A DECISION MAKING GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS CLOUD STRATEGY

Six Questions Every New Zealand Business Should Ask

Microsoft

Everybody's talking about the cloud like it's a case of 'be there or be square' and maybe you've heard of all the benefits and you're giving it serious consideration.

But, like most business owners you will be familiar, even if it's subconsciously, with the maxim: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread", because the truth is, that even small mistakes can be costly. Here's how to avoid some of them.

Office 365 – Reinvent your business potential

3 things every small business wants:

More time

More cash

More innovation

5 hours a week of unproductive time = **35 lost days a year** (average for small business owners)[1]

20%

20% of business owners say being able to connect with customers while on the go would boost productivity.[1]

How **Office 365** can help you reach your business potential.

Introducing no boundaries for your business. Let everyone edit, share files, and collaborate from any device – PC, Mac, tablet or phone.

More time

- Create a shared space for you and your customer to store files, documents and reports using **SharePoint Online** or **OneDrive for Business**.

- Start setting up **Skype for Business** Meetings and use the webcams built into your devices to see each other's facial expressions and body language.

- Share your screen and documents with your peer so they can see what you see, or go all in and edit your documents, reports or presentations together in real time.

More cash

- The waterfall chart, now available in **Excel 2016** can help you take thousands of rows of data and make it easy for anyone to understand.

- Furthermore, by using the new forecasting capability in **Excel 2016**, you can determine when your cash will run out.

- By saving your excel spreadsheet into **OneDrive for Business** or **SharePoint Online** you can access and update your report from all your devices.

More innovation

- **Yammer** is a great place to set your innovation challenge. Create a group in your **Yammer** network dedicated to the issue in your business you need to solve – or the opportunity you need to respond to.

- Pose questions. Ask for feedback. Give your team a voice and let them be heard. Then put those ideas into action.

Let's get you moving towards more time, better cash flow, and greater innovation.

Visit the **Office 365** Portal now to access resources to help you get more out of **Office 365**.
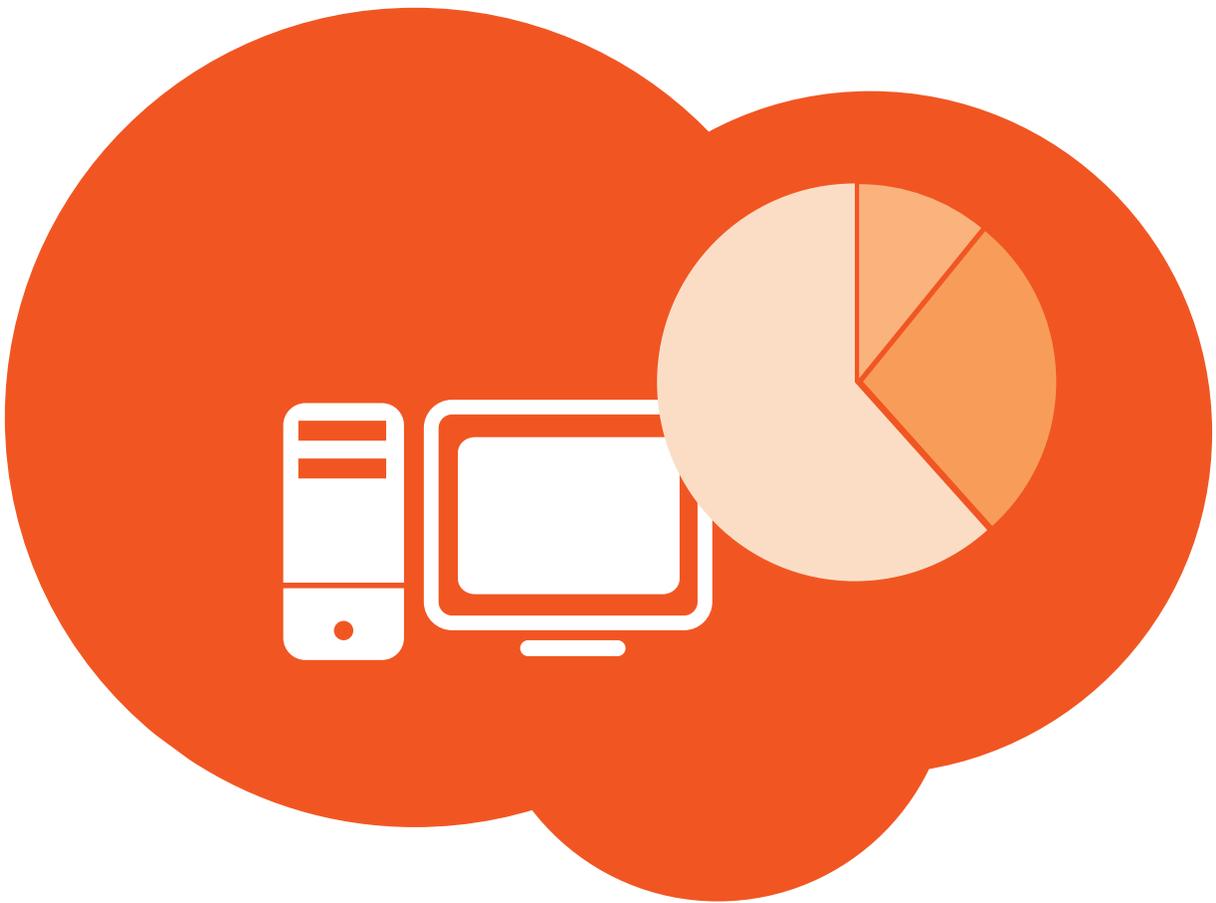
Visit the **Office 365** portal   ⊙

