



For many small business owners, cloud computing is still considered as one of the most recent developments in information technology. This is undoubtedly helping smaller businesses who want to stay abreast in the competitive world.

But considering the common thought process of a non tech savvy entrepreneur, in most cases they consider technology as an alien topic for them. That is the main reason of staying away from the cutting edge technology and considering it as a 'not-for-them' kind of tool. This is a wrong conception and it has to be resolved by knowing more about certain technologies that can really add value to their business. One of such technologies is -- cloud computing.

However, cloud computing is an umbrella term that groups a wide range of computing and hosting services which can be accessed over the internet. However there is one service that is currently making the biggest impact and that is cloud hosting, which has become one of the most popular uses of cloud computing for SMEs.

In simpler terms, this provides immense mobility in business and enables the field workforce become more proactive. This, however, leads to quick decision making and better internal processes etc.

But before jumping into any conclusion, it is important to know more about cloud computing and cloud hosting. What is it about cloud computing and hosting in general, that has got so many small and mid sized business excited towards it? One of the biggest problems facing IT departments in small businesses, especially with regards to cost controlling pressures, is the expenses of running websites and servers. Apart from this a lot of time, growing organizations also face scalability as an issue. When times are good they might need capacity and when times are tougher the entrepreneurs may not need so much capacity. Hence, smaller businesses need a flexible solution. This is best case scenario for Cloud computing and cloud hosting providers.

Cloud based solutions help SME's with these issues. By offering a scalable and a pay-as you-use service, SME's can manage their IT budget without having to spend a huge IT budget.

### Cloud Hosting

To put it simply, Cloud hosting enables the small business to run it's websites or any other computing service on one or more virtual dedicated servers. The main advantages to a small business are it allows a flexible approach to the server management of web portals for the businesses. When required businesses can scale up their capacity or down size the capacity according to demand and situation. As the back end of this cloud based solutions has a much larger bandwidth of capacity, the small business owners need not worry about having to purchase more hardware. This scalability has many benefits for businesses, whatever their size, as they may not have the expertise to know the requirements of their servers.

Some of the technical benefits of being into cloud includes, managing traffic influxes. It becomes very important to websites as this will undoubtedly effect a website's performance. No E-commerce website would like to be down or running slowly when they are busy – the effect may be devastating to a business. For example, if there is a surge of press activity around your organisation, or a social media campaign which really takes off, the servers need to be able to handle the additional traffic that is arriving at the website.

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If the business has either an in-house solution or you outsource their server to an external agency, there are only really three options available to such cases:

Upgrading the account with the existing provider, which could prove costly and may tie the business in for longer than they want or spend.

Go out to the marketplace and buy more hardware at a great deal of expense to smaller businesses

## Being on the Cloud: The Small Business factor

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Otherwise wait until the web traffic spikes are over.

Having said this, these solutions are only a temporary as none of these solutions are ideal. With cloud hosting the website owner has control over the size of the server and bandwidth. When a website needs extra capacity the website owner can choose how much bandwidth they require. When they no longer need it, it is scaled back to the appropriate level.

If you are a small business, then Cloud Hosting could be an appealing solution for those who experience spikes in their website and want to manage capacity accordingly. Cloud solutions are becoming increasingly popular among SMEs as they are the ones who experience fluctuations in their day to day business operations. In addition to this, they are the ones who need to control their overheads.

However, there are certain areas which need proper considerations when it comes to deploying the cloud based solutions. Foremost, is the signing of service level agreement (SLA). While getting into the cloud the small business owner must have to look at signing the SLA as a important step in getting into the cloud.

However, for some cloud applications users security is also considered as an aspect to look at very carefully, but over a short period of time, advocates of cloud computing based applications have made it very clear that these applications offer a well secured experience.

With this brief overview, it can be clearly said that for those environments which needs scalability at an affordable cost— cloud could be a relevant answer for them.