

SMB Quick Guide:

Is Cloud Computing Right for Your Business?

Cloud-based computing is one of the hottest topics in IT circles, as businesses of all sizes look for more innovative, efficient ways to do business while reducing the high cost of infrastructure. But what exactly do we mean when we talk about the cloud? What's real and what's hype? And what does it mean for your business?

In a recent [video roundtable](#), Qwest's Chief Technology Officer Pieter Poll said cloud computing is really just another tool in the toolkit. "One size does not fit all; you really want to focus on what the mission is for your organization before you decide how you're going to use cloud," he says.

There are different types of cloud computing. One is software-as-a-service (SaaS), which includes applications such as Google Docs and Salesforce.com. According to Nemertes, 75% of companies are already using some form of SaaS. Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) is another cloud computing model, which includes hardware solutions such as servers and storage. Less than 10% of companies currently use IaaS, but adoption is growing fast. It's easy to see why.

Three Ways Cloud Computing Can Help Your Business Grow:

1. Reduce costs and increase efficiency.

In the past, if your business needed a particular IT capability, you essentially had two choices: build it or buy it. But with cloud computing you don't have to own the infrastructure to get the benefits. This allows you to minimize capital expenditures and pay only for what you need, when you need it.

The cloud also enables small and midsize businesses to take advantage of enterprise-level technologies, from collaboration and business continuity tools to disaster recovery and managed security services. Often, best-in-class capabilities are just a mouse click away.

"Cloud becomes a leveler, even for the smallest of businesses, by providing capabilities that were not previously within their reach," says Martin Capurro, Qwest Director of Applications and Infrastructure. "And it enables both business and IT to focus on what really matters."

2. Adapt to growth and changing needs.

For business leaders what matters is profitability and growing the business. And one of the biggest challenges is scaling to meet changing demands without building—or spending—more than they need. In its Executive Brief "Is Cloud Computing Right for You?"¹ IDC notes, "As business processes such as sales, customer service, product development, and internal communications/collaboration become ever more IT and network dependent, enterprises need more dynamic IT infrastructures to respond to new business opportunities."

3. Make the most of limited IT resources.

Especially for SMB IT managers, it can be challenging to get beyond time-consuming tasks such as sourcing, buying and deploying computers and networks. Freeing IT staff to focus on more strategic business activities is another benefit of cloud computing, the IDC report says, giving them "more scope to innovate on revenue-generating and/or cost-saving IT projects."²

¹"Is Cloud Computing Right for You?", August 2010, adapted from "Telcos in the Cloud: Claiming a Seat at the Table" by Melanie Posey, IDC #219439

²Ibid



Qwest Vice President for National Network Services Eric Bozich says the bottom line is that cloud computing provides a new way to consume IT resources—a way that enables you to deal with your competitors, take care of your customers and expect greater efficiencies.

cases and criteria for assessing whether the cloud is right for you, download the full IDC report, compliments of CenturyLink Business.

Is the Cloud Right For You?





“All types of companies—enterprises, SMBs, and ‘cloud-native’ start-ups—can leverage IaaS for some aspect of their IT infrastructures,” according to IDC. However, the cloud sourcing model may not always be appropriate and, ultimately, application requirements and business objectives should drive your decision-making.

“Cloud computing services are not an all-or-nothing proposition,” the report concludes. “At the end of the day, IaaS provides enterprises with simplified, performance-oriented IT infrastructure solutions with enhanced scalability and selfservice/on-demand features.”³

For more in-depth insights, including use

Additional Resources

Cloud Computing Roundtable—Video Series

-  **Part 1:** Clarity in the Cloud »
-  **Part 2:** A Secure Cloud Computing Strategy »
-  **Part 3:** Connections in the Cloud »
-  **Part 4:** Bringing It Down to Earth »

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IDC Executive Brief:

 “Is Cloud Computing Right for You?”
[Download now »](#)

Learn how a cloud-based approach to IT infrastructure (IaaS) can enable a dynamic infrastructure that flexibly supports key business needs.

³ Ibid