1. https://news.microsoft.com/en-au/2015/06/24/australian-smbs-lose-35-working-days-a-year-to-unproductive-time/ 2. https://news.microsoft.com/en-au/2015/03/17/new-research-finds-workplace-culture-holds-many-smes-back-from-moving-into-the-innovation-fast-lane/

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Business in the Cloud

Possibly one of your biggest frustrations is conflicting vendor advice – everybody has a wheelbarrow – coupled with trying to get your head around the concept of the cloud and what it means, while still trying to focus on managing the business.

The reality is that 'the cloud' is overwhelming in it's enormity. There are multiple solutions, platforms and vendors and they're all competing for your time, attention and dollar. Just trying to make sense of it all, or stitch what you need together in one place can be expensive and difficult. It's a jungle out there!

However, that said, according to a MYOB Business Monitor survey done in 2015 we know that 33% of New Zealand SME's say cost is a major barrier to technological innovation, while 12% cite a lack of skilled staff as an obstacle to innovation. With these challenges, the ability to reduce costs and utilise offshore skills make moving to the ground a potentially smart move for many local SME's (particularly as the rollout to ultra-fast broadband gains momentum).

The following guide has been designed to help navigate your way through that jungle so that you emerge with a clear understanding of how cloud computing can help your business, specifically. It will outline how you can apply a small budget and limited resources to achieve your objectives, whether they are growth, scale, responsiveness, productivity, or to gain competitive advantage.

01 New and Shiny is Not Always Better

Step 1. Take stock: Assess your current needs in terms of the current stuff you're using right now. Not so much what it is, but what it does for you.

We're all attracted to new toys (read: technology) and cool apps, many of which include features that let us do stuff we've never dreamt before, like magpies are drawn to shiny things. But like the magpie, do you really need it? Do you need a new tasks app when perhaps a list in a Microsoft Word document would do the job just as well?

To begin with, keep it simple. You only need to understand and apply the cloud solutions that you most need, starting with the stuff you use the most right now. There's no need to feel intimidated when IT providers start talking about things like cloud migration.

Migrating your business to the cloud simply means the process of moving your data (documents, contacts, accounts etc.) and the applications you're using right now - for example, Microsoft Word - from your on-site servers and computers, to a secure online server that is hosted in a secure data centre offsite.

This means you will no longer have to maintain or replace expensive servers, update your software or worry about data security. That's all taken care of for you, for usually a low monthly subscription.

The reality is that most cloud applications are not applicable to you right at the moment. They might be in the future, but not right now. For example, some cloud services include safe document storage, online accounting packages, automated marketing platforms, CRM, payroll, telephone and project management.

Begin with what are you are using right now. For example, if your business uses Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint, then migrating your business to Office 365 will kill a lot of magpies with one stone.

