DOING MORE WITH LESS

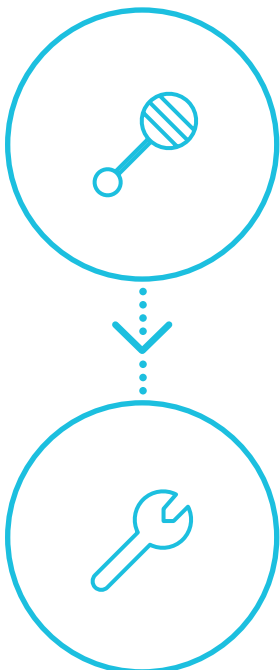## How cloud computing can unleash business potential

A few years back, the idea of hosting business-critical IT services over the Web would have seemed far-fetched. Now it's a reality.

Everyone is talking about the Cloud – and everyone seems to have a different definition of it. The 'Cloud' is essentially the Internet, but more **specifically,** Cloud computing refers to consumer and business products, services and solutions delivered and consumed in real-time over the Internet. Users have access to data and applications anywhere and at any time, provided there is an Internet connection.

"THE CLOUD WILL TRANSIT FROM TOY TO NECCESSITY WITH
SERVICES AND NEW SECURITY SYSTEMS EMERGING TO SUPPORT
AN INCREASINGLY MOBILE AND FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE."

Source: Techrepublic.com

INTRODUCTION

Cloud computing has become a hot topic in IT and business. As with any new paradigm, it can be hard sorting the substance from the 'sell'. Small and mid-sized businesses, with their tightly managed IT budgets, need to be especially careful when contemplating a radical change in the way they manage computing.
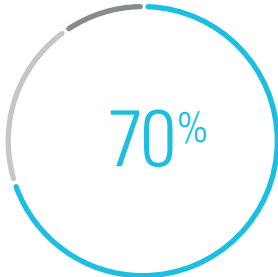
The right approach lies in understanding the technological trends and business practices that have led many organisations to rethink their relationship with IT.

Over time, technology has become increasingly interconnected with business productivity. To compete in today's fast-moving marketplace, businesses need to respond to any situation almost instantly. With the advent of mobile technology, the expectations of flexibility and connectedness are constantly being redefined. As such, access to the tools and services required for mobility and efficiency are vital components to an effective workforce.
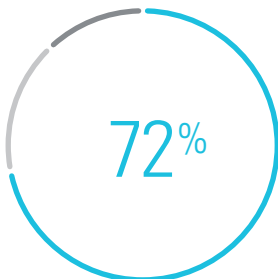
In the future, business productivity will become even more dependent on technology as we progress from an 'Internet of Things' toward an 'Internet of Everything', in which people, products and data are all constantly connected. This represents substantial business opportunities, but also comes with a requirement for businesses to adapt to the changing demands of technology.
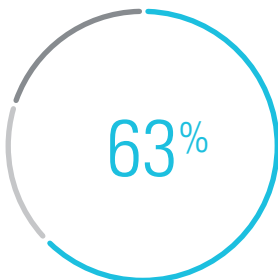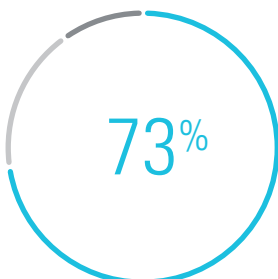
USING THE CLOUD HAS:

70%

SIMPLIFIED IT
MANAGEMENT PROCESS

72%

IMPROVED END USER
EXPERIENCE

63%

DECREASED IT
PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES

73%

REDUCED COST
OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Source: theTechJournal.com

