



Cloud Ease
CONSULTING



Moving your business to the Cloud

Fact or Fiction?



Introduction

The cloud, perhaps one of the most commonly used business terms, has changed the way we work and using cloud applications has many benefits for your business. LinkedIn, Dropbox, Skype and Google Apps are all terms that have become part of our workday in a very short period of time. So how does the cloud work? In its simplest form, the cloud refers to a centralised location on the Internet where data and applications are stored; meaning that where there is Internet, there is the cloud.

The cloud has many features, but most importantly it allows businesses to be more responsive and agile, adapting to new trends and opportunities to drive innovation and sales opportunities.

From an IT perspective, the cloud may also reduce costs for set-up, operation and maintenance, allowing business owners to focus on their core business instead of IT. The cloud has the possibility to transform the way your business operates, yes, it's true!



Although at Cloud Ease we are already convinced about the possibilities and opportunities that the cloud has to offer, we know that there is a lot of misinformation about the cloud out there, so we want to set things straight.

With this eBook, we outline what is fact and what is fiction when it comes to the cloud and where the opportunities exist for your business to move to the cloud.

1. The cloud is difficult to set up

Because the cloud is not a tangible product, it often seems, for the inexperienced amongst us, something that is difficult and that can be only used by 'experts'. On the contrary, you don't need to have a technical background to set up and manage the cloud.

However, as a business owner, a decision about where you spend your time is critical. So, the key question is should you be spending your time setting up new cloud applications or on something else in your business? The advantage of engaging Cloud Ease is that we can easily and efficiently move your business to the cloud, while you get on and work on other business activities, and then also provide ongoing support after the launch.

Another concern is that implementing new cloud systems will cause significant interruptions to the day-to-day operations of your business. Historically, implementing new IT systems has meant weeks or months of implementation, however with many cloud solutions, they can be deployed within days or even hours. This makes cloud technology much more agile and helps you get to market faster.

Most businesses sometimes also assume that moving to the cloud makes it more difficult to access day-to-day business data, perhaps because it is stored in the cloud, and not on a hard drive of a computer. However, the cloud allows you to access your data on almost any device that is connected to the Internet. That means tablets, smartphones laptops, watches etc....

The cloud is not difficult to set up and makes your data more accessible.

At Cloud Ease we are experts in helping you getting started with cloud services.

2. Setting up the cloud is cheaper than hardware

One of the many advantages of moving your business to the cloud is that it can reduce overheads related to managing and maintaining IT systems. With the cloud, there is no need to purchase traditional IT servers, which in the past were often needed when new software and systems were being deployed.

Also with cloud software, new updates are generally included in your contract, at no additional cost. Which means, chances are, you do not need to procure, install or configure any new hardware or pay for future software updates. Also, traditional IT systems need much more electricity than cloud applications; therefore there is an opportunity to reduce your energy consumption.

By using the resources that the cloud service has to offer, you can run your business on a utility based pricing model. This means that you only pay for the services that you actually use and you can monitor your usage. This gives you the ability to spread out your costs over time. The cloud also provides an option to start small and scale as you grow and change.

There are also other cost benefits, which include:

- Streamlined operations
- No need to build, implement or own IT infrastructure
- Reduced labour overheads
- Decreased need for an internal IT department or a specific IT expertise.

The cloud gives every business the opportunity to access sophisticated IT resources that otherwise would have been unaffordable. This helps you in benchmarking and competing with other large companies in the market. It makes sense that small businesses are the biggest users of cloud services.

3. Using the cloud brings more risks

There are often concerns amongst business owners about the security of data that is stored in the cloud and that it isn't 100 percent reliable – or may have downtimes when the data is not available. We can see why this may be an initial feeling as it may feel that your data is floating in the 'sky'. However, it is fair to say that using the cloud is just as reliable, or perhaps even more reliable, than using 'normal' software or hardware. What the cloud does offer is many more ways to protect your data to ensure that it remains accessible and secure at all times.

For example, cloud applications have high security infrastructure with regular security updates. This includes up to date versions of software, upgrades to servers and computer processes and the 24/7 monitoring of threats. The good news is all of this is automated in the background and isn't something you need to worry about or action.

As you know, it's important to back up your data. The cloud makes this easy and possible.

By having your data stored in the cloud, your data has been backed up in a secure and safe location even during a power failure, malfunction or a natural disaster.

By storing your data in the cloud, you can access your data again quickly which allows you to get back to business as usual, minimising downtime and any loss of productivity.

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4. The cloud is suitable for every company

Some businesses, especially smaller ones, believe that the cloud is only suitable for large companies. However, the customisability of applications is certainly one of the perks of using the cloud.

The cloud allows easy scalability – you can scale the infrastructure up and down to meet your customers' demand. This flexibility allows you to change your business as your needs change. This allows you to plan easily for growth without any significant up-front investment. You start small and gradually increase your usage over time.

For example, using a cloud based customer support software may also give your business similar functionality to that used by some of the largest call centre businesses around the world.

Furthermore, using cloud technology may also give the impression to your customers that the business is much larger than it actually is, and that in itself, may be a significant advantage.

The ability for your business to access enterprise level applications gives you a unique ability to scale up and down easily, as well as real competitive selling advantages.

5. Working efficiently with the cloud is difficult

Working with cloud applications increases your flexibility to access work-related files and information. Like to set up an office in another state? That's easy to do. Looking at hiring new staff as remote workers? That's possible as well.

The cloud makes your business a mobile office and it allows you to take your office with you virtually while you are off-site and your employees can be more flexible as well.

The cloud works especially well when project teams need common access to data across different locations. Compared to using a filing system where employees have to send files back and forth over email – with one person being responsible for a 'master copy' – document control and collaboration becomes easy.

Also, the ability to connect various software applications together to streamline the business process is a real bottom line plus. The integration of other connected services like bank feeds and exchange rates also allows for real time information to be available to you on any device anywhere.

At Cloud Ease, we can help your business be more agile and enable you to respond more rapidly to changing technology trends without investing in new IT solutions and infrastructure.

Set up your cloud today!

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