02

Benefits are Fine, But Which Ones are Relevant to You?

Step 2: Make sure you zero in on the benefits and determine which is relevant to you right now, and explore what the potential may be.

According to a study, *Cloud Computing from an SMES Perspective: A survey-based Investigation* by academics at Bournemouth University, "Cost reduction (45.5%) and mobility and convenience in accessing applications (44.9%) are seen by SMEs to be the key motivations behind adopting cloud computing services".

Consider getting your staff, or management, together in a room and brainstorming the answers to these questions:

• What benefits of the cloud are suited to the business?

• Which are not?

• How can the company utilise some of these benefits that it might not currently enjoy, like mobility, to create a better business model or achieve our goals?

03 What's Broken?
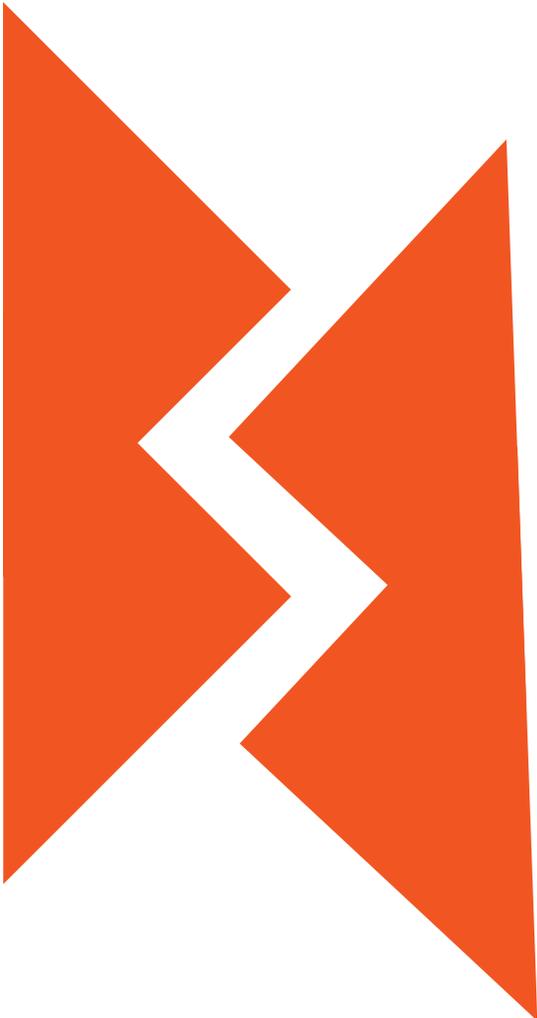
Step 3: Understand what's broken, and what your options are for fixing the problem. Compare costs.

What makes you want to scream with frustration? Are staff members complaining about a regular and persistent 'nuisance' issue? Are you wrestling with more than your fair share of downtime, or slow computers? Perhaps viruses are a constant threat, or software you have doesn't do what you want it to do.

Updating hardware and software can be an expensive process. Ask yourself, have you invested enough time and money in what is the backbone of your business?

If it's lack of investment (and it often is), it will be useful to:

1. Assess the costs of your current predicament and weigh them up;

2. Get estimates on replacing your equipment and software, on-going costs, and a lifespan forecast;

3. Consider the price of migrating to the cloud, lifespan forecast and on-going costs (not, in addition to your subscription

   – as low as $16 per month on Office 365 – there may some expenditure on Internet connection, equipment and professional assistance from an IT support company).

Key questions to consider:

1. What hardware will you need?

2. When will the hardware need to be upgraded?

3. What software will you need?

4. How often will it need to be updated or replaced?

5. How long will it take to deploy your chosen solution?

6. Is your solution scalable e.g. can you move premises or grow easily?

7. Who will provide support and maintenance if necessary?

8. How much will all this cost, and can I afford it?

04 Hangers' on Getting Underfoot?

There may be technology and software you need, but don't have, or technology and software that you do have, but don't need. Do an audit to see what you're using, what's doing the job to your satisfaction and what you don't need or could do without. Or perhaps there is a cheaper alternative?

Very often companies have applications or bits of equipment running that they not only don't need, but which are actually getting in the way. An example would be something that consumes virtual memory without contributing anything productive to your operation.