TECHNOLOGY AND SMEs
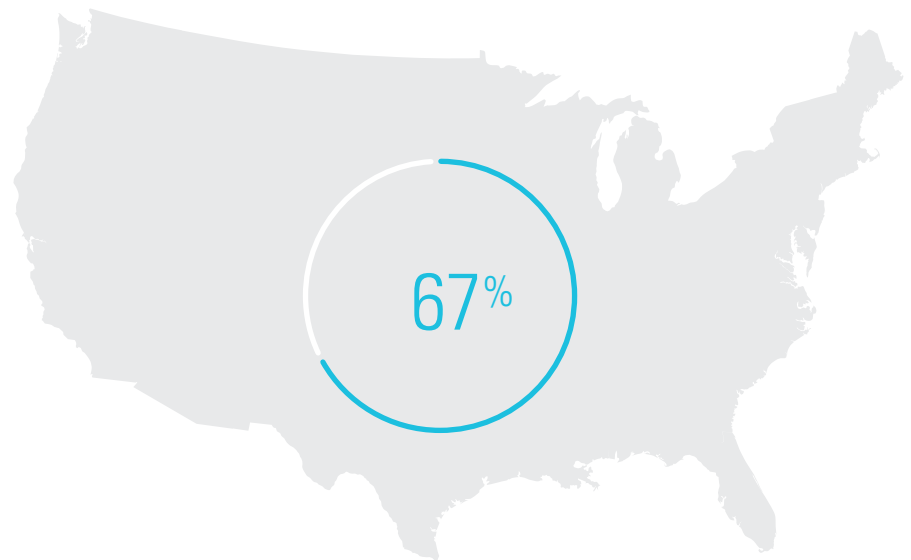
For small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), IT flexibility is the key to extracting the maximum productivity out of a limited workforce. However, the ability of businesses to keep up with technological developments can be constrained by the pressure to reduce costs.

Furthermore, the costs associated with establishing and maintaining an agile and effective IT infrastructure are not easily scalable to SME businesses – placing them at a significant disadvantage compared to larger organisations that can justify the expense of regular and substantial investment in technology. The constant challenge for a SME business is to achieve more with less.

Thankfully, the Cloud makes it possible for SME businesses to compete effectively. By offering a completely scalable, affordable IT solution, the Cloud makes improved accessibility, mobility and performance available to all businesses.

67%

of US businesses use cloud solutions for at least some aspects of productivity.

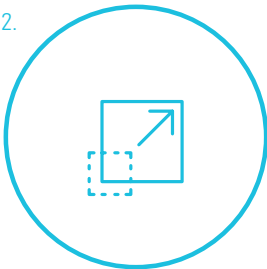AGREE   DISAGREE   NEUTRAL

5 REASONS TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD

1.

1: Enterprise-level infrastructure at small business prices

Cloud computing enables SME businesses to implement enterprise-level infrastructure that may be otherwise unattainable. There is no requirement for complex equipment or dedicated staffing, so the best possible services are available to businesses regardless of size. Cloud solutions ensure that the latest technology and software versions are always available to you, meaning that on-going costs are reduced as in-house maintenance and software upgrades are no longer necessary.

2.

2: Scalability to suit your requirements

Cloud services can be easily scaled as your needs change, as capacity can be increased or decreased to match your business requirements. With continually evolving services, you can be confident that cloud solutions will be able to meet the future requirements of your business.
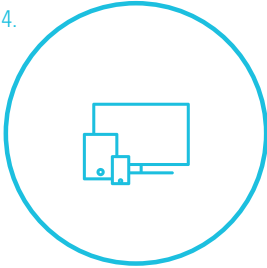
3.

3: Security for your peace of mind

With your critical business data safely stored in a high security facility that adheres to strict security and privacy policies, you can enjoy much greater peace of mind. Access to Cloud services is always through a user authorised and authenticated portal so that no one outside of your business can access your information. For many SME businesses, a Cloud solution can often provide much greater security measures that can be put in place on-premise. For example, Christchurch companies that found their premises destroyed by the 2011 earthquake were nevertheless able to restore their businesses within days, as long as they had access to their data in the Cloud.
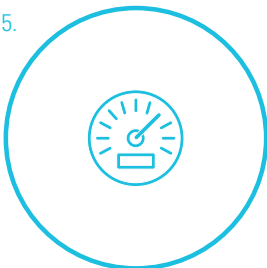
4.

4: Greater accessibility for a more mobile workforce

Cloud computing provides a simple way for businesses to maximise the accessibility and productivity of their workforce. With near constant uptime and on-demand access to data and information from any location, cloud computing offers unparalleled flexibility and mobility.
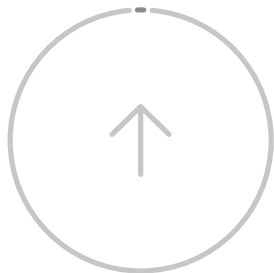
5.

