking for a more cost-effective solution with built-in AI and ML capabilities migrate from Snowflake to Databricks, reducing TCO while gaining flexibility.
- **Amazon Redshift to Databricks** – Redshift users migrate to Databricks to overcome scalability limitations, benefit from the lakehouse architecture, and enhance real-time analytics.
- **Amazon EMR to Databricks** – Migrating from EMR provides a unified, cost-optimized processing environment with improved governance, performance tuning, and lower operational overhead.
- **Hadoop to Databricks** – Many enterprises transition from Hadoop to Databricks to modernize legacy big data infrastructures, eliminating complex maintenance while leveraging cloud-native efficiencies.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC MIGRATION BENEFITS

Databricks enables industry leaders to harness AI-driven analytics and real-time processing to drive innovation and operational excellence.

- **Financial Services** – Real-time fraud detection, risk analytics, and regulatory reporting become more efficient with Databricks' scalable data processing and machine learning integration.
- **Healthcare & Life Sciences** – AI-powered diagnostics, genomics research, and patient data analytics improve with Databricks' ability to process large-scale medical datasets while ensuring compliance.
- **Retail & eCommerce** – Businesses leverage Databricks for personalized marketing, demand forecasting, and real-time inventory optimization to enhance customer experiences and operational efficiency.
- **Manufacturing** – Predictive maintenance, IoT-driven insights, and supply chain optimization improve with Databricks' real-time data streaming and analytics capabilities.

I CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Migrating to Databricks is more than just a technology shift—it is a strategic move toward a scalable, AI-powered data ecosystem. By embracing Databricks, organizations can streamline operations, enhance performance, and optimize costs while ensuring security and compliance. With its unified lakehouse architecture, advanced governance features, and integrated AI/ML capabilities, Databricks provides a future-ready platform for data-driven innovation.

A successful migration requires a structured approach, from assessment and planning to execution and optimization. Scalable Systems ensures a seamless transition, minimizing risks and maximizing the benefits of Databricks. Our experts tailor migration strategies to align with your business goals, ensuring a cost-effective and high-performing data environment.

Take the next step toward a smarter data future—contact Scalable Systems today for a personalized migration consultation.



About Scalable AI

Scalable AI empowers organizations to transform complex data into strategic outcomes. By leveraging advanced analytics, our AI solutions enhance decision-making, improve operational efficiency, and drive measurable business value enterprise-wide.

www.scalableai.com

About Scalable Systems

Scalable Systems is a Data, Analytics & AI Company focused on vertical-specific innovative solutions. By providing next-generation technology solutions and services, we help organizations to identify risks & opportunities, and achieve sales and operational excellence to gain an innovative edge.

www.scalable-systems.com