Step 4: As in step one, be certain of what you need, and then eliminate the hangers' on.

05

What Dangers Lie in Wait?

Step 5: Assess your environment, geography, politics, trends, technology, legal, competitors, to establish your risks and threats. Put plans in place to mitigate these risks, or establish if the cloud offers a solution.

Consider your current environment and the risks associated with it, and your business. This could be rising property costs, increasing salaries, or even earthquakes. Ask yourself how technology can help you mitigate these threats. Perhaps employing offshore staff could ensure business continuity giving the company the ability to work from anywhere in the event of a disaster. You could think about employing staff that work from home. Is there a key person in your business going on maternity leave, who you would like to retain even part time?

Technology, particularly cloud computing, can help you solve these problems but it is important to be aware of the risks, threats and trends in your current environment. List them, look for solutions and evaluate.

06 Dream Big, But Keep Your Feet on the Ground

What are your future plans for your business? When you've considered your needs, and your problems, it's time to think strategically about where you want to go and what will help you get there.

This may be employing a bigger sales team, hiring home based staff, implementing a strong marketing campaign or improving your team's ability to collaborate and stay in touch from anywhere. Perhaps you've identified a niche, an imminent need or an export market, and you want to take advantage of that.

Questions to ponder:

1. Do you have the necessary technology and resource in place?

2. Can you make do until you see a return?

3. If not, what do you need (not would be nice, but need)?

4. How much will it cost?

5. How quickly can you deploy?

Step 6: The cloud can help you do anything. Dream big but it is important your technology supports your business first and foremost, and not the other way around.

Conclusion

There are six decision-making, assessment steps towards building a successful cloud computing strategy for your business. They are:

1. Take stock. What are you currently using?

2. Zero in on the benefits that are relevant to you.

3. Understand what's frustrating you. What's broken, and why?

4. Weed out the hangers on. Technology and apps that may be costing you money but slowing you down.

5. Assess the current environment, looking forward, for any threats and risks that could set your business back

6. Dream big, but keep your feet on the ground. Approach all your technology needs and future aspirations from a business first perspective.

The benefits of the cloud cannot be underestimated, including greater mobility, communications, productivity and the safety of data, however a third of local businesses have never used cloud computing according to a survey conducted by business advisory group The Alternative Board.

The real focus of businesses contemplating the cloud should be to ensure they know what they need and want from the outset, that they apply business thinking to their technology solutions and that they make the right decisions the first time around.

SOURCES:
http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1510/S00822/nz-smes-embracing-technology-changes.htm
http://www.computerworld.co.nz/article/582590/1-3-kiwi-smbs-still-without-cloud-computer-platforms/
http://jitm.ubalt.edu/XXIV-1/article1.pdf

CloudReady is an e-Book by Microsoft New Zealand to help local enterprises harness the incredible opportunities for business growth that exists in the cloud.

Build the office of tomorrow; do business anywhere, anytime – we're all now living in a global marketplace. Technology has opened up new frontiers and the pioneers of today travel through cyber space to discover fresh resources, new customers and fresh thinking.

Here are some of the benefits that Microsoft Office 365 can offer your business:

- Expand your business, not your budget. With Office 365 you and your staff can enjoy the same seamless experience no matter where or when you log in.
- Bring your office with you anywhere you go. With a complete set of business tools accessible virtually anywhere, Office 365 lets you get more done.
- Harness the power of your team with easy real time co-authoring and collaboration.
- Communicate in new ways, build deeper insights from your data, and deliver a seamless customer experience with Office 365.
- 60% of businesses cite data security or privacy as a concern. Keep your company data safe, centralised, and protected. Office 365 provides security, privacy, and device management features.
- Office 365 provides you choice in the cloud.
- Share a common platform, connect and collaborate with staff and customers.
- 40% of businesses confronted with disaster never re-open. The ability to open quickly after an emergency, from anywhere.
- Never lose files, even if you lose your device or laptop.

For information that is more relevant to your particular situation, click here to contact a Microsoft Partner near you, about what the cloud can do for your business.

The Team at Microsoft NZ

Like to know more about Microsoft Office 365? Click here to visit our website.