5: Improved productivity and performance

Moving your systems to the Cloud often means a reduction of your business' reliance on ageing IT infrastructures. By reducing the load on your network, your in-house systems can operate at an optimal level, providing the best possible IT experience for your users. Furthermore, these benefits are gained without the need for significant capital expenditure on infrastructure.

Using Cloud services for your business allows you to have an enterprise-level IT infrastructure at a fraction of the cost. Cloud computing can even exceed enterprise-level offerings in flexibility and adaptability. You can improve productivity and network performance while minimising costs. The outcome is maximum business efficiency.

54%

OF IT EXECUTIVES
LISTED CLOUD
SECURITY AS A
TOP PRIORITY

99.9%
BACK-END UPTIME

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CLOUD PROVIDER

With growing operational reliance on Cloud services, selecting the right Cloud service provider has now become an important consideration.

The most appropriate Cloud provider will be one that not only offers a range of Cloud solutions but also has best-of-breed technology and a depth of experience in providing these services.

Solid Service Level Agreement

When your data and applications are hosted in the Cloud, it is vital for your operations that the service provided is robust. A strong Service Level Agreement is a good indicator that a Cloud provider will offer a proven and reliable service

Best-of-breed Technology

The technical expertise behind a Cloud service is absolutely critical. Businesses should be looking for vendors who are using reliable services from well-known technology companies.

Three key elements in Cloud technology excellence are:

- Performance – ensuring the Cloud service minimises network latency while maximising processing capacity.
- Availability – Cloud services should deliver at least 99.9% uptime and come with a financially backed Service Level Agreement.
- Data protection and security – a Cloud provider's single greatest responsibility is to protect your data. Comprehensive physical and virtual security measures must be in place, as well as stringent data encryption methods and backup procedures.

Experience

The management of a Cloud service relies as much on a provider's experience as it does the technology behind it. Proven experience in migrating services across to the Cloud and then managing them effectively is key to providing a robust solution.

Cost effective, not free

When it comes to business communication tools, it is clear that you get what you pay for. A Cloud service must certainly be cost effective, but qualities such as security, control, support, integration and mobility must be given priority. SMEs should ensure they work with a Cloud services provider that is competitively priced but also focuses on providing a suite of professional-grade IT services packaged with support and reliability.

"VIRTUAL IT DEPARTMENTS AND TECH SUPPORT IS GOING TO BE A NEW SECTOR THAT WILL GROW RAPIDLY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A WORKFORCE FOCUSED ON GETTING MORE DONE, WITH LESS, IN A MUCH SHORTER TIME."

Source: techrepublic.com

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM OPTIMUS SYSTEMS

A full range

Optimus Systems offers a full range of Cloud services that can be tailored to meet the requirements of your business and complement your existing network. These solutions include online backups, spam protection, hosted exchange email, hosted servers, and hosted virtual desktops, web-filtering, email archiving, and a file sync and share service.

Focus on uptime

The Cloud services offered by Optimus Systems are supported by at least 99.9% uptime Service Level Agreements - ensuring that the availability of your information and services is almost faultless.

Secure hosting

Optimus Systems protects the security of your critical business information by ensuring it is hosted in quality data centres located around the world, which all have extremely comprehensive physical and digital security procedures. The privacy of your data is ensured as access to cloud services is through a user authorised and authenticated portal. Data is encrypted using military-grade encryption during both upload and download procedures.

Years of experience

With a team of Cloud experts to provide consultation, design and implementation you can be sure that your Cloud computing solutions are based on the wisdom of many engagements with SME clients. Equipped with years of experience working with the Cloud, Optimus Systems can provide the knowledge, skills and technology required to ensure you receive the very best result.

Get started with the Cloud now to begin experiencing the benefits of a more accessible, flexible and affordable IT solution.

ABOUT OPTIMUS SYSTEMS

Optimus Systems was founded in 2002 to provide an approachable, customer focussed, one-stop-shop for the IT needs of small to medium sized businesses. As a trusted technical partner Optimus Systems ensures that a business's IT needs are met and their IT system is an effective and efficient component of their business. With expert knowledge of the latest technologies and Cloud services Optimus Systems aims to improve IT efficiency and reduce overall costs.

With a strong belief in preventing problems before they occur and constantly maintaining the health of a business's IT infrastructure, they are able to deliver optimum performance and maximum uptime. Clients of Optimus Systems find that the proactive approach to IT management delivers a higher level of performance, functionality and stability in a cost effective manner.

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